



Aimal Wali Khan elected ANP president

Awami National Party's (ANP) president for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Aimal Wali Khan, on Sunday was unanimously elected as the party's central president. The party's general council meeting, under the chairmanship of Chief Election Commissioner Iftikhar Hussain, was held in ANP's Bacha Khan Centre in Peshawar.



Mushaal lauds COAS for unwavering support for Kashmir cause

Mushaal Husseini Mullick, former SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, hailed the Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's unwavering support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just struggle for right to self-determination. Mushaal Paid rich tributes on the 3rd Martyrdom Anniversary of Kashmiri Hurriyat Leader Shaheed Sherai Tehreek e Hurriyat. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ahlan Wa Sahlan Marhaba

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan welcoming Saudi Investors' delegation led by Assistant Minister of Investment H.E. Ibrahim AlMubarak on Arrival at Nur Khan Airbase on Sunday.



Photo: PID

'High-level' Saudi delegation arrives in Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: A high-level Saudi delegation arrived in Islamabad on Sunday with aims to explore trade and investment opportunities in Pakistan, ARY News reported. Saudi Arabia's Deputy Investment Minister Ibrahim AlMubarak led the 50-member delegation to boost bilateral relations between the two

countries, the Ministry of Commerce said in a statement. Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Petroleum Minister Masood Malik welcomed the delegation upon their arrival at Noor Khan Air Base. Minister Jam Kamal Khan said that the three-day visit of the Saudi delegation will pave the way for enhancing trade relations between investors

from both countries. The commerce ministry has selected several companies in relevant sectors to hold meetings with their Saudi counterparts, he added. Khan went on to add that prominent Pakistani companies would collaborate with as many as 30 Saudi companies in different sectors. According to the minister, the meetings will target

sectors such as agriculture, mining, human resources, energy, chemicals and maritime. Additionally, discussions will also be held for investment prospects in other sectors including refinery, IT, religious tourism, telecom, aviation, construction, water and power generation, he said. Minister Jam Kamal Khan maintained that these discus-

sions were aimed at identifying investment opportunities that would generate employment and boost exports between the two countries. The local companies of Pakistan would present their business and investment proposals to their Saudi counterparts, he said, while expressing hope that several companies would be able to finalise deals during the meetings.

Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar diminishes wheat scandal as 'Storm in Teacup'

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Former Caretaker Prime Minister, Anwarul Haq Kakar, downplays the wheat import issue as a 'Storm in a Teacup'. During his interview on ARY News program 'Sawal Yeh Hai', Kakar emphasized the importance of understanding the intricacies of the wheat import mechanism. He highlighted the government's efforts to save tax money, facilitate private-sector wheat purchases, and generate revenue from import duties. The former caretaker prime minister underscored that the decision to allow



private sector wheat imports was made in response to the country's wheat demand, aiming to maintain a balance between supply-demand ratios. While denying the allegation of corruption and crisis, he credited the actions of the caretaker government for the decrease in inflation in

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Pak-Saudi investment conference to be held today

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Two day Pakistan-Saudi Arabia investment conference will begin here today (Monday) to promote bilateral trade and investment, besides fostering a new era of growth and prosperity for the people of both the countries. A 50-member high-level business delegation from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) is also visiting Pakistan from May 5 to explore investment opportunities in different sectors as well as to forge strong bonds with local entrepreneurs. Some 30 Saudi companies representing different economic sectors, including information technology, telecoms, energy, aviation, construction, mining exploration, agriculture and human resource development would be part of the delegation, which would be led by the Assistant Minister of Investment, a Ministry of Commerce official said on Sunday.



he added. He said that Saudi Arabia was an oil-based economy with strong government controls over major economic activities, however, it was now undergoing a transformation to reduce oil dependence, diversify income sources and enhance competitiveness under the Vision 2030. Currently, he said, the major exports of the Kingdom included mineral fuels, mineral oils, plastics and organic chemicals, whereas it was importing machinery, vehicles, and

agricultural products. The official said that during the first half of the current financial year, bilateral trade between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia was recorded at \$2,482.37 million, with Pakistan's exports of \$262.58 million and Saudi exports of \$2,219 billion. He said Pakistan's major to the KSA consisted of rice, meat of bovine animals, fruits and vegetables, and tents and camping goods, whereas imports were petroleum products, and polymers of propylene and ethylene. The official said Pakistan and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) had agreed on a Free-Trade Agreement. Pakistan, he added, was also planning to organize a Single Country Exhibition and Lifestyle Show in Saudi Arabia. He said that Pakistan would welcome and fully facilitate investments and partnerships from Saudi Arabia in IT, minerals, textiles, food security, engineering and energy sectors.

Deputy PM, Turkish FM discuss bilateral ties between two countries

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan on Sunday reviewed the state of bilateral relations and emphasized the exceptional bilateral relations and the strong bonds of friendship between Pakistan and Türkiye. The two leaders met on the sidelines of the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference in Banjul, The Gambia, Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.



"Expressing satisfaction with the positive momentum in bilateral relations, they reiterated their resolve to further deepen bilateral cooperation, with a particular focus on economic, trade, and defence sectors," it was added.

Kissan Ittehad announces protests from May 10

PPA

MULTAN: The Pakistan Kissan Ittehad has announced that it will begin protests against the wheat crisis in Multan on May 10. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, PKI Chairman Khalid Khokhar accused the 'mafia' of making money by smuggling wheat, stating that the entire system supports wheat smugglers. He claimed that Pakistan has 4.4 million tons of wheat available, but decisions regarding wheat were made in bad faith. Khokhar further stated that despite the availability of 4.4 million metric tons of wheat, wheat was imported, resulting in the outflow of one billion dollars in foreign exchange. He alleged that the mafia did this to benefit the private sector. Khokhar also said that farmers have suffered losses of 400 billion rupees due to low

prices, while the government has lost 150 billion rupees due to farmers not selling their wheat. He claimed that the mafia first smuggles wheat and then imports it. He emphasized that farmers do not take their money abroad, and that without money, they will not be able to cultivate cotton and rice. He stated that farmers are currently facing immense difficulties, working 24 hours a day but receiving nothing in return. He added that farmers cannot describe the pain they are currently experiencing and have repeatedly called for the formation of an independent agriculture commission. Khokhar said that if wheat farmers do not have decision-making power, how will they invest in future crops? He stated that farmers have bought everything in the black market, and that those in power are not making the right decisions.

IMF says its mission will visit Pakistan this month to discuss new loan

Reuters

ISLAMABAD: An International Monetary Fund mission is expected to visit Pakistan this month to discuss a new programme, the lender said on Sunday ahead of Islamabad beginning its annual budget-making process for the next financial year. Pakistan last month completed a short-term \$3 billion programme, which helped stave off sovereign default, but the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need for a fresh, longer term programme. "A mission is expected to visit Pakistan in May to discuss the FY25 budget, policies, and reforms under a potential new programme for the welfare of all Pakistanis," the IMF said in an emailed response to Reuters. Pakistan's financial year runs from July to June and its budget for fiscal year 2025, the first by Sharif's new government, has to be presented before June 30. The IMF did not specify the dates of the visit, nor the size

or duration of the programme. "Accelerating reforms now is more important than the size of the program, which will be guided by the package of reform and balance of payments needs," the IMF statement said. Pakistan narrowly averted default last summer, and its \$350 billion economy has stabilised after the completion of the last IMF programme, with inflation coming down to around 17% in April from a record high 38% last May. It is still dealing with a high fiscal shortfall and while it has controlled its external account deficit through import control mechanisms, it has come at the expense of stagnating growth, which is expected to be around 2% this year compared to negative growth last year. Earlier, in an interview with Reuters, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said the country hoped to agree the contours of a new IMF loan in May. Pakistan is expected to seek at least \$6 billion and request additional financing from the Fund under the Resilience and Sustainability Trust.

Wheat scandal

Wheat import summary forwarded before my taking charge: former minister

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker food security minister Dr. Kausar Abdullah Malik said that the wheat import summary was forwarded before his assuming charge of the ministry. In an exclusive interview with the ARY News, the interim cabinet member said that the

summary of five lac to one million tons wheat import was forwarded. "When I came to know, I said that we have sufficient wheat in store," former minister said. "I said that wheat import is not necessary, don't import grain by the TCP?" He said, "the matter when discussed in the ECC they said that the private sector should be



entrusted for the import". Dr Kausar Abdullah said that the matter was first approved by the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC). "What

happened later, I don't know". "Allowing private sector for the import was not my mandate, it was the ECC to do," former caretaker food security minister said. "Minister for Food Security not used to be a member of the ECC, the secretary is being summoned when it is necessary". "A date was fixed in the Wheat Board session that no wheat ship-

ment will arrive after that date," Dr Kausar Abdullah said. "What happened after this date, I am unaware, nor I had a role in it," former food minister said. He said the wheat shortage used to be upto 2.5 million metric tons, but 3.5 million metric tons wheat imported. "It is our working culture that the officials don't

Continued on Page 8

A delegation of traders' association calls on PM to protect interests of AJK people

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation of AJK traders' association led by its president Muhammad Razaq Khan called on Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq here today. Speaking on the occasion, prime minister Haq said that raising voice for the legitimate rights was not a crime but the state won't allow anyone to use it as a pretext to create an ideological divide or disrupt peace in the region. "All possible steps will be taken to establish writ of the state and there will be no compromise on it", he said, adding that no one be allowed to dent or harm the ideology of Pakistan in the region.



"Pakistan is the axis and center of our hopes and joining Pakistan is our destination", he said.

The PM while reiterating his commitment to safeguard the interests of the state and its people told the delegation that he would go to any extent to protect the rights of the citizens. He said that the state resources would be utilized for the welfare of the economically less-privileged sections of the society. The PM said that the business community should also play their role to improve the society. He assured the delegation that traders'

problems would be solved on a priority basis. He said that the local bodies will be made more active. Regarding the deployment of FC, the PM made it clear that FC has been called for the protection of foreigners in Azad Kashmir. "Protection of foreigners working in Azad Kashmir is our responsibility", he said, adding that FC would be deployed in particular areas to ensure foolproof security to them. Referring to the federal government's all out support and timely release of funds, the prime minister said that despite the adverse conditions the federal government did not stop our funds.

He said that interest-free loans would be given to the youth so that they can start their own business.

He said that improvements were being made in all other sectors including health, education, infrastructure. "We all have to work together like a single unit to establish a society that is free of tribalism and prejudice", the PM said. Referring to the dissemination of disinformation on social media, he said that it was not wise to get the new generation being spoiled and their minds poisoned by the propagandists who spread lies and disinformation through social

media. "We have to lead and guide our new generation in the right direction", he maintained.

