

Chairman Senate decries 9th May incidents as Dark Day in Pakistan's history

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has strongly condemned the events of May 9, denouncing them as a dark chapter in Pakistan's history. He expressed strong dismay over the acts of vandal-

ism and attacks on significant national assets, including Jinnah House, emphasizing that such reprehensible actions have no place in civilized societies.

The Chairman Senate reiterated that the entire nation was shocked and outraged by the distressing events

of May 9. He lamented the desecration of monuments and martyrs' memorials emphasizing that martyrs hold a revered place in the hearts of every Pakistani, deserving utmost respect. He said that those who orchestrated these events deserved no leniency. Furthermore, the Chairman Senate

paid glowing tributes to the sacrifices rendered by Pakistan's armed forces for the defence of motherland.

He called upon all political entities to unite in addressing Pakistan's challenges and contribute positively to the country's development, emphasizing the need for concerted efforts.



Man killed over old feud

Reza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A man was shot dead over old feud in a day broad light killing case in the limits of Hassanabdal Police station on Wednesday, Police sources said.

Police sources said Nazir Shah—a driver was going on his dumper when reached near Khudda bus stop after loading stone crush from nearby stone crusher plant, two masked men riding on a motorcycle intercepted him and showered bullets over him resultantly he received bullet injuries and died on the spot. The assassins managed to escape from the scene successfully. Later Police reached at the spot and moved the body to the tehsil headquarters hospital for autopsy. Police registered a case and launched further investigation.

Three arrested for killing co-worker

Reza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Pindigheb Police on Wednesday arrested three murder suspects who strangled to death their colleague over some pity dispute on April 27 this year. The Police spokesman has said that Muhammad Nadir along with Muhammad Naveed and Parvaiz Talib—all natives of Muzaffargarh and working as workers in local brick kiln has strangled to the death their co-worker Muhammad Shoukat also native of Muzaffargarh over some pity dispute and fled away. He said that Police after successfully traced their hideouts and after successful raids arrested them.

World Thalassaemia Day

ISLAMABAD: Head of Pakistan Sweet Home, Zamarud Khan talking to the media at PIMS in the Federal Capital, on the occasion of World Thalassaemia Day on May 8.



Photo: Online by Raja Farid

Judiciary of Pakistan to punish the perpetrators of the 9th May tragedy: Khaula Amjad



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A rally was held against the May 9 tragedy under the leadership of Divisional President of Muslim League-Nawaz and Member of Punjab Assembly Mrs. Khaula Amjad and candidate for Punjab Assembly Asif Rajwana and Information Secretary & Focal Person Umar Farooq Bhatti. Slogans were raised against Tehreek-e-Insaf chief Imran Khan during this rally which was taken out from High Court Multan to SP Chowk. The female and male party workers participating in the rally carried banners and placards against the May 9 tragedy.

Mrs. Khaula Amjad, Asif Rajwana, Umar Farooq Bhatti, Madam Sarwat Khan and Mrs. Nabila Butt participated in the rally. She said that we condemn the attack by the miscreants of PTI against the Pakistan Army installation. She demand from the judiciary of Pakistan to punish the perpetrators of the May 9 tragedy as soon as possible.

The leaders of the Muslim League-Nawaz Asif Rajwana and Umar Farooq Bhatti said that the forces of Pakistan are sacrificing their lives for the security and dignity of Pakistan.

The participants in the rally raised slogans of Pakistan Army Zindabad and raised slogans against Imran Khan's anti-state policies.

Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to the NADRA centers Multan

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to the Nadra Center in Kachari Chowk, Multan. Taking immediate notice of other complaints of the citizens, including AC shut down, Public waiting for 4 to 5 hours to get tokens, the Nadra office should be kept open 24 hours. He Announced.

Interior Minister reached Lahore in the morning, Quetta by evening and Multan at night. Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi paid a surprise visit to NADRA Center in Multan.

He ordered to shift the NADRA center of Kachari Chowk to a better location. The citizens told the federal



minister that they have come to make the form for 4 hours, we have high hopes from you, May Allah protect our interior minister, you have already

shown and are still doing it during your caretaker Chief Ministership.

The Interior Minister said that we need your prayers, the

system will be improved for your convenience, I am visiting NADRA centers. Federal Interior Secretary Khurram Agha was also with him.

Drug smugglers arrested in Attock district

Reza Naqvi

ATTOCK: In the light of the orders of District Police Officer Attock Dr. Sardar Ghuys Gul Khan, Attock Police is continuing its jihad against drug smugglers. 4 suspects were arrested from across the district, around 4 kg of hashish, 120 grams of heroin, 60 grams of ice and 10 Liter of liquor was recovered, according to the details, during the checking, the police of Hazro police station seized 1400 grams of hashish, 120 grams of heroin and 60 grams of ice from the drug smuggler Khurram Shahzad son of Azmat Khan Sukna Ghorghashti Hazro, Sadar Attock police station Saad Farooq son of Muhammad Hanif Sukna from Shakar Dara. 1260 grams of hashish, police station New Airport police team stopped and checked Mursalin son of Basharat Sukna Fateh Jang as suspicious,

Sardar Attique condoles death of prominent lawyer, Malik Hayat Awan

Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has condoled over the sad demise death of the Central Secretary of Muslim Conference and well-known jurist, Malik Muhammad Hayat Awan. He has expressed deep sorrow and shock over the death of Muhammad Hayat Advocate. He has prayed that Allah Almighty may bless him with the eternal peace in Paradise and grant patience to all the family members.

Meanwhile, Secretary General of Muslim Conference Ms. Maher Nisa, Central Chief Organizer Raja Saqib Majeed Khan, Chairman Finance Syed Nazar Abbas Shah, Central Chief Minister, Haji Zulfikar Ali Khan, Central Vice President Raja Zafar Maruf Khan, Former Government Minister and Vice President Ms. Shamim Ali Malik, Syed Ghulam Nabi Shah, Raja Muhammad Latif Hasrat Abdul Majid Tahir Zulfikar Ahmad Siddiqui Advocate Syed Azhar Ali Shah Sardar Abdul Razzaq Syed Taswar Naqvi, Haroon Azad and others have expressed deep grief and sorrow and heartfelt condolences to the family members on the death of Malik Muhammad Hayat Awan Advocate.

Pakistani community in Gambia praise government for its support of immigrants



Bureau Report

BENJUL/GAMBIA: In honor of the Minister of Small Industries, Trade and Travel of Azad Kashmir, Prof. Taqdees Gilani, a prestigious ceremony was organized by the Pakistani community based in the Republic of Gambia. The event was organized by the President of Pakistani Community, General Secretary Farqan Ahmed Siddiqui, Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Bilal Abid, Tahir Aziz. On this occasion, the Pakistani community told the Government Minister that there are immense employment opportunities for medical and other professionals in Gambia. Apart from this, there are also vast business opportunities here. If the government of Pakistan invests here in the textile industry, construction, food items and telecom sector, immense benefit can be obtained. If the government of Pakistan provides facilities to the Pakistani community living here, we can do the best work. Talking on this occasion, Government Minister Professor Taqdees Gilani said that I will talk to the federal government about the problems of the immigrants living here and the provision of facilities. Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan and Foreign Minister are also present in our delegation. I will also bring your position to their notice. In the future we will work with the best coordination so that the expatriates can use their skills in the best way in The Gambia as well.

Public awareness, armed struggle is necessary for freedom movement: Ministers

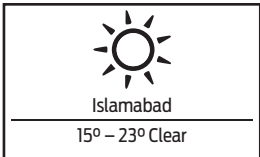
Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Ministers of the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Chairman Prime Minister's Inspection and Implementation Commission have said that unless they come to Ghulam Rasool and get intellectual training, freedom will not be achieved, India will not deprive Kashmiris of freedom for a long time. According to the resolutions of the United Nations, Kashmiris will continue to struggle for their birthright, the sacrifices of Burhan Wani and other martyrs of Kashmir will definitely bring color, he expressed these views in seminar held under the auspices of Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Club Muzaffarabad. Addressing the seminar on the background and foreground of the Azadi Kashmir movement, the seminar formally began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, which was blessed by Qari Muhammad Basharat Saeed made a special appearance, Government Minister Chaudhry Rasheed announced the building and furniture

for Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed Press Club, Government Minister Asim Sharif Butt said while appreciating the seminar organized by Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed Press Club. Thanking the members and office bearers, he said that the Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Club is under the rules and it is the first responsibility of the government to fulfill all its requirements. Addressing the seminar, Government Minister Asim Sharif Butt said that Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Announced one million rupees for the club, Prime Minister Inspection Implementation Commission Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah said that when the sword was with the freedom movement of Kashmir, the condition of India at that time and the condition of today is also in front, he said that Public awareness and military struggle is necessary, while addressing the seminar, Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah said that I congratulate all the members and office bearers of Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Club. Announced Rs.