The delegation was comprised of Nisar Rehman Abbasi, Basharat Khan Mughal, Sheikh Zafaran Ali Akbar, Raja Tahir Turk, Raja Waqas Sikan, Raja Saeed Akhtar, Mohammad Abdullah, Raja Jawad Ali Khan, Zaheer Kayani, Imad Nazir, Ishtiaq Aslam, Chaudhry Umeer Gujjar, Syed Nabil Hussain, Adnan Maruf, Malik Khurshid Awan, Syed Maqsood Haidar, Malik Riaz Awan, Imtiaz Abbasi, Syed Mazhar Hussain Shah, Ashfaq Tareen and others.

People who serve for the suffering humanity in the society will find the best employer from Allah: Shaheen Langriyal

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Inner Wheel Club District 343 Chairman Mrs. Shaheen Langriyal, Vice Chairman Mrs. Ayesha Mazhar and Secretary Shaheen Muazzam Khakwani have said that the people who serve the suffering humanity in the society will find the best employer from Allah Almighty in all social services in our Punjab. Clubs are appreciated all over Punjab because of them And especially in Multan district, hundreds of people are smiling today. The living example of this is the poor children of the electrical center in Multan who were unable to walk just because of the lack of shoes for crooked feet. Today, he is able to walk and is living a prosperous life while addressing the annual distribution award ceremony for the best performance of the presidents and secretaries of 9 clubs in the whole Punjab under the shadow of Inner Wheel District 343, he said, adding that all social organizations and philanthropists should go forward to serve the suffering humanity in Pakistan And eliminate poverty. On this occasion, the presidents and secretaries of all the clubs said that the candle lit by our district chairman, vice chairman and secretary has reverberations in the entire Punjab today and the mission of all of us is to serve the suffering humanity in Pakistan. Because the government alone cannot solve all the problems, the community also grows. In the event, Sadia Kirmani, Zeba Javed, Tahira Najam, Jaina Ejaz, Laiba Khakwani, Dr. Afshan, Rashida Tahir, Naz Fatima, Munaza, Farah Lodhi, Nizhat Iftikhar, Iram Iqbal and others were honored at the event. Awarded for high performance.



Waziristan forest Dept employees demand release funds of stoppage salaries

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: South Waziristan Forest Department's salaries of the forest employees recruited in the Tsunami ten billion trees mega project started a few years ago have been stopped for the last one and a half years and due to which the stoves in their houses have become cold.

Forest employees demanded immediate payment of unpaid salaries, the employees say that if the salaries are not paid, we will start an endless series of protests.

According to information received Dawn, the salaries of the forest department employees, watchmen, watchmen and laborers in the two tribal districts of South Waziristan, Lower and Upper Waziristan, have been stopped for the last one and a half years and due to which forest employees are facing extreme problems.

The employees said that they have played an important role in the conservation of forests and plantation campaigns, but despite them we are not getting their wages.

The employees told Dawn that they have not been getting their salaries for the last one and a half years, now shopkeepers have stopped giving loans to feed their children and due to which the problem has increased.

The employees say that their stoves have gone cold due to the stoppage of salaries.

They said that if the salaries are not paid in a few days, we will be forced to leave our work.

On the other hand, South Waziristan Divisional Forest Officer Wehdat Zeeshan told Dawn regarding the stoppage of employees' salaries that I understand the difficulties of my employees.

Attock Press Club chief congratulates new Punjab Governor on assuming office of governor

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Patron-in-Chief of Attock Press Club & General Secretary of Central Union of Journalists, Syed Raza Hyder Naqvi congratulated Sardar Saleem Hyder Khan on becoming Governor Punjab and called it a good omen for Attock. In a congratulatory message, he hoped that Sardar Saleem Hyder Khan will serve people of Punjab in general and people of Attock in particular dedicatedly as he always done people's politics. He said that as Federal Minister, Sardar Saleem Hyder solved long standing problems of Attock and brought development schemes worth billions of rupees which enhanced the living standard of the people of this backward area. Syed Raza Hyder Naqvi extended full support of the journalistic community to newly appointed Governor Punjab and hoped that he will strive to solve problems being faced by journalists community of Attock. He said that leadership of Pakistan Peoples Party acknowledged the services of Sardar Saleem Hyder Khan which will also strengthened Pakistan Peoples Party in Punjab.

Teenage girls given as "Vani" to settle dispute seek Legal Protection in Thatta

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: The evil-custom of giving girls as "Vani" to settle old tribal disputes has started rearing its ugly head in larr region of Sindh after causing serious social damage in northern areas of Sindh.

A jirga in Thatta decided to marry off two girls of Mirjat tribe to two men of the same tribe to settle a domestic dispute. Credible sources revealed that a daughter of Edu Mirjat eloped with the son of Laung Meer Jat a week ago, the local chieftains interfered in the matter and the girl was recovered. The chieftains convened a jirga late Thursday night and pronounced their verdict.

Encouragement

ISLAMABAD: Farmers harvesting wheat crop in the Golra area of Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Amere Ahle Sunat urges Pakistanis to boycott Israel, US products over Palestinian rights

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Former Federal Minister Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi appealed to the people of Pakistan, businessmen, scholars, lawyers, students and people from all walks of life regarding the oppression of Palestinian Muslims that the products of Israel, America and its allies Do a practical boycott of the Movement for the Protection of the Honorable Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him). While talking, he appreciated the efforts of the movement for the protection of the honor of the Prophet (peace be upon him) regarding Palestine.



The delegation of Tehreek Tahafaz-e-Namoos-e-Risalat (peace be upon him) led by President Asif Akhwani,

General Secretary Maulana Muhammad Ayub Mughal Noorani met with the former religious minister and Amere Ahle Sunat Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi. Mirza Muhammad Arshad ul Qadri, Muhammad Younis Ghazi, Sultan Mahmood Malik, Ashfaq Saeedi and others participated in the delegation. Palestinian Muslims The intolerable criminal silence of the

leaders of the Muslim countries on the cruel forced war and the extreme oppression and the practical boycott movement of the products of Israel, the United States and its allies gave awareness to the businessmen and the people to intensify the boycott movement of their products To make a part. Syed Hamid Saeed Kazmi also told about the recent efforts and assured

the delegation to play their full role in the movement of boycotting the products of Israel, America and its follower countries and appreciated the efforts of the movement to protect the honor of the Prophet and for the freedom, victory and victory of Palestine and Maulana Muhammad Ayub Mughal Noorani Special prayers for complete recovery.

Ashraf Sehrai remembered on his 3rd martyrdom anniversary

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan chapter organized a conference in Islamabad to pay tributes to senior Hurriyat leader and Chairman of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai on his third martyrdom anniversary.

APHC-AJK and Pakistan Convener Mahmood Ahmed Saghar presided over the conference while former JI amir of Azad

Jammu and Kashmir Abdul Rasheed Tarabi was the special guest on the occasion.

Abdul Rasheed Turabi, addressing the conference, highlighted the precious services of the martyred leader for the freedom struggle.

Mahmood Ahmed Saghar on the occasion said that criminal negligence was done regarding the treatment of Muhammad Ashraf Sehrai during his detention, but the Hurriyat leader remained an embodiment of determination and sacrificed his

life for the Kashmir cause.

Other speakers paid their respects to the martyred leader and said that the ugly face of India was exposed by his martyrdom and a new chapter of sacrifices was created in the history of the freedom movement.

Referring to the statement of Pakistan Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir regarding Kashmir, they said that this statement raised the morale of the Kashmiri people engaged in the freedom struggle and gave a clear message to the occupying power.

The participants of the conference reiterated the determination of Kashmiris to continue the martyrs' mission till taking it to its logical conclusion.

In the conference, the deaths of Hurriyat activist Abdul Sattar Chacha and mother-in-law of Hurriyat leader Javed Iqbal Butt were condoled and solidarity was expressed with the bereaved families.

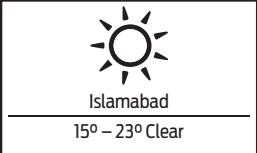
Hurriyat leaders Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Imtiaz Wani, Muhammad Hussain Khateeb, Mir Tahir Masood, Muhammad Rafiq Dar,



Hasan Al-Bana, Raja Khadim Hussain, Nisar Mirza, Muhammad Shafi Dar, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqoob, Sanaullah Dar, Javed, Iqbal Butt, Mian Muzaffar,

Dawood Yousafzai, Sheikh Abdul Majid, Gulshan Ahmed, Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Zahid Ashraf, Adeel Mushtaq Wani, Syed Mushtaq, Nazir Ahmed Karnai, Muham-

mad Ashraf Dar, Ijaz Rehmani, Rais Ahmed Mir, Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan, Afsar Khan, Shaukat Ali Abu Zar and Attaulah participated in the meeting.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:42 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	4:54 pm
Maghrib	6:54 pm
Isha	8:28 pm

EMERGENCY

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

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

63 Plots is a historic initiative for the families of Martyrs Police: Sarfraz Mughal



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General Islamabad Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi praised the high performance of DIG Headquarters Dr. Syed Mustafa Tanveer with beautiful words and great enthusiasm for the families of martyred policemen in a very short time. Arranged plots and Inspector General of Police Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi while paying tribute announced that these plots should be constructed and given to the relatives which the officers and Islamabad Police will construct and give. Social and business leader Sarfraz Mughal said that Syed Mustafa Tanveer has valuable services for the department and the people, in which he established the Dispute Resolution Council, which included experienced people from all walks of life, which are civil matters, including domestic disputes. Hearing and solving disputes of issues, transactions etc. and in the parties reconciliation is done, which is an ongoing charity. Sarfraz Mughal praised IG Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi and DIG Syed Mustafa Tanveer for the improvement of the department and the measures taken for the rights and protection of the people. Much appreciated.

International food festival

'Taste the World' celebrates in Serena Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLA. ABAD: The International Food Festival-Taste the World was held on Sunday, May 5th featuring 29 embassies as a fundraising event. The event is a celebration of culinary diversity and cultural exchange, bringing people together through the universal language of food. The participating embassies offered a unique and authentic taste through cuisine ranging from savory dishes to sweet treats representing the flavors and traditions of the world.

Taste of the World, a charity event, is the collaborative effort of many embassies, IFWA (Islamabad Foreign Women's Association), Serena Hotels, the Head of Missions' Spouses (HOMS) Group with the participation of the Pakistan Foreign Office Women Association (PFOWA). IFWA and the Serena Hotels have a long history of partnership that aims to make a meaningful impact by raising funds for charity projects that benefit vulnerable groups, especially women and children in Pakistan.