Former Chairman Dam President Tehreek-e-Insaf Muzaffarabad Syed Azhar Geelani while speaking, discussed the background and foreground of Kashmir Freedom Movement, he said Burhan. Muzaffar Wani announced a revolving chair for Shaheed District Press Club, Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan Director Liberation Commission also spoke, Chairman Pasban Hurriyat Jammu Kashmir Uzair Ahmed Ghazali while addressing the seminar said that India has oppressed the people of Kashmir in Occupied Kashmir. The mountains of Vastam have been broken but Kashmiris are still protesting for their rights, he said that there are millions of martyrdoms from 47 till today, whose only crime was freedom. Azad Kashmir Council Maulana Mumtazul Haque Qasmi, Amir Majlis Shura Muhajireen Muhammad Yunus Mir, Malik Muzaamil Aslam, Raja Aslam Khan, Mush-taq Salam, Uzair Ghazali, Yasir Naqvi, Mufti Muhammad Hanif, Chaudhry Ziad Qasim, Hamza Mughal, Raja Mujibur Rahman, Adil Naqvi, Raja Ejaz, Raja Zafar Missile, Raja Fara,

Arif, Syed Zwar Hussain Naqo, Gulshad Ahmed Butt, Syed Barkat Hussain Shah, Deputy Amir of Tehreek Mujahideen Abdul Shakur Azad, Osman Ali Hashim, Iftikhar Abbasi, Arshad Abbasi, Rana Muhammad Ilyas, Javed. Ahand Mir, Sardar Safid Abbasi, Raja Bashirullah Khan, Raja Basharat Khan, Raja Shehzad, Agha Safir Kazmi, LB Farooqi, Naeem Khan, Parvez Durrani, Biyad Hussain Kazmi, Qazi Saeed Abbasi and others participated in large numbers. Ms. Saeqa Awan presented the thank you note, while Rana Muhammad Ilyas performed all the duties of the stich, in the end President Burhan Muzaffar Wani Shaheed District Press Club Sardar Younis Khan Niazi thanked the distinguished guests who participated in the seminar and for the most successful seminar. Congratulation was offered to all the members and officials for the organization, at the end of the seminar special prayers were also offered for the security of the country of Pakistan, the freedom of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the oppressed Muslims of Palestine.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:38 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:56 pm
Maghrib 6:57 pm
Isha 8:32 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80

First specialised construction and engineering dispute centre to be launched

PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman Pakistan Engineering Council, Engr. Najeeb Haroon, on behalf of the Council is pleased to announce launching of Pakistan's first specialised construction and engineering ADR/Arbitration Centre at Pakistan International Disputes Weekend 2024, which is being co-hosted by the PEC along with Hon'ble Sindh High Court and Chartered Institute of Arbitrators, London.

The ADR Centre will be launched by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Sindh High Court and the Chairman PEC on 11th May 2024 at PC Hotel Karachi.

The launch of the PEC ADR Centre is a significant milestone for the construction and engineering industry in Pakistan. The construction sector in Pakistan contributes up to 380 billion PKR to the GDP. However, it has been reported that pending cases related to construction and housing amount to a monetary value of Rs. 1.1 trillion. The various challenges faced in construction dispute resolution in Pakistan include an absence of mandatory case management laws and the inability to introduce effective methods of dispute resolution.

Delegation of Pakistan Dairy Association meets the Minister for Finance and Revenue

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA), led by CEO Fauji Foods Ltd Mr. Usman Zaheer, at Finance Division, today.

While addressing the delegation, Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb underscored the significant role the dairy industry played in increasing agricultural GDP and fostering economic development. He highlighted the government's commitment to providing a conducive environment for business growth, particularly in the dairy sector, which presents promising opportunities for increased exports. The Finance Minister encouraged executives from the dairy industry to seize the moment and launch the initiatives that would not only benefit large-scale producers but also create opportunities for small-



scale farmers.

The meeting ended with both the government and the Pakistan Dairy Association (PDA) aligning on a vision to enhance the sector's export capacity,

promote innovation, and upgrade practices to meet international standards. They expressed confidence in the dairy industry's ability to contribute significantly to Pakistan's economic growth.

Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Maen Khreasat, Ambassador of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, visiting an Arts exhibition at Pakistan National Council of the Arts titled "Dances with Colors" Abstract expressionist paintings by Sherzada Khalid Iqbal.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Jam Kamal urges Pakistan-Belarus trade boost

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, has stressed the need for Pakistan and Belarus to elevate their bilateral trade relations to fully exploit their potential.

Pakistan has been exporting a diverse range of goods to Belarus, including medications, optical/medical apparatus, rice, leather articles, textiles, cutlery, footwear, sports requisites, cotton garments, salt, and mangoes.

However, Pakistan's imports from Belarus consist of agriculture tractors, fertilizer, wood pulp, and motor vehicles.

Minister Jam Kamal



Khan highlighted Pakistan's significant position as the fourth-largest dairy producer globally, suggesting that the

country has the capability to become a major exporter in this sector.

He urged the exploration

of new avenues and potential to capitalize on this opportunity, proposing that Belarus upgrade its tractors to meet Pakistan's agricultural requirements.

Additionally, the Ambassador, Mr. Andrei Metelitsa emphasized Belarus's expertise in manufacturing harvesters and electric vehicle (EV) transports, suggesting deeper cooperation between the two countries in these sectors.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan underscored the importance of both business-to-business (B to B) meetings and government-to-government (G to G) dialogues to enhance trade volume and strengthen bilateral ties.

International Nurses & Midwives Day Conference 2024



PPA

KARACHI: The International Nurses and Midwives Day Conference, hosted by the Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery (AKU-SONAM) in collaboration with the Division of Nursing Services, Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH), successfully convened to commemorate the invaluable contributions of nurses and midwives worldwide. The conference, titled "Economy and Environment: Impact through Nursing and Midwifery care", highlighted the pivotal role healthcare professionals play in shaping economies and environmental sustainability.

The conference, held on Wednesday, May 8, 2024 at the AKU Stadium Road campus in Karachi, featured distinguished speakers and experts in the field who offered insights and perspectives on the diverse benefits of nursing and midwifery care.

Mr Noor Ahmed Samoo, Secretary, Department of Universities and Boards, Government of Sindh, graced the event as the Chief Guest. His presence added significant value to the discussions surrounding the intersection of healthcare, economy, and environment. "The efforts we see at the AKU-SONAM in the nursing and midwifery sectors have set an admirable benchmark and become a role model in the country," said Mr Samoo.

The conference provided a platform for engaging discussions, knowledge-sharing, and collaboration among healthcare professionals, policymakers, educators, and stakeholders. Attendees actively participated in interactive sessions, panel discussions, and networking opportunities to further the conversation about nursing and midwifery's impact on the economy and the environment.

Syrian Arab Republic delegation visits AIOU

PPA

ISLAMABAD: An eight-member delegation from Syrian Arab Republic led by Deputy Education Minister, Rami Waheed Al-Dhulli visited Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) yesterday. Syrian Ambassador to Pakistan Ramiz Alraee also accompanied the delegation. During the visit, Al-Dhulli expressed his desire to strengthen educational relationships between Syria and Pakistan through practical measures. He emphasized the importance of academic cooperation between the two countries and encouraged academicians from both sides to work together towards this goal.

The Deputy Education Minister stated that we aim to utilize the research and experience of faculty members at Allama Iqbal Open University. Our goal is to explore ways in which Syrian students can benefit from the distance learning system. Additionally, measures need to be taken to facilitate thesis review and scholarships between the two countries. Given the shared history and culture between Syria and Pakistan, Syrian people are familiar with Pakistanis. The Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, affirmed that AIOU will extend all possible support to strengthen relations with Syrian universities. There is a need for effective collaboration in the field of education and research between the two countries.

UAJK launches landmark Economic Conference to Shape Region's Future

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) is set to inaugurate a pioneering conference focusing on the economic landscape of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Titled "The Economy of AJK: Unlocking the Potential," the event commences on May 9th at the scenic King Abdullah Campus at Chatter Kallas.

Distinguished attendees from academia, research, and industry, alongside national and regional economists, will convene to delve into critical economic discourse during the two-day conference.

Organized in collaboration with the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), the conference's opening ceremony will take place at the King Abdullah Campus Chatter. The ceremony will feature addresses by notable figures including former Prime Minister of AJK, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan; Chairman of the Higher Education Commission Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed; Vice Chancellor UAJK Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi; Vice Chancellor PIDE, Dr. Nadeem ul Haque; Director Kashmir Institute of Economics (KIE) Prof. Dr. Samina Sabir; and others.

The conference aims to foster collaboration and chart a sustainable economic trajectory for Azad Jammu and Kashmir, with discussions spanning tourism, skill development, industrial policies, investment promotion, and infrastructure development.