Aziz Boolani, CEO Serena Hotels said, our commitment to cultural diplomacy extends beyond hospitality, it is about creating meaningful connections through shared experienc-



es. Taste the World is not just a culinary event; it is a celebration of diversity, unity, and compassion. Through the language of food, we bridge cultures, nurture understanding, and empower communities. I am also pleased to announce that the proceeds from this event will be directed towards IFWA funds, aimed at supporting underprivileged communities. Together with IFWA, we embark on a culinary journey that enriches lives and fosters a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

IFWA is a non-political, non-profit charitable organization established in 1995 by women from around the world, living in Islamabad. IFWA's organizing committee, drawn from volunteering spouses of foreign diplomats and expats, creates an exciting program of cultural and social activities with all profits going to worthwhile causes. Through various programs and initiatives, IFWA provides support, resources and opportunities to women and chil-

dren in need, and those facing social and economic challenges.

Some past projects include donating 100 wheelchairs to the National Institute of Rehabilitation Medicine, providing school supplies to the Haraf Foundation, Khatoon-e-Fatima High School, and Al-Firdous Community Model School, as well as medical equipment to Care for Special Persons (CFSP). IFWA launched a charity drive to respond to emergency needs by The International Baby Food



Action Network (IBFAN) after by purchasing equipment for the devastating floods in 2022 mobile Nurturing Care Center.

Services of students going to foreign countries for higher education will continue: Director Students Club

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The annual general meeting of the well-known organization of Study Abroad Students Club was held in a local hotel. In which Director Dr. Ammar Suhail (UK), Project Major Samira Ali, Operation Manager Hijab Fatima, Admin Officer Mehwish Batul, General Manager. Apart from Shiraz Ashraf, branch managers and other officials and members of students club from Lahore, Multan, Sahiwal, Chiniot, Faisalabad and other districts and

provinces participated in full. Addressing this event, Director Dr. Ammar Suhail in his address.

It has been said that the services of the students who have gone abroad for higher education on behalf of the Students Club are continuing successfully. In which all the officials and the teams of different departments have worked very diligently and enthusiastically. This is the reason that thousands of students in Europe, Australia, Canada and China, includ-

ing other countries, through the dedication and struggle of the students club during one year, are engaged in the pursuit of education. Project Manager Samira Ali has said in her address that the Student Club is no less than a blessing for the students who are continuing their educational activities in developed countries. The achievements achieved during the last year are exemplary and the services will continue to be good. Admin Professor Mehwish Batul while speaking at the students club forum

highlighted various aspects of academic development and study abroad. He has further said that the students who return to their homeland after studying abroad will serve the country and the nation well. The officials of the students club who have performed best during the year were awarded with excellence awards and certificates. The officials who received the awards assured the students club that this series of hard work, dedication, struggle and service will continue in the same way.

130 Christian children in Faisalabad schoolhouse provided with school supplies

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD:

130 Christian children were provided with stationary, lunch boxes, and school supplies in Faisalabad village of Djakot. The children and their parents expressed their gratitude towards Madam Madiha Aslam and Nasir Sohail for their generosity.



During the event, Madiha Aslam and Nasir Sohail shared their vision of continuing to support the education and religious upbringing of children not only in this village, but also in other villages. Their goal is to nurture future leaders who will serve Pakistan with dedication and excellence. Fr. Peter Shangara and other community members also shared their thoughts and appreciation for the initiative.

Takht Bhai College of Sciences holds farewell party for second year students

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

MARDAN (TAKHT BHAI): The Lord's College of Sciences Takhtbhai organized a farewell party and prize distribution ceremony in honor of the second year students.

A farewell party was organized in the honor of the second year students in the famous and famous educational institution of Takhtbhai, The Lord's College of Sciences, Takhtbhai, in which the parents and college lecturers of the first and second year students also participated. Recitation was

done from the Holy Quran, on this occasion students presented Naat Rasool Maqbool, Praise be to God, poems and national songs. In addition, in the ceremony, prizes were awarded to students of the first and second year who obtained prominent positions in the college level examination. Moinuddin, the principal of the college, addressed the ceremony and said that they are the valuable asset of the nation and the builders of the future. Do not waste a single moment of time, work hard to fulfill the expecta-

tions of your parents and nation, prepare yourself to face future challenges and do your best for the development of the country and the nation in the future and the welfare of the society. Play the role. Leader of Anjuman Tajran and social personality Haji Aftab, members of lecturers staff Abdullah Bacha, Tariq Khan Yousafzai, Abdali, Asad Khan, Wasif Shah, Adnan Ali, Shirazios Sufzai, Zahid Shayan, Jawad Ali, Shah Han Manzar, Mufti Abid, Mufti Yousuf Shah. And Muhammad Iqbal also addressed



Interview

Government should begin the Solar Degree program: Majid Chishti

Tahir Amin Malik

The Director of Star Solar Energy Company Majid Chishti said that I have been working in Start Solar Energy Company since 2018 while properly I started work on Solar in 2016. He said that I completed the process for registration of Start Solar company in 2018.

He said that I have found work on solar in my Childhood. He further said that I also have done work on Electronics relevant things like UPS, TV, Mobiles repairing and after that I came completely in the field of Solar Energy.

He said that I also want the day electricity should be free but Solar can play a very vital role for this. He further said that people should take advantage of solar for decreasing their electricity bills and should install the Solar in their homes. He said that the

Government should be flexible regarding the networking and that the support in solar energy and systems should be one for every one in the cities of Pakistan.

He said I took part first time in solar exhibition in 2017 and after that I never left any Solar exhibition in Pakistan and participating regularly in the solar exhibition he said that for not for business point of view I take the part in exhibition also for getting the knowledge I take part in solar exhibition.

He said the Power and Fuel Industry are playing a very vital role for Solar. He said that Government should also plan to begin the Solar Degree plan and Licences criteria should be compulsory for Solar Energy Companies because everybody who has no knowledge is coming in solar field and some are misguiding to the people regarding solar items and due to begin these solar program awareness will come among the people and they will purchase right solar things.



He said a technical exam program should also be started on solar energy and due to these reasons Industry will flourish and Solar Industry can survive for damage. At last he said people should get the advantage of solar items due to decreasing the prices and the Government should fully support networking on solar and energy items.



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‘Wheat crisis: Belling the cat may not be so easy’

There has been significant controversy and public outcry over the continued import of wheat in May 2024, despite the government's target to halt imports in February 2024. This decision comes at a time when the country's own wheat crop has flooded the market. The middlemen, flour mills, and hoarders are more inclined to store and hoard imported wheat compared to domestic wheat due to the price difference. The average landed price of imported wheat is around US\$290/mt (AU\$450/mt), significantly lower than the government's domestic intervention price of approximately US\$350/mt (AU\$545/mt). As a result, the burden of purchasing and storing wheat has fallen on the government, which lacks the financial resources and capacity for adequate maintenance and management of warehouses. Moreover, with the government's warehouses already full of wheat and farmers expecting to sell no more than 50 percent of their crop, losses are estimated to be nearly 380 billion rupees (\$1.4 billion).

Various reasons and theories have been proposed to explain this glut, but no one has been able to provide credible data to support these claims. This lack of transparency may be due to either naivety or an attempt to conceal certain facts.

According to credible data from the United States Department of Agriculture, there was no wheat import from 2015 to 2019. However, there was a staggering 361,600% increase in 2020. This increase coincided with the weakening of

the USA's hold on Afghanistan and the rise to power of the Taliban. During this time, some ambitious elements began to consider Afghanistan as part of Pakistan's sphere of influence, leading to more fluid borders that facilitated smuggling of essential commodities to Afghanistan to earn goodwill and strengthen relations with the new government there.

Let's compare this production with our domestic consumption for the same years. For example, the total wheat consumption in 1960 was 5,454 (thousand metric tons). This increased to 11,200 (thousand metric tons) in 1980, 22,500 (thousand metric tons) in 2000. This increase continued, reaching 26,300 (thousand metric tons) in 2020 and 29,600 (thousand metric tons) in 2023. According to fair estimates, wheat production in 2024 is expected to be around 32,000 (thousand metric tons), sufficient to meet the entire year's domestic requirement. Additionally, if we factor in the over 2 million metric tons of wheat exported to Afghanistan, the production outweighs the domestic consumption.

In 2024, the sowing of wheat was a popular choice for farmers due to higher flour prices and perceived shortages. As a result, almost 40 percent of the cultivated area, or 9.12 million hectares, was dedicated to wheat in October, November, and December of the previous year for the 2024 harvest. This was an increase

from the 8.86 million hectares planted in 2022 for the 2023 harvest and slightly higher than the 9 million-hectare crop a year earlier.

All was going well. There was equilibrium between supply and demand. The surplus of wheat and flour of around 1.8 million tons according to US government estimates was smuggled to Afghanistan, and any forecast of wheat, as a rule of thumb was reached after including the domestic demand of Afghanistan.

This practice required inflating the demand figures while avoiding direct mention of Afghanistan, as most exports to Afghanistan were facilitated through state-aided smuggling. Smuggling to Afghanistan was further incentivized as smugglers were doubling their money with each transaction, evading taxes, and being paid in U.S. dollars. Moreover, the depreciating rupee also motivated smuggling, as the exchange rate reached a record low with the PKR plummeting to 287.29 against the U.S. dollar, while 86.3 afghanis fetched a dollar.

However, the situation changed when the government made a sudden policy U-turn in July 2023 to repatriate Afghan undocumented and illegal aliens, and to curb smuggling and hoarding of wheat as a punitive measure against Afghanistan for failing to stop cross-border terrorist attacks into Pakistan.

The then caretaker Prime Minister,

Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, defended the July 2023 policy, stating that Pakistan has adopted a "zero tolerance" approach towards smuggled goods and foreign currency to Afghanistan.

In response, the Frontier Corps intensified vehicle checks and seized multiple large consignments of wheat flour attempting to cross illegally. The government also began monitoring wheat supply movements from Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, requiring official documentation for wheat transportation and establishing additional checkpoints to control food item smuggling. It tightened control over the Afghan Transit Trade. These stringent measures and crackdowns had a significant impact on curbing illegal wheat smuggling to Afghanistan.

However, in his hasty, thoughtless, and knee-jerk policy U-turn, the government utterly failed to comprehend the long-term impact of this skewed policy decision. It also failed to put in place adequate checks and balances to protect Pakistani farmers and consumers from the consequences of this short-sighted policy.

As PML(N)'s leader, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, known for his confrontational stance with the establishment, is determined to identify those responsible for the wheat import crisis, he may soon realize that the elements behind this crisis are beyond the power and reach of the weak and fragile incumbent government, as well as beyond his own reach.

Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former MD, SRBC



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

Stoking Hate for Political Advantage: Modi's Tactics - I

As the General Elections unfold in India, Modi and the BJP are resorting to unjust methods to sway Hindu-majority voters. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is actively fostering animosity towards Muslims, recently equating the community with "infiltrators" and perpetuating anti-Muslim stereotypes amidst the country's ongoing general elections. Addressing a crowded rally in the western state of Rajasthan, Modi insinuated that if the opposition, led by the Congress party, were to come to power, it would redistribute the nation's wealth among those with larger families, seemingly referring to Muslims, whom he had mentioned moments earlier. "Should your hard-earned money be given to infiltrators?" he asked the audience, before alleging that the opposition would even take away mangalsutras — the sacred necklace symbolizing marriage in Hindu ceremonies — if given the opportunity.

Modi's recent remarks against Muslims underscore his Hindutva ideology and highlight his willingness to resort to divisive tactics for political gain. It's evident that lacking tangible achievements to showcase to voters, Modi has turned to spreading hate speech against minorities, particularly Muslims, as a means of rallying support. In developed and civilized nations, political leaders typically campaign based on their track record and accomplishments. However, Modi's tenure has been marked by a lack of substantial progress, with the situation of the impoverished worsening and India's international reputation suffering due to involvement in conflicts abroad. In the realm of politics, where ambition often eclipses ideals, the pursuit of power frequently overshadows the importance of governance based on performance.

In Indian culture and tradition, the cow holds a sacred and esteemed status, often revered as "Gaumata" (mother cow). This reverence for the cow is deeply ingrained in Hinduism, where it symbolizes purity, abundance, and divine significance. Nevertheless, the cultural significance of the cow has emerged as a contentious topic in contemporary India, sparking intricate discussions surrounding religion, politics, and social identity. The debate over Gaumata in India is multi-dimensional, touching upon religious, cultural, economic, and political realms. Central to this discourse is the juxtaposition between the cow's revered status as a symbol of Hindu heritage and the diverse dynamics of modern Indian society, where the cow also holds economic value, serves as a livelihood for millions, and influences dietary preferences. A particularly contentious aspect of the Gaumata debate revolves around cow protection, a focal point for Hindu nationalist factions and certain state administrations. Incidents of cow vigilantism, often carried out by self-appointed "gau rakshaks" (cow protectors), have resulted in instances of violence, coercion, and vigilantism against individuals suspected of involvement in cow slaughter or beef consumption. These occurrences have ignited public outcry and raised apprehensions regarding the rule of law, religious tolerance, and the safety of religious minorities, particularly Muslims and Dalits.

Furthermore, the politicization of the Gaumata issue has escalated tensions, with BJP leveraging cow protection to mobilize support and solidify their electoral base. Laws prohibiting cow slaughter or restricting the sale and consumption of beef in specific regions have faced criticism. The Gaumata controversy intersects with broader discussions on dietary choices, culinary preferences, and individual liberties within India's diverse and pluralistic society. Despite beef consumption being prohibited or limited in numerous states due to religious and cultural sensitivities, it remains a dietary staple for certain communities, notably Muslims and Dalits. Efforts to enforce dietary restrictions or oversee food preferences have been met with opposition and critique, prompting discussions on individual liberties, religious autonomy, and the government's role in regulating personal choices. Moreover, the economic ramifications of the Gaumata debate are significant, especially in rural regions where cattle husbandry is a traditional occupation and a vital source of income for millions. Policies aimed at safeguarding cows often yield unintended outcomes, such as the proliferation of stray cattle, presenting challenges for farmers and contributing to disputes over land and resources. Modi and the BJP have utilized the Gaumata issue as a means to target minorities, particularly Muslims, resulting in numerous instances where Muslims have been subjected to beatings and torture by Hindus based solely on suspicions of cow slaughter.

In the annals of Indian history, the Babri Masjid dispute has long been a focal point of contention, encapsulating the intricate dynamics of religion, identity, and governance in a diverse and pluralistic society. At the core of this contentious matter lies the debate over the construction of a Ram temple at the Ayodhya site, revered by Hindus as the birthplace of Lord Ram, juxtaposed with the historical presence of the Babri Masjid, a 16th-century mosque demolished in 1992. Amidst fervent calls for resolution and reconciliation, the Modi government's failure in handling of this longstanding dispute has reignited discussions and sparked controversy, prompting reflections on violations of secularism, justice, and communal harmony.

To be continued

Energy crises and the need for new distribution companies

Czechangez Khan Jadoon

The world is facing an unprecedented energy crisis, with far-reaching consequences for global prosperity and stability. The crisis is characterized by a mismatch between energy demand and supply, exacerbated by climate change, geopolitical tensions, and inadequate infrastructure. The situation is dire, with the International Energy Agency (IEA) warning of a potential global energy shortage by 2025.

Causes of the Energy Crisis

- 1. Rising Energy Demand:** The world's population is projected to reach 9.7 billion by 2050, leading to increased energy demand. Economic growth, urbanization, and industrialization have also contributed to the surge in energy consumption.
- 2. Depleting Fossil Fuels:** Fossil fuels, the primary source of energy, are finite resources. As reserves dwindle, extraction becomes more challenging and expensive.
- 3. Climate Change:** The shift to renewable energy sources has been slow, and the continued reliance on fossil fuels contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, accelerating climate change.
- 4. Geopolitical Tensions:** Political instability and conflicts in energy-producing regions disrupt supply chains and exacerbate the crisis.
- 5. Inadequate Infrastructure:** Aging infrastructure and inadequate investment in energy transmission and distribution networks hinder the efficient supply of energy.

Consequences of the Energy Crisis

- 1. Economic Instability:** Energy shortages and price volatility impact economic growth,

inflation, and employment.

2. Environmental Degradation: Continued reliance on fossil fuels accelerates climate change, causing devastating natural disasters and ecosystem destruction.

3. Social Unrest: Energy scarcity and price hikes lead to social unrest, political instability, and human migration.

Need for New Distribution Companies
 To address the energy crisis, innovative and efficient distribution companies are essential. New companies can:

- 1. Invest in Renewable Energy:** Focus on renewable energy sources like solar, wind, and hydroelectric power to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
- 2. Implement Smart Grid Technologies:** Leverage advanced technologies like blockchain, IoT, and AI to optimize energy transmission and distribution.
- 3. Enhance Energy Efficiency:** Promote energy-efficient practices and technologies to reduce consumption.
- 4. Foster Global Cooperation:** Collaborate with international partners to share expertise, resources, and risk.
- 5. Support Energy Storage:** Develop and deploy energy storage solutions to ensure a stable and reliable energy supply.

Conclusion

The energy crisis poses a significant threat to global prosperity and stability. To address this challenge, new distribution companies must emerge, focusing on renewable energy, smart grid technologies, energy efficiency, global cooperation, and energy storage. By working together, we can ensure a sustainable energy future and mitigate the far-reaching consequences of the energy crisis.

China, France mark 60 years of diplomatic ties as Xi makes third visit to France

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: It gives me great pleasure to begin my third state visit to the French Republic at the invitation of President Emmanuel Macron. Back in 2014 and 2019, I paid two visits to France, both in spring, to celebrate the 50th and 55th anniversaries of our diplomatic relations together with the people of France. As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic ties, I have a strong sense of déjà vu when setting foot again on the soil of your beautiful country. On behalf of the Chinese government and people, I wish to take this opportunity to extend our warmest greetings and best wishes to the French government and people.



As important representatives of Eastern and Western civilizations, China and France have a long history of mutual appreciation and admiration. French Enlightenment thinkers turned to study Chinese culture centuries ago, and great French thinkers and

writers such as Voltaire, Diderot, Hugo and Balzac have been household names in China. Sixty years ago, our two countries broke through Cold War blocs and established diplomatic relations at the ambassadorial level. In the 60 years since, our bilateral relations have always stayed abreast of China's relations with Western countries, setting

a prime example for countries with different social systems to coexist in peace and pursue win-win cooperation. In recent years, our relationship has risen to new heights, and we keep making new progress in our cooperation on aviation, aerospace, nuclear energy, agrifood and green development. Our two countries enjoy close

coordination and cooperation on climate response, biodiversity protection and global governance. Activities of the China-France Year of Culture and Tourism are unfolding across the board. A growing China-France relationship not only brings benefits to our two peoples, but also provides stability and positive energy to the turbulent world. During my visit, I will have an in-depth exchange of views with President Macron on growing China-France and China-Europe relations under the new circumstances as well as major international and regional issues in the world today. I hope this visit will help cement our long-standing friendship, enhance political trust, build strategic consensus and deepen exchanges and cooperation in various fields. I hope our two countries will light up our way forward with the torch of history, open a brighter future of China-France relations and make new contributions to world peace, stability and development.

UAE delivers 400 tonnes of food aid to Gaza

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: The UAE, in partnership with American Near East Refugee Aid, announced on Sunday that it had delivered 400 tonnes of food aid to Gaza.

The delivery, specifically for the northern areas of the enclave, is enough to feed about 120,000 people, Emirates News Agency reported.

Reem Al-Hashimy, Emirati minister of state for international cooperation, said: "The UAE's safe and successful delivery and distribution of food relief to the Gaza Strip, especially the northern Gaza Strip, marks a significant scaling up in action."

She continued: "We remain firmly committed to our position of solidarity with the brotherly Palestinian people and alleviating suffering in the Gaza Strip. The UAE, working in parallel with international partners, is determined more than ever to intensify all efforts to ensure that aid lifelines get to those who need it the most."



Sean Carroll, CEO of ANERA, thanked the Emirati government for its assistance in getting the much-needed aid to the Palestinian people.

"ANERA and the people we serve are extremely grateful for support from the government and people of the UAE, that allows us to deliver this food to

northern Gaza, where the needs are so great," he said. Last month the UAE allocated \$15 million under Cyprus's Amalthea Fund to bolster aid efforts in Gaza.

Meanwhile, the Gulf country continues to collaborate with international partners and organizations to enable the effective delivery of food and relief via land, air and sea.

To date, the UAE has dispatched more than 31,000 tonnes of humanitarian supplies, including food, relief items and medical supplies, using 256 flights, 46 airdrops, 1,231 trucks, and six ships.

The UAE has embarked on several sustainable relief projects to ensure a consistent supply of food and water to the people of Gaza.

These initiatives include the establishment of five automatic bakeries, the provision of flour to eight existing bakeries, and the installation of six desalination plants with a combined capacity of 1.2 million gallons of water a day.