The second session will feature Additional Chief Secretary General Ms. Midhat Shahzad, Chief Manager State Bank of Pakistan Umar Shahzad, President Business Forum Azad Kashmir Imran Aziz Khan, and Prof. Dr. Muhammad Khaleeq from the School of Business of Mirpur University of Science and Technology.

In the third session, Chairman Higher Education Commission Prof. Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Vice Chancellor University of Poonch Rawalakot Prof. Dr. Zakaria Zakir, Vice Chancellor UAJK Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, Secretary Higher Education AJK government Ch. Muhammad Tayyab, and Representative from UNDP Husnain Ali Gilani will share their insights.

The event will span two days, culminating on Friday, May 10th, with continued engagement through panel discussions, debates, and knowledge-sharing sessions.

World Bank Vice President visits Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser, concluded his three-day visit to Pakistan today and reaffirmed the World Bank's support to stabilize the economy and accelerate inclusive and resilient growth.

Raiser met with the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and members of his government as well as key counterparts to discuss Pakistan's development priorities. The discussions focused on economic and fiscal reforms, human capital development, adaptation to climate change, energy sector reforms, and digitalization as a foundational enabler and accelerator of development.

"I am pleased to learn about the Government's reform plans to boost growth and attract more private investment, leverage digital transformation to improve governance, strengthen climate resilience, and invest in human capital to tackle daunting challenges such as child stunting and learning poverty," said Raiser.

Business community stands with Pakistan Army: Atif Ikram Sheikh

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has strongly condemned the events of May 9 and said that the business community stands in solidarity with the Pakistan Army. We pay tribute to the services of Pakistan forces and the proud spirit of martyrdom for Pakistan. The efforts of the Special Facilitation Council (SIFC) to bring investment to the country are commendable, he expressed these views while addressing a meeting of the business community.

President Atif Ikram said that on May 9 last year, Jinnah House, sensitive installations, government and private properties were vandalized and surrounded by fire, and the country's prestige was damaged at the inter-



national level. The economy is badly affected by incidents like May 9, so a plan should be made so that these incidents cannot be repeated in the future.

President FPCCI Atif Ikram said

that Pakistan forces are our pride due to which national defense is in strong hands. Therefore, the Pakistan Army is working shoulder to shoulder with the government to improve the

economic conditions. All stakeholders should come together on sensitive issues against the national interest so that these incidents can be avoided in the future.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

The US leverage bombs to nudge Israel for ceasefire

Pressed by widespread demonstrations, initially led by civil society and later fueled by university and college students, which have spread across the United States like wildfire with no sign of slowing down, resulting in the arrest of over 2400 students, the Biden administration has finally realized that its policy of supporting and aiding Israel's indiscriminate bombing of innocent infants, children, women, and the elderly with US-supplied lethal and highly destructive bombs will not work anymore.

In the wake of these protests and with looming presidential elections, Biden is rapidly losing ground to his staunch opponent, Donald Trump. While successive US administrations across the political spectrum have backed Israel since its creation in 1948, the tide is now turning against Israel. Several polls conducted in the USA suggest that public support for Israel appears to be waning, especially among young people.

Realizing, albeit belatedly, that if he harbors any hope for salvaging his image in the elections, he must bring an end to the war in Gaza sooner rather than later. To demonstrate resolve in forcing Israel to reconsider its decision to bomb Rafah, one of the most densely populated areas in the world, the Biden administration first paused the supply of 3500 bombs of 5000, and 500-pound, which were favored weapons of the Israeli Armed Forces. This pause is part of an ongoing effort to deter Israel from launching major military operations in the southern city of Rafah, which would endanger the lives of 1.5 million civilians seeking refuge there."

Meanwhile the United State is also

pursuing aggressive diplomacy with all stakeholders. It is feverishly working with the warring parties, both Israel and Hamas and interlocutors, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan and Egypt besides others to bring them to agree on the conditions of ceasefire.

The talks were considered not far from reaching a ceasefire, temporary or permanent. If the talk succeeds, it would be a big blow to Netanyahu who has from the very beginning been against any ceasefire and had expressed his resolve to obliterate Hamas by military means from Gaza, that too without giving any regards of collateral damage in the form of loss of lives and property.

A permanent ceasefire could also lead to the collapse of his far-right coalition, prompting early elections and his removal from power, as his national security minister, Itamar Ben-Gvir, and finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, have already threatened to leave and collapse Netanyahu's coalition, if Israel agrees to a captive deal and ceasefire.

To add to the complexity, both Israel and Hamas have divergent interpretations of the various sections of the agreement. The first phase of a three-phase agreement would be the six-week pause in fighting, during which according to the Israeli point of view, Israel would exchange hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails for 33 of the most vulnerable hostages held in Gaza. But Hamas refused to release all of the 33 prisoners. According to Hamas these 33 hostages include those who were

still living, and the remains of those who have died. Additionally Hamas demanded a framework that would stretch out the hostage release by freeing three on the third day after the pause begins, then three more every seven days after that.

After the six week pause, the negotiation will move to the second phase named "sustainable calm" which is again interpreted differently by both Israel and Hamas. Israel interpreted it as, "the two sides would work toward achieving a "sustainable calm" in Gaza after an initial six-week pause in fighting. Whereas Hamas interpret it as a permanent cessation of hostilities and a complete withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza

agreement. The first phase of a three-phase agreement would be the six-week pause in fighting, during which according to the Israeli point of view, Israel would exchange hundreds of Palestinian prisoners and detainees in Israeli jails for 33 of the most vulnerable hostages held in Gaza. But Hamas refused to release all of the 33 prisoners who would be freed in the first phase who were still living, and that the remains of those who have died would be among the releases.

Though the text of the draft is still being moved to and fro and its fate hangs in balance, Israel side once again throws a spanner saying that Israeli believed the proposal Hamas had agreed to was "very far from Israel's core demands." Whereas, Hamas said that it had accepted the terms of a cease-fire proposed by Arab mediators.

In total defiance of the United Nations and the United States and in an attempt to frustrate the efforts of the international community for ceasefire, Israeli troops moved ahead and seized control of Gaza's vital Rafah border crossing on (7-May) and put the talks with Hamas over a cease-fire and hostage release once again on a razor's edge. Hamas called the Israeli operation a "dangerous escalation" intended "to disrupt mediation efforts for a cease-fire and the release of prisoners..

Amidst high-stakes diplomatic maneuvers and military tensions, there remains a faint hope for a deal to at least temporarily halt the conflict which has so far claimed the lives of over 34,700 Palestinians and inflicted widespread devastation on the entire Gaza Strip.

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

US puts arms shipment to Israel on hold amid dispute over Rafah attack

The United States has paused a shipment of "high-payload" munitions to Israel for review over concerns about a potential military offensive on the Gaza city of Rafah, Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin said Wednesday. The paused delivery was supposed to contain 3,500 bombs, split roughly evenly between 2,000-pound (907-kilogram) and 500-pound explosives, a senior administration official was cited as saying in media reports.

Austin said no final decision has been made on the shipment. But the defence secretary stressed that the U. S. commitment to Israel's defense remained "iron-clad" and that the decision on suspending the munitions shipment was not final. Still, he said the U. S. preference would be that "no major combat take place in Rafah" and that at a minimum any Israeli operation must safeguard civilian lives. "We've been very clear... from the very beginning that Israel shouldn't launch a major attack into Rafah without accounting for and protecting the civilians that are in that battles pace," Austin told a Senate hearing. "And again, as we have assessed the situation, we have paused one shipment of high payload munitions," he told a Senate hearing. "We've not made a final determination on how to proceed with that shipment." Israel has threatened a major assault on Rafah, but Western nations and the United Nations say a full-scale attack on the city would trigger a humanitarian catastrophe. Since Oct 7, Israel's campaign to destroy Hamas has led to a seven-month-long military campaign that has so far killed a total of 34,789 Palestinians, mostly women and children. The conflict has also left many of Gaza's 2.3 million people on the brink of starvation and sparked protests in the U. S. demanding that universities and Biden withdraw support for Israel - including the provision of weaponry. Biden is also under pressure from Democrats, including lawmakers in his party, to put more pressure on Israel. Republican Senator Lindsey Graham was among the Republicans who rebuked the Biden administration over the decision.

"This is obscene. It is absurd. Give Israel what they need," Graham said, adding it wasn't for Washington to second-guess how Israel fought a war against Hamas bent on Israel's destruction. U. S. Senator Deb Fischer, who sits on the Senate Armed Services Committee, called on Biden to drop "his politically-motivated hold".

"American support for Israel cannot be in doubt, especially now," she said. For its part, the Israeli military appeared on Wednesday to play down the arms shipment hold-up, saying the allies resolve any disagreements "behind closed doors". Speaking at a conference hosted by the Yedioth Ahronoth newspaper as the Gaza war entered its eighth month, Israel's chief military spokesperson Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari described coordination between Israel and the United States as reaching "a scope without precedent, I think, in history".



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

9 May Black Day - I

Amidst the tumultuous terrain of contemporary politics, negativity has become an unfortunately common refrain. From smear campaigns to divisive rhetoric, the utilization of negativity as a political strategy has risen to concerning heights. Negative politics, characterized by mudslinging, fear-mongering, and character assassination, not only corrodes public trust but also undermines the very fabric of democracy.

While negative politics has long been a fixture in political landscapes throughout history, its prevalence and impact have surged in recent times. The rise of social media and 24-hour news cycles has provided political actors with new platforms and audiences to propagate their toxic narratives. One of the most detrimental effects of negative politics is the erosion of trust in democratic institutions. When politicians prioritize attacking opponents over engaging in substantive debate, it fosters a perception that politics is merely a game of manipulation rather than a pursuit of the common good. This disillusionment can lead to voter apathy and disengagement, thereby weakening the democratic process.

Negative politics thrives on division, exploiting societal fault lines to garner support. By vilifying opponents and framing issues in stark terms, politicians exacerbate existing divisions and make compromise increasingly elusive. This polarization not only hampers progress but also undermines the sense of nation-

ality crucial for a healthy democracy. Additionally, the prevalence of negative politics has contributed to growing distrust on the media. With politicians and pundits weaponizing misinformation and propagating conspiracy theories, discerning truth from falsehood has become increasingly challenging for the average citizen. This erosion of trust in the media further undermines the foundations of democracy, as an informed electorate is essential for holding elected officials accountable.

Especially in the context of Pakistan, negative politics, exemplified by figures like Imran Khan, has aimed to gain political mileage by defaming opponents and institutions. In any democratic society, the strength of institutions is paramount to the functioning of the state and the well-being of its citizens. From the judiciary to the legislature, from law enforcement to the free press, each institution plays a crucial role in upholding the rule of law, ensuring accountability, and safeguarding the rights and freedoms of the people. Hence, nurturing a culture that reveres all institutions is not only crucial for the nation's stability but also for the safeguarding of democracy itself. Showing respect for every institution within the country is tantamount to upholding the rule of law. Entities like the judiciary serve as custodians of the legal framework that governs society. When individuals and collectives honor judicial rulings, irrespective of personal or political leanings, they reinforce the principle that no one is exempt from legal obligations. This cultivates trust in

the legal system and guarantees impartial dispensation of justice. Institutions furnish checks and balances that hold those in authority accountable for their deeds. For instance, a robust legislature serves as a platform for discourse and oversight, ensuring that governmental policies and choices are subject to open scrutiny and debate. Similarly, independent regulatory bodies and commissions play a vital role in overseeing various sectors, ranging from finance to the environment, and ensuring entities are held accountable for their actions. By honoring these institutions and their mandates, citizens contribute to the transparency and integrity of the governance process. Entities like the free press and human rights commissions are pivotal in protecting the rights and freedoms of individuals. A free and unbiased media acts as a watchdog, uncovering corruption, injustice, and abuses of power. By acknowledging the media's role as an informant and a check on authority, citizens empower journalists to hold those in power accountable and ensure the public remains informed. Similarly, human rights institutions advocate for the rights of marginalized groups, ensuring that every individual retains their inherent dignity and freedoms. Upholding all institutions within the country promotes stability and unity within society. When individuals and groups adhere to the decisions and mandates of institutions, even amid disagreement or controversy, they contribute to maintaining social cohesion and resolving disputes peacefully. Conversely, undermining or neglecting institutions can lead to instability, polarization, and a loss of trust in the democratic process.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Remembering 9th May: A Reflection of Tragedy and Resilience - I

The lamentable event of May 9 was instigated by the unlawful apprehension of Pakistan's pre-eminent and cherished figure, former Prime Minister Imran Khan, amidst a harrowing and contentious scenario within the precincts of the Islamabad court. This transpired despite Mr. Khan's presence in court, demonstrating his deference to both the judiciary and the Pakistani constitution. Subsequently, an armed contingent of rangers, eschewing conventional ingress through the door, opted to vandalize the chamber's windows, ostensibly to intimidate. This begs the question: why sow seeds of trepidation and chaos, particularly when the erstwhile premier was actively engaged in due legal process? Hence, one is compelled to query the exigency of his immediate and unlawful arrest.

The inception of the 9th of May commenced with the unlawful apprehension and forcible conveyance of the erstwhile Prime Minister Imran Khan within the precincts of the court, contravening established legal norms. To date, no judicial commission or committee has been convened in relation to this incident. Furthermore, the Supreme Court of Pakistan adjudicated the detention of former Prime Minister Imran Khan as illegitimate, leading to his subsequent release.

Imran Khan stands accused of

orchestrating the events of May 9th, a charge leveled against him despite his longstanding assertion that, "We adhere to a doctrine of pacifism, eschewing the path of radicalism, whether in the realm of physical infrastructure or political dissent."

The lamentable events of May 9th are scarcely amenable to mere condemnation, for on that lamentable occasion, our valiant martyrs were dishonored, our military installations despoiled, and the abode of the Corps Commander violated. An unequivocally transparent inquiry into the entirety of this lamentable episode is imperative, coupled with the establishment of a judicial commission. However, prior to such endeavors, it behooves us to reflect upon the manifold losses incurred during the May 9th tragedy. May 9th is not solely a tragedy by virtue of the indignities suffered by our martyrs therein. Rather, it is a tragedy of historical import owing to the abhorrent ordeal inflicted upon the daughters, mothers, and sisters of our nation, who were subjected to egregious acts of barbarism and callously paraded through the thoroughfares. Neither were the elderly nor the infirm spared from this affront. The dignity of the daughters, mothers, and sisters of our nation was shamelessly transgressed on the fateful day of May 9th.

I beheld those matrons, daughters, and sisters engaging in a tranquil demonstration, devoid of armaments,

not even a pebble in hand. Meanwhile, the masculine constabulary were forcibly hauling, tormenting, and apprehending innocent female protesters. Not only were they detaining them, but they were also engaging in defamation of character. Does the Constitution of Pakistan not allow women the liberty to engage in peaceful protest? If it does, then who are these law enforcement officers to besmirch the reputation of innocent women and denounce them as "inferior women would stand here, honorable women would be at home"? Furthermore, the police authorities went so far as to issue threats of sexual assault against the women in full view of the media. Despite this, numerous individuals, both male and female, were subjected to persecution merely on the grounds of suspicion and were consigned to imprisonment, wherein they endured not only mental and physical torture but also inflicted suffering upon their kin.

According to members of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), they staged a demonstration on the 9th of May due to the purported unlawful apprehension of their leader, Imran Khan, in a manner deemed humiliating. This occurrence marks the inaugural commemoration of the May 9th incident. Upon reflecting on the somber events of the preceding year, numerous inquiries surface, yet they remain bereft of resolution. The rationale behind the forceful detention of Imran Khan, which entailed the breach of judicial sanctity at the High Court, remains undisclosed.

To be continued

Macron hosts Xi at mountain restaurant in picturesque southern France

Xinhua

TARBES, FRANCE: Amid falling snows in the picturesque mountains in Hautes-Pyrenees Department in southwestern France, Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife Peng Liyuan were warmly received by French President Emmanuel Macron and his wife Brigitte Macron on Tuesday at a mountain restaurant for a restricted meeting.

Together, they watched a traditional folk dance performance by local villagers before lunch at L'Etape du Berger, which is located at Col du Tourmalet, a legendary climb in the Tour de France cycling race.

With snowflakes flying outside and clouds stretching across the sky, the two presidents and their wives sat next to the window gazing at the mountains in the distance while tasting local delicacies. In a relaxing and cordial atmosphere, they had strategic communication on a number of important issues critical to the world.

Xi pointed out that the Chinese civilization is the only one that has continued uninterrupted for more than 5,000 years. That is why the Chinese people have a strong commitment to their country, especially when it comes to national unification which they value and cherish.

Xi said although the Chinese and

French civilizations, one in the East and the other in the West, have different values and social systems, both are committed to inter-civilization exchanges and mutual learning.

The two sides could coexist in harmony without seeking uniformity, Xi said, adding that through dialogue and cooperation, they could make new contributions to world peace and development and human progress.

China is ready to work with France and Europe to enhance people-to-people exchanges, deepen economic and trade cooperation, build the right perception of each other, and solidify and carry forward the stories of friendship between the Chinese people and the people of France and Europe, Xi said.

For his part, Macron recalled his visit to China last year, especially the meeting at the Pine Garden in Guangzhou, south China's Guangdong Province, which left him with a deep and wonderful impression.

Through in-depth exchanges with Xi, Macron said, he learned more about China's history, culture, philosophy, and development process and gained a deeper understanding of China's position on important issues.