Houthis claim Red Sea victory against US Navy

News Desk

AL-MUKALLA: The Houthis have reiterated a warning of strikes against ships bound for or with links to Israel — including those in the Mediterranean — as they claimed victory against the US Navy in the Red Sea.

The Houthi-controlled SABA news agency reported that the fourth phase of the militia's pro-Palestine campaign would involve targeting all ships en route to Israel that came within range of their drones and missiles, noting that the US, UK, and other Western navies "stood helpless" in the face of their attacks.

"The fourth phase demonstrates the striking strength of the Yemeni armed forces in battling the world's most potent naval weaponry, the American, British and European fleets, as well as the Zionist (Israel) navy," SABA said.

Houthi military spokesman Yahya Sarea said on Friday strikes against Israel-linked ships would be expanded to the Mediterranean. Attacks would be escalated to include any companies interacting with Israel if the country carried out its planned attack on the Palestinian Rafah.

Since November, the Houthis have launched hundreds of ballistic



missiles and drones at commercial and navy vessels in the Red Sea, Bab Al-Mandab Strait and the Gulf of Aden. They claim attacks are only aimed at ships linked with Israel in a bid to force an end to its siege on the Gaza Strip.

They have also fired at US and UK commercial and navy ships in international waters off Yemen after the

two countries launched strikes against Houthi-controlled areas.

On Saturday, Houthi information minister Dhaif Allah Al-Shami claimed the US was forced to withdraw its aircraft carrier and other naval ships from the Red Sea after failing to counteract attacks. He added new offensives would begin against Israeli ships in the Mediterranean in

the coming days.

"They failed badly. Yemeni missiles and drones beat the US Navy, and its military, cruisers, destroyers and aircraft carriers started to retreat from our seas," Al-Shami said in an interview with Lebanon's Al-Mayadeen TV news channel.

Yemen specialists have disputed Houthi assertions that they have military weapons capable of reaching Israeli ships in the Mediterranean.

Brig. Gen. Mohammed Al-Kumaim, a Yemeni military analyst, told Arab News on Sunday the Houthis would only be able to carry out such attacks if they had advanced weaponry. He said the Houthis were expanding their campaign against ships to avoid growing public resentment in areas under their control after the militia had failed to pay public employees and repair services.

Al-Kumaim added the Houthis might claim responsibility for an attack on a ship in the Mediterranean which was carried out by an Iran-backed group operating in the region.

"Theoretically and technologically, the Houthis lack any technical or military capability to achieve their objectives (in the Mediterranean)," Al-Kumaim said.

Tribe of Caribbean congratulates Palestinian Authority on its decision to recognize state of Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago, Amiri Brown, stressed that the time has come for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state, and his country's support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, and the necessity of moving to a new phase in relations between the two countries and making progress towards enhancing development cooperation in a way that reflects the interests of the two countries.

This came during a phone call with a Palestinian delegation to the Caribbean, which includes Ambassador Linda Sobh and Ambassador Imad Al-Zuhairi, where they thanked and appreciated his country's decision to recognize the State of Palestine, and the importance of this decision, which is aimed at the Palestinian people enjoying their right to self-determination and to live in freedom and dignity like other peoples of the earth.

The Palestinian delegation conveyed the greetings of President Mahmoud Abbas, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Dr. Muhammad Mustafa, and the Palestinian people, stressing the importance of the timing and content of the recognition decision.

In turn, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Trinidad and Tobago conveyed his greetings to the Palestinian people and leadership, expressing his ministry's readiness to engage in programs to develop the bilateral relationship between the two countries and reflect common interests and priorities.

NPO launches Programme for Development of Gemstone Sector



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Productivity Organization (NPO) initiated a technical assistance programme for the gemstone sector in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO) Tokyo, Japan.

Consultancy and workshops focused on gemstone identification, certification, cutting, and polishing techniques with experts from the Gems and Jewelry Institute, Thailand.

Sessions held in Peshawar, Gilgit, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and Lahore aimed to enhance stakeholder capacity and foster economic growth through knowledge sharing and skill development.

The programme involved industry professionals, associations, and international experts, promoting collaboration and economic prosperity in the gems and jewelry sector.

The experts shared knowledge and hands-on skills and practices for enhancing the capacity of the stakeholders, paving way for broader collaboration and propelling towards sustained economic prosperity.

The objective is to promote international standards in gemstone products; provide comprehensive knowledge of cutting, polishing, designing, and heating techniques; and enhance understanding of best practices and technological advances in gemstone value chains. Engage relevant associations such as PGJTEA, APCEA and PGMA, industry experts, business professionals involved in the sector with the international experts to learn latest techniques and processes thereby leading to overall productivity enhancement within the sector.

The Asian Productivity Organization, Tokyo, Japan's team was led by Programme Officer, accompanied by senior international resource persons from Gems and Jewelry Institute, Thailand.

The delegation held consultancy sessions in Peshawar, Gilgit, Rawalpindi, Islamabad and Lahore. In Peshawar the delegation visited Gems and jewelry training center (G&JTC), KP TEVTA, Gems and Jewelry Center of Excellence, UET Peshawar, visited potential gemstone market (Namak Mandi) and meet local industry representatives from APCEA. The delegation also visited and conducted sessions at lapidary training center under GB administration with the assistance of PGMA association, and later visited Pakistan institute of Fashion design, Lahore. A session on structural reforms and sharing of best practices in gems and jewelry sector was also held at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Rawalpindi Chamber of commerce and Industry (RCCI). Representatives of PGJTEA association and other key stakeholders attended the sessions highlighting key sector issues, challenges and opportunities. Later, the delegation will submit a report giving overview and recommendations for uplift of gemstone sector in Pakistan.

Gemstones present in Pakistan can be found in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Swat, Dir, Mansehra, Kohistan, Peshawar, etc. In Gilgit Baltistan and AJK in Chilas, Hunza, Shigar, Baltistan etc. in Baluchistan Province they are in abundance in Kharan, Chaman etc.

COMSATS' holds Training Workshop on Carbon Markets and Carbon Credits

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Recognizing that there is a pressing need to raise awareness and build capacity among stakeholders about carbon market mechanisms, especially in light of the discussions and developments made during COP28, where Article 6 played a pivotal role, COMSATS Centre for Climate and Sustainability organized an in-house training workshop on Carbon Credits and Carbon Markets, held today at COMSATS Secretariat.

The workshop agenda encompassed a comprehensive overview of Carbon Credits and Carbon Market, Carbon Trading Mechanisms, Project Cycle

and Key Players in the Carbon Market. Participants gained insights into Core Carbon Principles and Project Integrity, understanding their own carbon footprints, and theories applied in setting up National Emissions Trading Systems. Additionally, discussions covered carbon trading prospects in Pakistan, emerging carbon trading policy frameworks, and real-world case studies.

Ambassador Dr. Mohammad Nafees Zakaria, Executive Director of COMSATS, delivered the opening remarks, emphasizing the significance of leveraging carbon markets for common benefit. He highlighted COMSATS' role as an intergovernmental organization with a

network of 25 Centers of Excellence, poised to unlock the benefits of carbon credit and carbon market. Dr. Zakaria stressed the importance of reducing all sources of GHG emissions close to zero and encouraged participants to seek guidance from experts on the basics, regulations, and issuance process of carbon credits.

Dr. Sohail Malik, Technical Team Leader at the Climate Resourcing Coordination Centre (CRCC), shared insights on Carbon pricing instruments for achieving decarbonization objectives, including emission trading systems, and provided an overview of international practices. He delved into the evolution of carbon markets globally over the last two decades and elucidated

the Carbon Offset Project Certification Process.

The Senior Representative of Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination (MoCC&EC), Government of Pakistan, presented a case study on project registration with carbon standards Verra. He provided detailed insights on Delta Blue Carbon, outlining the preparation document required for Carbon credit and offset projects. The representative of Ministry of Climate described the potential integration of carbon credit and offsets toward Pakistan's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and also highlighted the efforts of Government of Pakistan in reducing major



emissions. Moreover, he offered an overview of emerging global Carbon markets and the impact of their price variation on decision-making processes.

Ms. Minha Hanif, Climate Change Analyst at Resources

Future, provided participants with insights into the project cycle of carbon credits, the Core Carbon Principles including governance and sustainable development, and the concept of project baseline, boundaries,

and leakages. She engaged in an interactive discussion with participants, posing questions about some case projects to enhance their understanding of the types of projects that generate carbon credits.

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

OGRA silent on illegalities by oil marketing companies

Tariq Khattak

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) said on Sunday that the government should safeguard filling stations from the high-handedness of oil marketing companies (OMCs).

It said that leaving petroleum dealers at the mercy of OMC amounts to forcing them to go for adulteration and short-measuring to survive.

Speaking at a meeting, Executive Member of PPDA Hassan Shah said that the profit margin of distributors is always lower than that of retailers in every business. Still, OMCs make more profit per litre than dealers despite reduced business costs.

He added that OMCs sell tens of millions of litres per day, whereas filling stations sell a few thousand litres daily, and their business costs are much higher than OMCs.

Since fuel is regulated, no dealer can charge more than the ex-outlet price set by OGRA. The regulator also sets the ex-depot price for OMCs, yet they overcharge under private Franchise Agreements, which vary from 50 paisa to Rs 1.50 per litre.

Although millions of invoices prove the continued violation by OMCs, it is conveniently avoided by the OGRA due to some obvious reasons.

He informed that OMCs would stop supply and start hoarding across the country except for Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad if prices were expected to rise, leaving almost 70% of outlets run dry, even when dealers pay in advance.

He said that sometimes OGRA raids petrol pumps as an eyewash; it knows the truth and only shepherds the influential OMCs. He furthered that only Pakistan has a higher per-litre margin for OMCs than petroleum dealers.

Hassan Shah said that the margin of OMCs and dealers had been clubbed together intentionally, allowing the exploitation of dealers. To fix this anomaly, a high-powered committee should be appointed to determine profits separately.

He demanded that a study be conducted by PIDE, LUMS, or a leading chartered accountancy firm to bring facts to the limelight, which would help the proposed committee make the right decision in reducing oil market distortions.

The committee should gather data from all over the country to determine the average sale of a filling station and investigate whether a petrol pump owner can sustain the business after covering utility bills, staff salaries according to minimum wage, taxes, and other expenses.

He suggested determining the average sale of OMCs and their business costs and fixing their profit in accordance with their expenses.



Leaders of the PPDA Khawaja Atif Ahmed, Nauman Butt, Humayun Khan, Zaheer Ahmed Paracha, and Nadeem Aziz Khan, also spoke on the occasion.