Given the uncertainties in the current international situation, Macron said it is vital that Europe maintains strategic



autonomy, solidarity and unity, adding that it is also critical that Europe develop a sound relationship with China and enhance their bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Noting France and China are both permanent members of the UN Security Council, Macron expressed his readiness to maintain close communication with Xi and play a positive role in upholding

peace and stability in Europe and the world.

Expressing gratitude to Macron and his wife for their warm hospitality and thoughtful arrangements, Xi said he and

his wife had a wonderful and unforgettable time.

Xi expressed his readiness to have frequent interactions with President Macron and to work with him for sound and steady growth of China-France and China-EU relations and to bring more stability and positive energy to this changing and turbulent world.

Xi extended an invitation to Macron for another visit to China at a convenient time.

Before they parted, the local villagers started singing a shepherd's song, expressing gratitude to Xi and his wife for their visit and inviting them to come back another time.

Deeply impressed by the beautiful landscape and specialty food, Xi said he welcomes more high-quality agrifood from France to the Chinese market and visits by more friendly French people to China.

After the meeting, Macron and Brigitte accompanied Xi and Peng on their way from Col du Tourmalet to Tarbes, Hautes-Pyrenees Department of France, and held an official farewell ceremony at the airport.

On Tuesday night, Xi, having concluded his visit to France, arrived in Belgrade and commenced his state visit to Serbia at the invitation of Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

Xi aims to open brighter future of China-France ties via visit

Xinhua

PARIS: Chinese President Xi Jinping said here on Sunday that he hopes China and France will light up their 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.

Xi made the remarks in a written speech upon his arrival here for a state visit to France.

He said during the visit, he will have an in-depth exchange of views with French President Emmanuel 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," he said, adding that it is a great pleasure to begin his third state visit to the French Republic at the invitation of Macron.

Back in 2014 and 2019, Xi paid two visits to France, both in spring, to celebrate the 50th and 55th anniversaries of diplomatic relations together with the people of France.

"As we celebrate the 60th anniversary of our diplomatic ties, I have a strong sense of deja 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," Xi said.

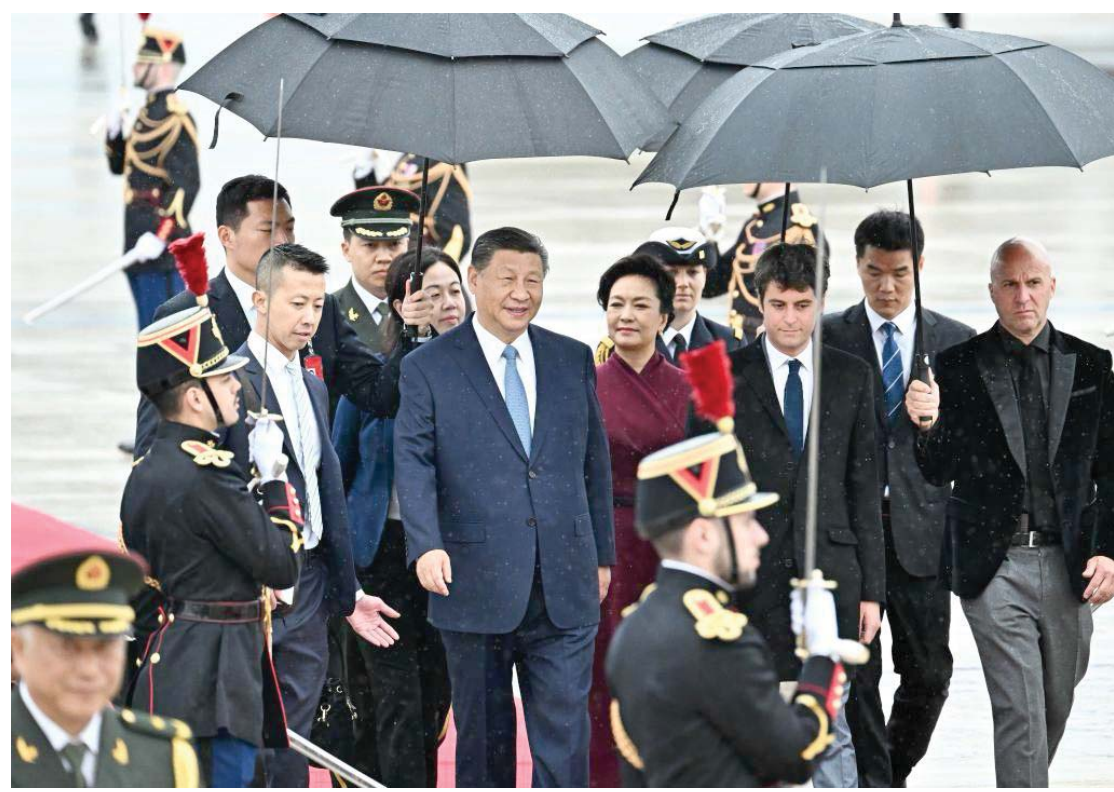
As important representatives of Eastern and Western civilizations, China and France have a long history of mutual appreciation and admiration, said Xi.

In the 60 years since, the 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, said Xi.

In recent years, the relationship between China and France has risen to new heights, and the two countries keep making new progress in cooperation on aviation, aerospace, nuclear energy, agrifood and green development, Xi said.

He said that the two countries enjoy close coordination and cooperation on climate response, biodiversity protection and global governance, adding that 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 both peoples, but also provides stability and positive energy to the turbulent



world," Xi said. The Chinese president was received

by French Prime Minister Gabriel Attal at Paris Orly airport and warmly

welcomed by overseas Chinese upon arrival.

Indonesian Embassy Partners with All-Pakistan Women Universities Consortium for Online Sessions

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad launched the first session of its 4th Online Internship Program (OIP) 2024 in collaboration with Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) in Rawalpindi and All-Pakistan Women Universities Consortium (APWUC) on 7 May 2024 with the theme "Women Empowerment". The OIP has been divided into ten online lecture sessions with the participation of top speakers from Indonesia and will continue until June 6 2024.

The OIP 2024 was officially opened virtually by the Director General of Information and Public Diplomacy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Ambassador Siti Nugraha Mauludiah. "I appreciate the friendship between the two countries and hope that OIP can encourage the



young generation to understand the strong history between Indonesia and Pakistan, then implement it in the current context."

Earlier, speaking at the opening ceremony of OIP held at the Fatima Jinnah Women University, the Chargé d' Affaires of Indonesia Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta underlined the close Indonesia-Pakistan relations that had been built by the founders of both countries, President Soekarno and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

"Now, on the way to 75th Anniversary of Indonesia-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations, it is time to fill this excellent relationship with stronger cooperation in relevant areas of mutual interest. For this reason, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad has set up priorities for Indonesian diplomacy in Pakistan, including the economy and people-to-people contacts. And APWUC is one of the right partners for the Embassy," he said.

On this occasion, Prof. Dr. Uzaira Rafique, Vice Chancellor of Fatima Jinnah Women University (FJWU) and chairperson of the All-Pakistan Women Universities Consortium (APWUC) in her remarks said that APWUC campuses are a free place for Pakistani female students to actualize their potentials. The first session started with the lecture of Ms. Chusnul Maryah, Ph. D. from the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Indonesia on "Indonesian Politics: Between Islam and Nationalism." She highlighted the trends of oligarchy, nepotism, and abandoning merit system in political recruitment in Indonesian domestic politics.

To further strengthen friendly relations between the young generation of the two countries, the Indonesian Embassy in Islamabad also showcased the Indonesian medley dances created by the Indonesian students at the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) along with the dancing performances of FJWU students.

Ziad Chowdhrey awarded for professional excellence as the finance leader!

PNP

KARACHI: The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan (ICAP) has awarded Ziad Bin Wasim Chowdhrey for professional excellence as the finance leader.

He was presented the Professional Excellence Awards in a graceful ceremony held at PC, Karachi, where 14 industry leaders were awarded in 5 categories.

Nominees were evaluated on the basis of their leadership approach, performance/achievements, innovation, digital



journey, enhancement in brand value of organization, contribution to profession, CSR, etc.

Amongst the recipients, Mr. Ziad Bin Wasim Chowdhrey was recognised and awarded for his professional excellence as the finance leader.

Mr. Ziad Chowdhrey is a commercial, entrepreneurial, and results-oriented CFO (also having served as the CEO), with diverse extensive experience in strategic, financial, and operational management, including international experience.

He is currently the CFO and director at Novartis Pakistan.

He firmly believes that a true leader's legacy is not only in their own success but in the leaders they nurture!

Magnificent Saudi: A Perfect Mother's Day Destination

PNP

KARACHI: Celebrating Mother's Day in Saudi offers a unique blend of luxury, history, and cultural experiences that promises to make this special day truly memorable. From thrilling hot air balloon rides to exploring ancient heritage sites, Saudi has something for every kind of traveler, including those from Pakistan.

Saudi, renowned for its rich history and evolving tourist attractions, is emerging as a top choice for travelers seeking unforgettable experiences. This Mother's Day, Saudi presents an array of options that cater to different interests and preferences, ensuring a delightful celebration for mothers and families alike.

A New Perspective: Take to the Skies in AlUla

For those seeking a truly extraordinary experience, a hot air balloon ride over AlUla offers breathtaking views of Saudi's stunning landscape. Departing from AlUla, a UNESCO World Heritage site, passengers can marvel at the mesmerizing vistas of rocky outcrops and valleys below. This open-air museum, spanning over 200,000 years of human history, offers a unique glimpse into Saudi Arabia's extraordinary heritage.

History & Heritage: Explore the Old Town of Al Balad

In the heart of Jeddah lies Al Balad, a UNESCO World Heritage site boasting architectural wonders dating back to the 7th century. The district's magnificent buildings and bustling streets transport visitors back in time, offering a glimpse into Saudi Arabia's rich cultural heritage. From shopping for

spices and textiles to exploring traditional markets and historical landmarks, Al Balad promises an immersive experience for all.

Book into Spa Bliss: Six Senses Southern Dunes, the Red Sea Coast

For those seeking relaxation and rejuvenation, Six Senses Southern Dunes Spa offers the ultimate retreat amidst the serene dunes of Saudi Arabia's Red Sea coast. Inspired by the region's natural beauty, the spa's tranquil ambiance and Arabian wellness traditions provide a blissful escape for mothers in need of pampering.

Luxury at its Finest: Discover Shopping & Dining at VIA Riyadh

VIA Riyadh stands as a beacon of luxury, offering an unparalleled shopping and dining experience steeped in

Saudi tradition. From prestigious designer boutiques to world-class restaurants serving cuisines from around the globe, VIA Riyadh caters to every taste and preference. After a day of shopping, families can unwind at the Renaissance cinema, indulging in lavish comfort and exclusive entertainment.

A Perspective from Pakistan

For Pakistani travelers, Saudi offers not only a captivating destination but also a sense of familiarity and cultural affinity. With an increasing number of visa initiatives, including the eVisa program and the free 96-hour Stopover Visa, visiting Saudi has never been more accessible for Pakistani tourists. Whether it's exploring historical sites, indulging in luxury shopping, or simply soaking in the vibrant atmosphere, Saudi invites families from Pakistan to



celebrate Mother's Day in style.

As Saudi continues to unveil its treasures to the world, it remains a compelling destination

for travelers seeking unforgettable experiences and cherished memories with their loved ones. This Mother's Day,

let Saudi be the backdrop for a celebration filled with adventure, relaxation, and cultural immersion.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
72,601.81	72,761.19
Day's High	Day's Low
73,079.18	72,358.19
Index Value	Change
13,047,675,184	-159.38
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	8 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,354.05	+40.38
Percentage	Time
+0.49%	8 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,988.37	+104.1
Percentage	Time
+0.27%	8 May, 1:47 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,202.37	-632.73
Percentage	Time
-1.63%	8 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180	182
Bahrain Dinar	740.79	748.79
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.43	38.83
Danish Krone	40.16	40.56
Euro	295.5	298
Hong Kong Dollar	35.6	35.95
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.99	914.99
Malaysian Ringgit	58.71	59.31
New Zealand \$	167.46	169.46
Norwegians Krone	25.69	25.99
Omani Riyal	723.62	731.62
Qatari Riyal	76.44	77.14
Saudi Riyal	73.3	74
Singapore Dollar	204	206
Swedish Korona	25.79	26.09
Swiss Franc	307.06	309.56
Thai Bhat	7.56	7.71
U.A.E Dirham	75	75.75
UK Pound Sterling	343.35	347
US Dollar	277	279.7

Unexpected shifts in key policies scare away investors, says Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that the arrival of investment delegations from Saudi Arabia is a great success of the current government and SIFC.

He added that if the country's investment environment improves, foreign investors will not have to be invited; they will invest in Pakistan themselves, improving the country's economic condition and solving many problems quickly.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has visited different countries to attract foreign investors. SIFC is also making all possible efforts in this regard, which



is commendable.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that important

policies should not be changed unpredictably and that crises in the country should be ended to restore the country's reputation.

He said the lack of coordination in various ministries and key departments should be increased. All such factors should be tackled to stop local and foreign investors from fleeing Pakistan, which sends a negative message.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan was once a model for dozens of countries, but now, local investors are nervous about making investment decisions because it is considered risky.

He said that if a foreigner invests here, he tries to transfer his capital and profits out as soon as possible.

He noted that the undocumented economy, smuggling, Afghan Transit Trade, unfair tax system, under-invoicing, misdeclaration, forgery, misuse of concessions given in FATA

and PATA, and excessive paperwork affect the economy and damage its image.

Mian Zahid Hussain said the country has no industrial policy or economic direction. The noise of special industrial zones is high, but there is no implementation. The electricity, gas, and oil prices are much higher than those in regional countries, and the interest rate is very high.

Who will dare to start a new business in a country where running a business is challenging, and people are fleeing by the millions?

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that it is impossible to hide the escape of local investors from Pakistan. The increase in tax net is limited to statements. The burden on taxpayers is increasing, and some companies must pay up to 68% in taxes. Under these conditions, he said getting the desired results from the investment effort is difficult.

POGEE 2024 – Energy sector's largest exhibition inaugurated

PPA

LAHORE: The 18th edition of the 'Pakistan Oil, Gas & Energy Exhibition' (POGEE), the premier showcase of the Energy sector, commenced at the Lahore Expo Centre with great enthusiasm. This edition, featuring cutting-edge global technologies for the Oil, Gas, and Power industries, was inaugurated alongside the 15th Safe Secure Pakistan (SSP) exhibition. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was graced by Mr. Zaki Ajiz, Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industries (FPCCI), Zia Salahuddin, Executive Director of Oil & Gas Development Company (Pakistan) Limited (OGDCL), Dr. Abdul Rehman, Administrator of RESCUE-1122 (Punjab Emergency Services), and Rao Asif Ali, Director Chevron Pakistan.

Despite its hiatus, POGEE and SSP witnessed robust participation from leading international and local energy companies, including Siemens Pakistan, JC Electronics (Netherlands), Flanders Investment & Trade (Belgium), and Hangzhou Turbine Power Group (China). Held from 8th to 10th May 2024, this event at the Lahore Expo Centre is expected to draw



thousands of delegates from key stakeholders and government institutions.

The chief guest underscored the significance of POGEE and SSP in providing valuable opportunities for stakeholders in the oil, gas, power, safety, and security industries, facilitating business expansion and diversification in Pakistan.

Pegasus Consultancy, renowned for organizing high-profile trade exhibitions in Pakistan annually, including IFTECH, Plasti&Pack, POGEE, and Safe Secure Pakistan, has garnered significant international participation. The Managing Director, Aamer Khanzada, expressed satisfac-

tion with the overwhelming response to this year's event, with 100 companies from 17 countries participating, showcasing a range of petroleum-related products and services.

Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) serves as the strategic partner for the event, with Chevron Group as the Gold Sponsor, representing global giants such as Chevron, TEXACO, and CALTEX. In addition to POGEE, the concurrent 15th International Fire, Safety, Security & Health Exhibition - 'Safe Secure Pakistan' is expected to attract a large audience from relevant industrial sectors.

Federal Minister for Commerce holds crucial meeting with fruit juice council

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, convened a pivotal meeting with the M/s Fruit Juice Council at the Ministry of Commerce on Wednesday.

The council, represented by industry leaders, provided an extensive briefing to the minister, highlighting pressing concerns regarding increased tariff rates, including Federal Excise Duty (FED) and Goods and Services Tax (GST).

During the session, the council expressed alarm over a significant 40 percent decline in juice sales attributed to the recent tax hikes.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan underscored the importance of focusing on and boosting exports.

He emphasized the government's willingness to provide incentives however a comprehensive proposal aimed at enhancing exports.

The minister cited Prime Minister's initiative to combat smuggling through a dedicated committee, a move expected to bolster local industries and generate employment opportunities.

Furthermore, Minister Jam Kamal stressed the imperative of collaboration with



provincial authorities and district administrations to crack down on fake and unregistered food products.

Such measures, he argued, would safeguard registered industries and uphold quality standards.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating exports, high-

lighting its readiness to support local industries in navigating challenges and seizing opportunities.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Syed Hamid Ali and representatives from leading companies including Nestle, Shezan, TetraPak, PepsiCo, Haleeb Foods, and Popular Group.

Ethiopian Embassy holds Business Forums in collaboration with KCCI & KATI



PPA

KARACHI: The Embassy of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) in Islamic Republic of Pakistan in collaboration with Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (KATI) conducted two Ethio-Pakistan Business Forums to mobilize the businesspersons, traders and investors for the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia scheduled for May 26th to May 31st, 2024.