They demanded a percentage-based separation of profits for dealers to save them from fluctuating oil prices.

They added that filling station owners cannot do business in the current scenario, pushing them to opt for unethical practices to avoid bankruptcy.

If PPDA demands were sidestepped, dealers would continue to face hardships, and millions

of consumers would continue to pay for the discrepancies in the system, they warned.

In this regard, the Chairman of the PPDA, Abdul Sami Khan (SI), recently met Mr. Syed Nazir Abbas Zaidi Secretary General Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC), and top representatives of all major OMCs. They included Mr. Asif Iqbal, CEO, TPPL, Mr. Raja Imran Ullah, DCCO, PSO, Mr. Omer Shafiq, CEO, TAJ, Mr. Zeeshan Hameed, NSM, TPPL, Mr. Hasnain Shah, NSM, Shell, Mr. Asif Iqbal, NDM, Shell, Mr. Habibullah Chandio, RM, Shell, and Mr. Arshad, RM, GO.

Khan later assured the petroleum dealers community that an arbitration committee would soon be created to completely eradicate the menaces of illegal Franchise Fee by OMCs, senseless split of margins between OMC and Petroleum dealers, malpractices by OMCs in Lubricants pricing and forced lubricants sale, hoarding by OMCs before price rise situations.

He also assured the complete abolishment of the exploitive condition of presenting Lease Agreements with OMCs for renewal of Explosives Department Licenses of Petrol Pumps.

The petroleum dealers have strongly welcomed and hailed this announcement from their leader. Abdul Sami Khan (SI) has also instantly notified an action committee of competent dealers for this specific task.

Souvenir

Federal Minister of Communications, Privatization and Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan being presented Markhor Model by CM GBT Haji Gulbar Khan on Sunday.



Photo: PID

SLIC'S 2023 Business Growth uncovers Pakistan's untapped potential

PPA

KARACHI: The State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC) has disclosed its outstanding financial accomplishments for the fiscal year 2023. Under the leadership of Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO of SLIC, the corporation has achieved remarkable milestones, establishing itself as a financial powerhouse in Pakistan.

Key Financial Highlights of 2023: Total Annual Income surged to an all-time high, exceeding PKR 526 billion, marking a substantial, +37% increase from the previous year, highlighting SLIC's strong revenue generation capabilities.

Total Annual Premium Income witnessed a notable uptick, surpassing PKR 338 billion, reflecting an 18% increase compared to 2022, demonstrating the corporation's ability to attract and retain a diversified portfolio of policyholders.

Investment Income crossed PKR 257 billion in 2023, with substantial investments in Government Securities and the Pakistan Stock Exchange, contributing to the growth and stability of Pakistan's capital markets. The profit before tax for the year 2023 increased to PKR 24.5 billion which is +18% increase over the year 2022. The profit after tax was PKR 14.7 billion in 2022. Total Assets under Management for the year 2023 increased to PKR 1.93 trillion which is +20.5% increase over the year 2022.

Business Performance by Segment: The Individual Life segment achieved record-breaking New Business premium collections, surpassing PKR 26.9 billion in 2023 (PKR 20.1 billion in 2022), showing a growth of +34%, signifying strong customer demand for SLIC's diversified range of protec-

tion and savings products.

The Group Life and Pensions segment achieved a milestone by recording PKR 12 billion in New Business, further strengthening SLIC's product offerings and market position. SLIC launched its corporate and individual health plans in 2023, diversifying its product portfolio with a commitment to meet protection needs of all Pakistanis across all strata of society. SLIC continues its strong delivery on the Government's Social Health program, showcasing service to the people of Pakistan as its paramount ethos.

Payouts and Profit Allocation: On the basis of the strong financial performance in 2023, SLIC has announced a special one-time policyholder profit bonus, the State Life Khushali Bonus of PKR 10 billion, symbolizing SLIC's commitment to rewarding its policyholders.

The Total Profit Bonus allocated to policyholders in 2023 is PKR 119.7 billion in 2023, showcasing a substantial +23% increase from last year, reflecting SLIC's strong financial performance. The profit bonus allocated to its UAE branch policyholders in 2023 has also increased to PKR 1.74 billion, an increase of +84% from last year, demonstrating sound financial performance of the UAE branch office.

Policyholder Claims Payouts were PKR 247 billion in 2023, marking a significant +41% increase from the prior year, emphasizing SLIC's dedication to honouring its promise to policyholders. The corporation announced a special cash dividend of PKR 0.5 billion to the Government of Pakistan, increasing its total cash dividend to PKR 2.5 billion, an increase of +25% from 2022.

UBG leadership pays visit to SCCI in post FPCCI election Victory

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The United Business Group (UBG) leadership paid a visit to the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) in the headship of SM Tanvir after the historical history of UGG in FPCCI 2024-25.

President SCCI, Fawad Ishaq arranged a well attended dinner in honour of visiting UBG leadership.

The visit was part of the post election victory celebration and also to evolve future strategy for the upcoming budget 2024-25 proposals.

Earlier the UBG delegation visited Mardan Chamber of Small trade and Small Industry and Mardan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Nowshera Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

The dinner held at President Fawad Ishaq's residence in Peshawar and attended by UBG leadership delegation led by SM Tanvir (Patron-in-chief) President FPCCI, Atif Ikram, Zubair Tufail (President) Zafar Bakhtawri (Secretary General), Mian Zahid Hussain, businessman from Karachi and prominent business leader from Peshawar and other cities of KPK also attended.

SM Tanvir, while speaking at the dinner said that the visit was primarily aimed at to express thanks to the voters who hugely voted for UBG in the last FPCCI election and therein a historical victory in the election.



He further said that he is fully agreed for all economical rights and assistance for KP province in the shape of electricity and energy royalty.

Mr Atif Ikram President FPCCI said that "we are making proposals for the upcoming budget of 2024-25 to be sent to the government."

He further asked the business community to send its proposal for the purpose.

Mr Zubair Tufail President UBG said that the country is passing through the major economic challenges and we all must join hands to persuade the political leadership for the Charter of Economy.

On the occasion Secretary General, UBG Zafar Bakhtawri said that only a businessman can lead the country and bring it out from the current economic crisis. He added

that the youth must start idealising businessmen, instead of thinking for migration. He said that youth's focus must be on entrepreneurship to enhance the export of Pakistan.

Fawad Ishaq President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while highlighting the economic problems of KPK province said the royalty of hydel power and gas is not sufficient and that it should be enhanced by the federal government.

Senator Ilyas Bilour on the occasion thanked the visiting delegation and said that we will always be a part of UBG. He also highlighted the role of SM Munir for serving the business community in his life.

Ghazanfar Bilour President UBG KPK, Haji Afzal, Secretary General, KPK UBG also spoke on the occasion.

Winterland Begins Epic Season: Celebrities, Thrills, and Chills Abound

PPA

LAHORE: Winterland, Pakistan's one-and-only snow-themed adventure park—with new rides and a spectacular new experience for everyone with -10 inside and unbelievable fun for everyone. It opened its doors with an epic event that delivered thrills, chills, and unforgettable memories for all ages.

A star-studded guest list added to the magic of the evening. High-profile celebrities including fashion and entertainment icon Hassan Sheheryar Yasin (HSY); social media sensation Dananeer

Moheen; the coveted actor Mariyam Nafees; digital creator Rana Hamza Saif; and one of Pakistan's most iconic YouTube personalities Saad Ur Rehman, more popularly known as Ducky Bhai were all present to celebrate the momentous occasion and added a touch of glamour.

The event was further amplified by a captivating performance by powerhouse musician, Shamoon Ismail.

"At Winterland, our dream is to be the top spot for families and friends to connect and make lasting memories," says Winterland's

CEO, Sharjeel Saleem "We offer a one-of-a-kind escape from Pakistan's scorching heat, bringing the joy and wonder of a winter right here. We were thrilled to welcome some of Pakistan's most inspiring figures this weekend, kicking off the season and showing everyone what Winterland has to offer!"

Winterland offers its unique winter experience in the sweltering heat in Karachi and Lahore both, ensuring families across Pakistan can experience the magic of snow and winter festivities, while creating memories that will last a lifetime.



KTC calls for action against surge in cigarette smuggling



PPA

KTC has raised concerns over the recent decline in its cigarette sales, attributing it to a sharp rise in the smuggling of international cigarette brands in Pakistan. This surge in illicit trade poses a significant threat to the company's operations and the local market.

The tobacco manufacturing entity emphasized the importance of continued vigilance and collaborative efforts among policymakers and enforcement agencies to combat the smuggling of cigarettes effectively. Addressing this issue is crucial not only for safeguarding the interests of legitimate businesses like KTC but also for protecting consumers from potentially harmful counterfeit products.

Despite facing challenging circumstances, KTC remains steadfast in its commitment to providing quality products to its customers while complying with local fiscal regulations. The company's dedication to upholding standards and contributing to the local economy underscores its resilience in the face of adversity.

Khyber Tobacco Company Limited (KTC) was the first tobacco manufacturing company to implement track and trace tax stamps on its products and is committed to be truly compliant to all applicable health and fiscal regulations and to contribute to community development through our robust CSR program.

In a statement, the company said that implementing the track and trace stamps not only enhanced traceability but also signified the company's dedication to upholding fiscal responsibilities within the country.

Furthermore, KTC takes pride in its progressive stance as the first-ever tobacco company in Pakistan to be led by a woman CEO. This milestone underscores the company's commitment to diversity and inclusivity in its leadership ranks.

IPC Minister congratulates Pakistan hockey team on victory over Korea

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) Ahsan Iqbal, has congratulated the national hockey team on their impressive 4-0 win over Korea in the ongoing Sultan Azlan

Shah Hockey Tournament at Malaysia. The national team had earlier defeated hosts Malaysia by 5-4 in their first match. Federal Secretary, Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Nadeem Irshad Kiani, and Director General, Pakistan Sports Board, Zahoor Ahmed, have

also extended their congratulations to the team.

Ahsan Iqbal expressed his hope that the national team would continue to perform exceptionally well in their upcoming matches.

He also praised the team's hard work

and dedication, which has resulted in their top notch display in the tournament so far.

Pakistan's national hockey team has made a strong start in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, and their victories have boosted the country's hope.



ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 fixture schedule announced

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the fixtures for the ninth ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 taking place from October 3 to 20 in Bangladesh, an event that promises to inspire and connect with a new generation of fans across the globe. Ten teams would play 23 matches, over 18 action-packed days, at two venues in Bangladesh, the Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka and the Sylhet International Cricket Stadium in Sylhet as the world's best battle it out for the ultimate prize in T20 cricket, said a press release.

The schedule was unveiled at an event in Dhaka, attended by Nazmul Hassan, President of the Bangladesh Cricket Board along with the guidance of Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa. In line with this commitment, the Department of Sports, Culture and Tourism organized a Taekwondo competition on Sunday, which saw enthusiastic participation from private school students.

More than 350 students from various private schools, including Beacon House and Asas, showcased their skills and sportsmanship at the Taekwondo competition. The event, aimed at promoting physical activity and healthy competition among the youth, witnessed fierce but friendly contests among the participants. Prizes were awarded to the first, second, and third position holders by the Director of Sports, Culture, and Tourism, recognizing their dedication



Zealand, Pakistan, and Qualifier 1, with matches taking place in Sylhet. Whilst Group B matches between the hosts Bangladesh, England, South Africa, West Indies and Qualifier 2 will be played in Dhaka. On the World Cup's opening day, Bangladesh will face Qualifier 2 in the evening match in Dhaka on October 3, as the hosts would look to announce themselves strongly in front of what is expected to be a sellout home crowd. Prior to that 2023 runners up South Africa will play England in the opening match of the T20 World Cup which will set the tone for a competitive and exciting 18 days. Defending champi-

ons and the most successful team in the event's history Australia would start their campaign on October 4 in Sylhet against Qualifier 1, whilst the highly anticipated fixture between India and Pakistan would take place in Sylhet on October 6. The top two teams from Group A and Group B will qualify for the semi-finals, scheduled for October 17 in Sylhet, and October 18 in Dhaka. The T20 World Cup champions would be crowned at the Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka on October 20.

The Qualifiers 1 and 2 would emerge from the ongoing ICC Women's T20

World Cup Qualifier in Abu Dhabi, UAE, with the final being played on May 7. Teams have been divided into two groups of five, with sides playing everyone in their group once. The top two teams from each group progress to the semi-finals, where the first-ranked team from one group clashes with the second-ranked team from the opposite group. The winners of these semi-final matches claim the last spots in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024. Kicking off the excitement, there would be 10 warm-up matches from September 27 to October 1 all taking place at BKSP in Dhaka.

Pakistan outplays Korea in Azlan Shah Cup

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hockey team continued their impressive performance in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup and defeated South Korea by 4-0 in a one-sided match on the second day of the tournament at Ipoh, Malaysia.

Pakistan's team dominated the match, with goals from Abdul Hanan Shahid, Arshad Liaquat, Ghazanfar Ali and Sufiyan Khan. The Korean team failed to score any goals against Pakistan's strong defense.

Six teams were participating in the tournament, including hosts Malaysia, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, and Canada.

After a day's rest, Pakistan's hockey team would face Japan in their third match on May 7.

This win was a significant boost for the Pakistan team, and they would look to carry this momentum forward in the tournament.

Naila Kiyani becomes first Pakistani woman to summit 11 peaks above 8,000 metres



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani mountaineer Naila Kiyani scaled the 8,485 meters Mount Makalu, one of the world's highest mountains, on Sunday, becoming the first woman in the country's history to summit 11 peaks above 8,000 metres.

"After a challenging climb through the night, Naila has achieved another historic milestone by successfully summiting Makalu, the fifth highest peak in the world at 8,485 meters, today [Sunday] at approximately 9:35am Nepal local time [8:50am Pakistan time]," Karrar Haidri, the secretary of Alpine Club of Pakistan, said in a statement.

In 2023, she became the second Pakistani woman to climb Mount Everest. It was earlier achieved by Samina Baig in 2013.

In July the same year, she along with Samina, scaled the 8,125-metre-tall mountain Nanga Parbat — the world's ninth-highest peak.

Kiyani was grateful for all the prayers and wishes. She also thanked Sherpa Gelgen Dai from Imagine Nepal, who supported her every step of the way, making the achievement possible.

"This latest success highlights her exceptional endurance and determination. She now holds the record as the fastest Pakistani, both male and female, to have summited 11 of the 8,000-meter peaks, accomplished in under three years."

Pakistan grab 6 medals in South Asian Rope Skipping C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan team bagged two Gold and four Silver Medals in the South Asian Rope Skipping Championship 2024 at Nepal. According to Shariq Siddiqui Secretary General Pakistan Rope Skipping Federation, the South Asian Rope skipping Championships was held in Nepal from May 4 to 5.

The teams who featured in the championship includes Pakistan, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan. In U-10 Girls, 10 Bounce Hoop, Mawra Saeed of Pakistan got the Gold Medal. In U-13 boys, 30 Second Speed event, Muhammad Hussain won Gold Medal in Double event and Silver Medal in 3-minute endurance. In U-13 Girls Free Style Speed event, Syeda Wareesha won a Silver Medal. The championship had 18 categories while Pakistan team took part in 6 categories. Pakistan contingent comprised Muhammad Saleem Team Manager and players Hafsa Saleem, Marwa Kamran, Syed Wareesha, Muhammad Hussain. Pakistan Rope Skipping team has qualified for World Junior Rope Skipping Championship 2024 in the USA.

Pakistan Rope Skipping team would head back home on Monday at Karachi.



CDA hosts successful Taekwondo competition for students

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is committed to enhancing recreational opportunities for citizens, particularly children, under the guidance of Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa. In line with this commitment, the Department of Sports, Culture and Tourism organized a Taekwondo competition on Sunday, which saw enthusiastic participation from private school students.

More than 350 students from various private schools, including Beacon House and Asas, showcased their skills and sportsmanship at the Taekwondo competition. The event, aimed at promoting physical activity and healthy competition among the youth, witnessed fierce but friendly contests among the participants. Prizes were awarded to the first, second, and third position holders by the Director of Sports, Culture, and Tourism, recognizing their dedication



and talent in the martial art of Taekwondo. Commenting on the success of the event, the CDA administration reiterated its commitment to providing top-notch facilities to citizens while prioritizing recreational activities for children. This event underscores the CDA's ongoing

efforts to foster a vibrant and active community in the capital city. Looking ahead, the CDA administration pledges to continue organizing such events regularly, ensuring a diverse range of recreational activities for the youth of Islamabad, the Authority's administration said.

HEC cricket team secures spot in semi-finals of President's Cup 2024

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The cricket team of Higher Education Commission (HEC) has made a remarkable journey to the semi-finals of the President's Cup 2024, topping the points table with wins against State Bank of Pakistan, Pakistan Television Corporation, and WAPDA. In an enthralling match on Sunday, the HEC cricket team emerged victorious by 1 wicket against WAPDA, showcasing their exceptional skills and determination. Aqib Liaquat, a student of the University of Sargodha, was the star of the show, taking 5 wickets with his brilliant bowling.

The team, comprising university students, has been competing against professional and international cricketers, making their achievement even more commendable. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman HEC, Dr. Zia Ul Qayyum, Executive Director HEC, and Mr. Javed Ali Memon, Incharge Sports and



Co-curricular Activities Division, HEC expressed their heartfelt appreciation for the team's outstanding performance. "This achievement is a testament to the HEC's commitment to promoting sports and extracurricular activities among university students and providing them opportunities of growth in every walk of life including sports," said the Chairman HEC. This year, the HEC is launching the Talent Hunt Cricket, an initiative under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) for young athletes aged 15-25

years. This initiative aims to identify, nurture, and develop the cricketing talent of Pakistani youth, providing them with opportunities to compete at the national and international levels, he expressed. The HEC has been actively promoting cricket and other sports among university students, providing platforms for them to showcase their talent and compete at the national and international levels, he said and added, the HEC cricket team will face Sui Northern Gas Pipeline in their next match on May 6, 2024.

Mardan win Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Handball League trophy

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Spirited Mardan clinched the trophy after defeating strong Peshawar in the final of the Prime Minister Youth Talent Hunt Boys Handball League played here under the aegis of Directorate of Sports University of Peshawar inside campus premises on Sunday.

Vice Chancellor Agriculture University Peshawar Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht was the chief guest on this occasion. Registered University of Peshawar Dr. Yurid Ihsan Zia, Professor Dr. Shafiqur Rehman, HED, Director Sports Islamia College University Ali Hoti, Director Distance Studies Dr. Noor Zada, the selection committee

nominated by Higher Education Commission Islamabad including Head Coach and selector Asim Rashid, Qaiser Javed Shakir, Arshad Hussain and Secretary Coordinator Dr. Noorzada, Director General Sports and Organizing Secretary Bahre Karam, officials, players and a large number of spectators witnessed the matches played for the first and third position respectively.

In the dependable match, Mardan stunned host Peshawar by 21-16 to clinch the trophy. The teams of Mardan comprising Ghous Ali Shah, Mansoor Ali, Muhammad Zohaib, Nouman Khan, Shahid Ali, Wisal Khan, Basit Zeb, Faisal Khan, Imran, Sherez Khan,

Danial and promising Talha played very attacking game and did not give much time to Peshawar to settle down in the whole final match.

The team of Peshawar, was in the lead till the end of the first session but later on Mardan dominated the proceedings and marched into victory at 21-16 goals. Peshawar players including Shafiqur, Shehzad Khan, Waqas Khan, Ahmad Hassan, Hasnain Zeb, Sheraz, Muhammad Shayam, Asad Khan and Shahzeb played well.

The match was played on hot note and Peshawar took the lead of 4-13 and 12-16 but later on Mardan managed their position and Talha along with Ghous Ali, Mansoor Ali and Muhammad

Zohaib were the top contributors. Thus Mardan won the match by 21-16.

Mardan got first position by remaining unbeaten, followed by Peshawar with three wins and one loss, Swat took third position by defeating Bannu by 22-15 and Hazara by 23-19 in the last League round matches. Bannu got fourth position with one victory against Hazara while Hazara did not win all matches and lost all four matches.

At the end, the chief guest Vice Chancellor Agriculture University Peshawar Professor Dr. Jahan Bakht gave away gold, silver and bronze medals along with first, second and third position trophies. A cash prize of Rs. 120,000 awarded to Mardan,

Rs. 60,000 to Peshawar and Rs. 36000 to Swat on behalf of Higher Education Commission.

Out of the League two selected teams would represent Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the forthcoming National Handball League to be played in Peshawar under the aegis of University of Peshawar from May 20, 2024 wherein teams from all other regions across the country would participate.

The selected teams including as under:

Green Team:
Mansoor Ali, Shakil Khan, Shiyar Khan, Ghous Ali Shah, Faisal Shah, Waqas Khan, Shehzad Khan, Muhammad Suleman, Zafar Ullah, Asad Khan, Muhammad Tahlha and



Luqman Khan
White Team:
Muhammad Nouman, Zahoor Khan, Muhammad Rehan, Wisal Ahmad, Hassan Zeb, Nouman

Khan, Muhammad Hasnain, Junaid Khan, Ammar Khan, Ahmad Hussain, Liaquat Ali Khan, Kashif Ullah, Syed Zohaib Ali Shah, Sheraz Khan.