H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia in Pakistan, presided over those business forums along with the respective Presidents of both the trade bodies on Wednesday.

According to the Ambassador, the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation will provide an opportunity to participate in the International Manufacturing Trade Fair where manufacturers from the entire world including Africa will participate.

H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula also shared other details about the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia which included business forums, meetings with ministers concerned and high officials, visits to the industrial parks and top notch tourist sites, and on top of that cultural nights in Addis Ababa.

The Ambassador briefed the business community about the comparative advantage offered by the FDR Ethiopia in terms of cheap, clean and sustainable energy, industrial parks,

incentives and one-window operations for the investors.

On the other side business community of Karachi assured the Ambassador of their participation in the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia.

At Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry, its President Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed Sheikh said the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia is an excellent opportunity for the business community of Karachi and it is high time for them to enter Africa through Ethiopia.

Muhammad Zubair Motiwala, Chief Executive Officer at Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), stressed the need for exchange of business delegations between the two countries to boost the bilateral trade between Ethiopia and Pakistan.

Meanwhile, Mr. Syed Johar Ali Qandhari, President of Korangi Association of Trade and Industry, called upon the businesspersons and traders to explore lucrative business market of Ethiopia by joining the 2nd business and trade delegation to Ethiopia.

Later, H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula along with the President of KATI and other businesspersons planted trees as part of Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Under Green Legacy Initiative of H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, to foster the brotherhood between the two nations.

ICCI organizes seminar on 'Mental Health Care in Times of Financial Constraints'

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that addressing the mental health issues is critically important and we have to reach out those suffering from these problems and provide them the required information and resources. He said that taking mental health issues serious and giving the necessary treatment to the patients is a service to the nation as well as the humanity.

Addressing a seminar entitled 'Mental Health Care in Times of Financial Constraints' held at the Chamber House, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that awareness sessions on such crucial issues always prove beneficial for the patients to help them come out of the



stress and thereby lead a normal life.

He added that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry always remained in forefront in addressing the issues of the business community and the general public and is committed to organize such counselling sessions in future also for the benefit of the patients.

Chief guest Professor Dr. Uzaira Rafique Vice Chancellor Fatima Jinnah

Women University underlined the need for connectivity with nature, values and families to overcome the issue by saying that our every action even little positive or negatively affect others, therefore we should be mindful of our actions.

In his address Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that it is very important to promote the joint family system to overcome the increasing violence in

the society. He dubbed the economic challenges as the cause of all the problems and said that it is the responsibility of the State to facilitate each and every individual including the business community to enable them to respectfully earn their livelihood.

Former President FPCCI and ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for organizing the seminar on a much

needed issue by expressing hope that the Chamber will continue to do so in future also. Professor Dr. Johria Azhar, Psychotherapist and Psychologist Zobia Zubair, Psychologist Sobia Khateeb and Fatima Hassan in their presentations narrated the root causes of the mental health constraints and shared valuable tips to overpower the issue. The seminar was conducted by Sadaf Asim Abbasi.

Competition Commission of Pakistan Initiates Phase 2 Review of PTCL's Acquisition of Telenor Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has successfully concluded Phase 1 of its review of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL)'s acquisition of Telenor Pakistan. This strategic transaction, involving the consolidation of telecom services, marks a significant development in the telecommunications sector for the growth and improvement of services for the customers.

Owing to the size of the transaction as well as its impact on market competition, CCP has decided to undertake a more detailed assessment in Phase 2 of the review process. This decision also aligns with CCP's precedence for evaluating Mergers & Acquisitions within the telecom industry. PTCL, a leading telecommunications provider, expresses confidence in the review process and hopes for expeditious final clearance and is actively cooperating with CCP, providing comprehensive information and documentation to facilitate a thorough evaluation. As the telecom landscape evolves, PTCL reaffirms its dedication to innovation, customer satisfaction, industry best practices and also to further advance the ambition of the company towards the betterment of the customers, the company as well as to the economic growth and digital transformation journey.

The collaboration between the two companies will expedite innovation, leveraging a larger customer base to develop more innovative and experiential products. Moreover, the combined entity will possess greater capacity to invest in future technologies to offer customers enhanced offerings.

At a macro level, increased penetration of broadband services is directly correlated with the economic growth of the country and is in line with one of the key pillars of the Digital Pakistan Vision. Furthermore, the participation of foreign financial institutions in deal financing, along with advancements in the telecom sector, holds the promise of attracting more international players to Pakistan, offering advanced digital products and services.

Dortmund, Bayern runs put Leverkusen title in perspective: Xabi Alonso

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The success of Borussia Dortmund and Bayern Munich in Europe this season highlights how impressive unbeaten Bundesliga champions Bayer Leverkusen have been, coach Xabi Alonso said Wednesday.

Alonso, speaking with Leverkusen on the brink of the Europa League final, congratulated Dortmund and Bayern, congratulating Dortmund for making the Champions League final after beating Paris Saint-Germain 2-0 on aggregate on Tuesday.

Bayern Munich can make it an all-German final by defeating Real Madrid in their finely-balanced second leg on Wednesday.

Then Leverkusen can book their place in the Europa League showdown on Thursday if they can hold onto their 2-0 lead from the first leg against Roma.

Alonso's side were crowned German champions for the first time in their history in mid-April and are on a season-long unbeaten run of 48 games in all competitions this season.

"This high level in the Bundesliga means what we've been able to do is not easy," Alonso told reporters.



"It's very positive for the Bundesliga. I should congratulate Dortmund and congratulate Edin (Terzic, their coach), it's not easy to make it to the Champions League final.

"Yesterday they played as a team so congrats to them."

Leverkusen can break the record for successive unbeaten games set by Benfica in 1965 by avoiding defeat against Roma and are two league matches away from being the first side to go through a Bundesliga season unbeaten.

Alonso played in the Bundesliga for Bayern as well as with Liverpool in the Premier League and for Real Madrid in La Liga before becoming a manager.

He was linked with Jurgen Klopp's soon-to-be-vacant manager's job at Liverpool and the hot seat at Bayern Munich but has said he will remain at Leverkusen next season.

Alonso was asked whether the English league's claims of being the best were warranted with no teams in the final four of either the Champions

League or Europa League this season.

"You can say anything you like, but results are results. They're facts — you cannot discard them," the Spaniard said.

Leverkusen only need to avoid defeat by more than a goal at home against Roma on Thursday to progress to the final in Dublin on May 22.

The 42-year-old manager said "a return leg is always a dangerous situation. No matter what the first result was, a goal can quickly change the situation and the mindset.

"We want to be aggressive, to control the game and to defend well."

Last season, Roma defeated Leverkusen over two legs to make it to the final and Alonso said the bitter memory of that May evening would motivate them.

"We haven't forgotten what we experienced in our stadium and the feeling we felt last year.

"We must use this energy and hopefully we can celebrate at the end."

Leverkusen defender Edmund Tapsoba echoed Alonso's statements, telling reporters "we saw last season how our fans suffered after the defeat against Roma.

"We want to give back to them for what they did for us this season."

Bangladesh recall Shakib Al Hasan for last two Zimbabwe T20s

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Bangladesh on Wednesday recalled all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan and pace bowler Mustafizur Rahman for the final two T20s of the five-match series against Zimbabwe.

Former captain Shakib has not played a T20 since July 2023 and was this year elected as a member of parliament for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ruling party.

Shakib has refused to draw the curtains on his cricket career, and his participation in this series is the strongest indication that he will compete in next month's ICC T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled in the West Indies and the United States of America (USA).

"We expect him to play



in the World Cup. This is why he is back in the squad for this series," Jalal Yunus, the cricket operations chief of the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB), told AFP.

Left-arm pace bowler Mustafizur was rested for the first three matches after returning from the Indian Premier League (IPL), where he was the season's joint-highest wicket-taker for the Chennai Super

Kings.

Top-order batsman Soumya Sarkar also returned to the side after missing the first three matches due to injury.

Parvez Hossain Emon and Afif Hossain, both named in the squad for the first three matches but neither making the XI, have been left out. Meanwhile, pace bowler Shoriful Islam also rested to accommodate

the returning trio.

Bangladesh have already sealed the series 3-0, with the last two matches scheduled in Dhaka on Friday and Sunday.

The Zimbabwe tour is the last home series for Bangladesh before the T20 World Cup kicks off on June 1.

Yunus said the BCB expected to announce its World Cup squad at the end of the series.

Bangladesh Squad Najmul Hossain Shanto (capt), Liton Das, Tanzid Hasan Tamim, Shakib Al Hasan, Towhid Hridoy, Mahmudullah Riyad, Jaker Ali Anik, Mahedi Hasan, Rishad Hossain, Taskin Ahmed, Mustafizur Rahman, Tanzim Hasan Sakib, Soumya Sarkar, Tanvir Islam, Mohammad Saifuddin.