Caled on

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar called on the President of the Republic of the Gambia, Adama Barrow, on the sidelines of the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference, in Banjul, the Gambia on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Deputy PM Dar urges OIC action on Palestine, Kashmir

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Addressing the 15th OIC Islamic Summit Conference, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar expressed Pakistan's deep concern over Israel's ongoing brutal military onslaught against the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank. In the backdrop of the genocide of Palestinians and atrocities of Israeli forces, he urged the OIC Member States to work together for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and uninterrupted humanitarian assistance to the besieged Palestinians. He also expressed Paki-

stan's support for Palestine's admission as a full member of the UN, resumption of the peace process for realization of the two-State solution and establishment of a viable, contiguous and sovereign State of Palestine on the basis of pre-1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Highlighting Indian atrocities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), especially after India's illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister urged the OIC to implement its Action Plan on Jammu and Kashmir; demand that India ends

all human rights violations; release Hurriyat leaders; and reverse its illegal demographic and other unilateral laws. He appreciated the OIC for its principled support for the Kashmir cause and requested the OIC member countries to use their influence for urgent resolution of Jammu and Kashmir Dispute as per relevant UN Security Council and the OIC resolutions.

Condemning the rising trend of Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims in various parts of the world, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister urged the OIC to formulate a joint strategy to work with global social media plat-

forms to harmonize their application of content regulation policies for blasphemous, anti-Islamic and Islamophobic content. He appreciated OIC's appointment of a Special Envoy on Islamophobia.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister strongly condemned the surge in anti-Pakistan rhetoric and Islamophobic narratives by India's political leaders during the ongoing Lok Sabha elections which threatens regional stability.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister highlighted that Pakistan continued to face externally sponsored terrorism from across

its borders, despite contributing the most to the fight against terrorism.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister underscored that the OIC can play an important role in global economic growth. He urged the OIC to work collectively to address the existential threat of climate change, which caused catastrophic floods in Pakistan in 2022.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister also expressed Pakistan's support to revitalize the UN system and reform the UN Security Council – to make it more representative, democratic, and effective for international peace and security.

Think tank report highlights China's approach to modernization

Xinhua

PARIS: A report released by Chinese think tanks here on Saturday introduced the process of Chinese modernization and highlighted its global significance.

The report, entitled "Chinese Modernization: the Way Forward," was co-authored by researchers from the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and Xinhua Institute, which is a high-end think tank of Xinhua News Agency.

The Chinese people, under the CPC's leadership, have blazed a trail of Chinese modernization, said Fu Hua, president of Xinhua News Agency and also chairman of the academic committee of Xinhua Institute.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, by elaborating on the connotation and essence of Chinese modernization, has contributed major innovations to global modernization theo-



ries, Fu said.

Upholding the spirit of "establishing oneself and helping others to establish" and the idea that "the world is one family," China has been sharing development opportunities and building a better future with other countries, a move that benefits the Chinese people and promotes global development

as well, which will have a positive and far-reaching impact on the world, Fu said.

Ji Zhengju, vice-director of the Institute of Party History and Literature of the CPC Central Committee, made a speech on the relationship between modernization and people-to-people and cultural exchanges.

Cultural cooperation should adhere to the spirit of independence, which is not only the primary connotation of the "China-France spirit" summarized by President Xi, but also an important spiritual connotation of Chinese modernization, Ji said.

Cultural exchanges should prioritize mutual learning,

which is the main theme of the China-France cultural exchanges as well as an inevitable choice for Chinese modernization to achieve the coordinated development between material and spiritual civilizations, Ji added.

Noting that global development is facing new challenges, Marc Uzan, founder and executive director of the Reinventing Bretton Woods Committee, called for closer cooperation between France and China to make the international financial system more resilient, equitable and inclusive.

"By aligning efforts with China and with other international partners, we will be able to contribute to shaping a more stable global governance," Uzan concluded.

Remi Mathieu, French sinologist and research director emeritus of the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS), said the Chinese practice can help the French take a step back from their customary ways of thinking.

Bilawal felicitates newly elected ANP President Aimal Wali

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended warm felicitations to the newly elected President of the Awami National Party (ANP), Senator Aimal Wali Khan. The PPP Chairman, in his congratulatory message to Senator Aimal Wali Khan on Sunday, expressed his confidence that the legacy of democracy and progressive ideology, rooted in the principles of Bacha Khan, would continue to flourish under Aimal Wali Khan's leadership. He said that the transition of leadership within political parties to the younger generation marked the onset of a promising new chapter. "I remain optimistic that the trajectory of Pakistan's future is bright and promising," he added.

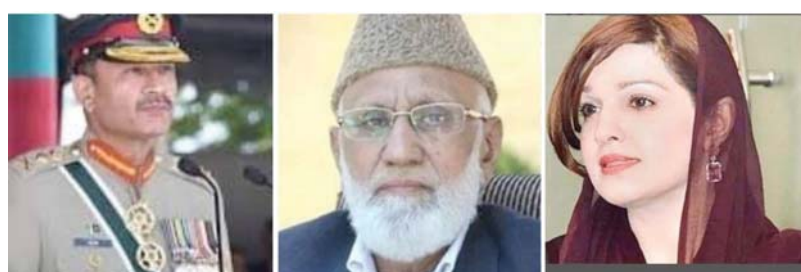


Mushaal lauds COAS for unwavering support for Kashmir cause

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, former SAPM on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, hailed the Pakistan Army Chief General Asim Munir's unwavering support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just struggle for right to self-determination. Mushaal Paid rich tributes on the 3rd Martyrdom Anniversary of Kashmir Hurriyat Leader Shaheed Sherai Tehreek e Hurriyat.

Mushaal, a wife of unlawfully incarcerated Kashmir leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, stated that the army chief's



remarks on Kashmir that Pakistan would continue to provide "moral, political and diplomatic support to our Kashmir brothers was a source of inspiration, as it would give a new impetus to the ongoing Kashmiri freedom struggle.

The hurriyat leader went on to say that the Pakistani army chief's assertion was a reminder to the brave Kashmiri freedom

fighters that they were not alone in their just fight, as entire Pakistan was firmly standing by their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their pursuit for freedom to break the shackles of Indian slavery.

Mushaal stated that Gen Munir rightly highlighted that the international community's silence about the reign of terror unleashed by Indian forces

in IIOJK could not suppress the voice of freedom.

She continued that the Pakistan army chief's remarks was a clear-cut and unequivocal message to India that Kashmir was an internationally recognized disputed territory whose final status was to be decided as per the UN agreed formula and aspirations of the people of the scenic valley.

PM expresses condolences on death of Prince Badr Bin Abdul Mohsen



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the Royal Family and the people of Saudi Arabia on the loss of an eminent poet Prince Badr

Bin Abdul Mohsen Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud. "His most popular song on Saudi Arabia's National Day will always remind us of his profound love for his country. His contributions to contemporary poetry in the Arabian Peninsula were truly remarkable and his legacy will continue to inspire generations to come," the prime minister said in a post on X account.

The prime minister also prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude. "May his words forever resonate in the hearts of poetry lovers around the world," he added.

Interior Minister pays tribute to martyred police constable

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday paid tribute to Constable Usman Ghani, who was martyred by terrorists firing near Shan Khel Karuna in the limits of SMA police station in Tank. "Constable Usman Ghani earned high status of martyrdom" said the minister adding that Martyr Constable Usman Ghani laid down his precious life for the peace of the country.

KPK Police is on the frontline in the war against terrorism, he said.



The minister further said that the martyrs of KPK police have written the history of sacrifices with their blood. He said that the sacrifices of the martyrs will not go to waste. With the strength of unity, we will completely eradicate the scourge of terrorism, he added.

Equipping with essential skills vital for economic growth: Ahsan Iqbal



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Saturday emphasized the importance of forging robust connections between academia and industry, besides equipping individuals with essential skills for achieving sustainable economic progress. In a meeting with the Animal Husbandry Committee and vice chancellors of veterinary colleges, he said that the government was committed to resolve all the issues on priority basis faced by the local veterinary institutes, said a press release.

Professor Ahsan Iqbal highlighted that a major challenge facing the animal husbandry sector is aligning education curricula with the demands of the modern era and bridging the gap between academia and industry to achieve requisite skills of economic development and social prosperity. He emphasized the pivotal role of the veterinary sciences sector in national development goals, advocating for the adaptation of veterinary education curricula to meet the standards of the fourth industrial revolution. Referring to a 7-point framework developed in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission in 2023, he urged the HEC to conduct performance audits of local educational institutions. Furthermore, he underscored the necessity of promoting high-quality research alongside conventional education to enhance competitiveness on the global stage. The minister said that Pakistan ranks fourth in the world in beef production while countries like New Zealand and Norway were famous for their cattle production. He stressed the need to improving productivity of local dairy and poultry products to compete with the developed economies.

Anwar-ul-Haq Kakar ...

Continued from Page 1

the country, asserting that his claim can be confirmed through the records of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

While answering a question, the former caretaker prime minister revealed that by allowing the import of wheat, he asked the private sector to take advantage, as the global supply chain was affected.

He appreciated the PTI government initiative to issue Statutory Regulatory Orders (SROs) to import wheat during the COVID era was a

wise decision as the balance of supply and demand was maintained.

He emphasized that no new laws were enacted for wheat importation, as the private sector had been authorized to import wheat by the previous government.

Kakar defended the government's non-interference in market mechanisms, asserting its role in regulation rather than intervention.

During the initial part of the program, Kakar stated that August 8 was the last day of the PDM government, and caretaker government took charge on August 9.

Wheat import summary...

Continued from Page 1

inform about many things and act themselves," former minister said.

"The secretaries aware that the caretaker minister has come for a brief period, and they don't have authority," Kausar Abdullah said.

He said, the summary was earlier forwarded but if they prior informed us about increase in the quantity of the import consignment, it could have been stopped.

"Captain (ret'd) Mohammad

Mehmood was the secretary food security at the import time, and he was present before my tenure. "The wheat import was first approved by the cabinet and later the ECC," he said. "The ministries of finance and commerce have pivotal role in the ECC," he said. "I had told them in September-October 2023 that we have sufficient stocks of wheat."

"The Directorate of Plant Protection issues permits for import and export and blunders also used to happen there," former interim minister said.