Pakistan, Japan to lock horns in Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 final on May 11

Pakistan have sailed through tough matches to the final of the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 in Ipoh, Malaysia, in which they would take on Japan on May 11 at the same venue.

Pakistan and Japan have qualified for the final of the ongoing Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 in Ipoh, Malaysia after they finished at the top of the points table.

The two sides will lock horns on May 11 at the same venue.

Pakistan are at the top of the table after four games. They have registered three wins and a draw.

Meanwhile, Japan also have the same number of wins and a draw.

Malaysia and New Zealand are placed at third and fourth respectively with six points. Korea have registered three points and are at five while Canada with no wins, are teetering at sixth.

Pakistan will play their final round game against New Zealand on May 10.

On the other hand, Japan defeated Malaysia by 2-1 to confirm their place in the final.

Pakistan women's team holds training session on third day

Sports Desk

LEICESTER: Pakistan women's team participated in the training session on the third day at Uptonsteel County Cricket Ground here on Wednesday for the white-ball series against England.

The players will participate in the robust training session until 1 PM local time, before the first practice match.

Pakistan women's team will play a warm-up match against England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) Development XI on May 9, starting at 11 AM local time.

The team will then leave for Birmingham, where they

will play the first match of the three-match T20I series against England on May 11.

The second T20 match of the series will be played on May 17, while the third and final match will be played on May 19, followed by the ODI series, starting from May 23.

Notably, the ODIs in the series are part of ICC Women's Championship 2022-25 and this will be Pakistan's eighth and final series in the current event cycle.

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

The top five teams from this championship, along with hosts India, will directly qualify for the

ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.

Pakistan women squad for England tour

Nida Dar (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar

Player support personnel: Nahida Khan (manager), Mauhtashim Rasheed (interim head coach), Saleem Jaffar (bowling coach), Taufeeq Umar (batting coach), Hanif Malik (fielding coach), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager), Rabia Siddiq (physiotherapist), Zubair Ahmed (analyst) and Hina Munawar (chief security officer)



Tour Schedule

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

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

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

19 May – 3rd T20I, Leeds

(1.00 pm local time)

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

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

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

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

Pakistan Jr. Tennis team for South Asian Tennis Championship announced

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: A three-member Pakistan Junior Tennis team has been announced for the forthcoming South Asian Tennis Championship to be played in Kathmandu, Nepal from May 20-29, 2024.

The players selected include Rashid Ali Buchani (Sindh), Muhammad Shayan Afridi and Muhammad Junaid Khan (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa).

The players are really pumped up for the event. Surprisingly, since 2011 each of the national team either U12, U14, U16 or Davis Cup national squads, none of the coaches of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been named alongside the team to recognize

their efforts and hard work with the players who were selected in the national side.

Talking to the media, Shayan Afridi said that he will try his level best to win the trophy in U12 category. He was working hard for the event. After a long struggle, he had been included in the national team.

He said that he has been playing tennis for the last four years and had won many competitions, including Pakistan Junior Open, PSB Cup, Bank of Punjab Cup and many more.

Muhammad Junaid said that he had also been playing tennis for the last four years and his victories are quite high. "I could not express the joy of joining the national team for the first time.

He said he had an honour of winning runners-up trophies in Sheikho Steel in U12 and U14 categories besides winning Milat Tractor's both U12 and U14 categories trophies.

Muhammad Junaid said that he won runners-up trophy of the Service Tyres and reached the semi-finals in the U14 category of the same.

He said that he reached the quarter-finals of the Sheharyar Malik Open Tennis and won the winner trophy in the U12 category besides winning the trophy of the Haji Umar Khatib Memorial Tennis Open Championship U14 category.

Omar Ayaz Khalil, Secretary of the KP Tennis Association, when contacted, said that it was

a good news that two junior players took trials and were selected for the National team to play tennis for the first time at international level.

He said other players who have been selected to represent Pakistan include Shoaib Khan, Barkat Ullah, Yousaf Khalil, Saqib Umar, Aqib Umar, Kashan Umar, Hamza Roman, Hamid Israr, Uzair Khan with two of the upcoming selected team players Junaid Khan and Shayan also got the honor of becoming international players and represented Senior and Junior Davis Cup teams.

Khalil said, "We have well qualified coaches who worked hard with the players and they had been selected for various teams



at the national level including Shaharyah Khan, Shah Hussain, Zakir Ullah, and Nouman Khan. All of them are well talented but Pakistan Tennis Federation did

not give them a chance to go with the teams as coaches. They deserved to be named with the team because of their hard efforts, yet to be recognized."

He said four other players Muhammad Faizan Afridi, Ryan Umar Khalil, Salar Khan and Shaharyar Khan will soon join the teams.



KARACHI: Chief Guest Ali Hussain Vice President Regional Cricket Association Karachi Inaugurate the PCB Inter Club Cricket Tournament at Annu Bhai Park. Azam Khan, Khalid Nafees, Mazhar Awan and Visal Ansari also present on the occasion.

Pakistan beat Canada 5-4 to become a strong final contender



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hockey team on Wednesday defeated Canada 5-4 in their fourth pool match to solidify their position to earn a final spot in Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, underway in Ipoh, Malaysia. With the win, Pakistan has accumulated 10 points in four matches and is now a strong contender for the title.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Hockey Federation, Canada took early lead in the 5th minute with a goal from Sean Davis and another in the 17th minute from Harbir Sidhu. Pakistan's Abubakar Mahmood scored two goals in the 28th and 29th minutes, levelling the score. After halftime, experienced goalkeeper Abdullah Ashfaq Khan took over the Pakistani goalpost. Arshad Liaqat, Rana Waheed Ashraf and Ghazanfar Ali scored goals in the 36th, 44th, and 45th minutes, respectively, solidifying Pakistan's lead. Canada's Sean Davis scored a field goal in the 45th minute, and Avjot Butter scored another field goal in the 50th minute, reducing Canada's goal deficit. However, Pakistan emerged victorious in the end. Six teams are participating in the event, including hosts Malaysia, Pakistan, Korea, Japan, New Zealand, and Canada. Pakistan will play their fifth and final pool match against New Zealand on Friday.

SA Gardens, Wapda quality for National Challenge Cup semis



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: SA Gardens and Wapda emerged victorious in the National Challenge Cup 2023 quarterfinals, securing their berths in the semi-finals here at the Jinnah Stadium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday. In the first quarterfinal, SA Gardens edged past WSTC with a narrow scoreline of 1-0. Umar netted the lone goal of the match in the 38th minute. WSTC couldn't break through SA Gardens' defense despite a fierce battle.

The head coach of SA Gardens Zafar Iqbal conveyed his gratitude towards the Pakistan Football Federation for organizing such events. "I am very happy that my team qualified for the next stage," he said. "I would like to thank PFF for holding such events and I hope PFF will continue to organize such events in a professional and befitting manner." In the second quarterfinal, Wapda secured a victory against PAF with a 1-0 triumph. The decisive goal, scored by Shayek Dost in the 9th minute propelled Wapda into the semi-finals. Commenting on the match, Wapda's head coach, Muhammad Habib, expressed his team's eagerness for the competition. "We have been waiting for the competitions for so long," he stated. "Both the teams played very well and we will continue to carry this momentum in semi-finals." With the stage set for the semi-finals, the Pakistan Army is set to clash with Wapda, while SA Gardens will face HEC. Both the semis are scheduled to take place on May 10 at the Jinnah Football Stadium.

Save the life

ISLAMABAD: Children getting blood transfusions at the Thalassemia Center in F-9 Park in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM directs immediate establishment of Pakistan Skill Company, Skill Development Fund

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed the authorities concerned to immediately initiate the process of establishing the Pakistan Skill Company and Pakistan Skill Development Fund to unify the technical and vocational education countrywide and provide better employment to Pakistani workers abroad.

The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting to review

the matters of the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVVTC), decided to introduce reforms in the said organisations.

He instructed to further activate the NAVVTC to provide world-class technical and vocational training to the young workforce and also called for ensuring the globally renowned and international certifications in all techni-

cal fields.

The prime minister also emphasised the collaboration between the center and provinces to elevate the quality of Pakistan's technical manpower and human resource development.

He called for establishing an integrated system of regulating the manpower equipped with the best and world-class professional technical skills.

Besides, in coordination with NADRA, NAVVTC and all the provincial institutions,

a database of manpower in the country and abroad should be developed, he added.

Stressing the need for implementing the technical and vocational training plans, the prime minister also directed to reform the license regime of the companies engaged in employment of Pakistani skilled and technical workforce abroad.

He said the individuals and companies should be identified those are found involved in defrauding the people and inflicting financial

losses besides defaming Pakistan internationally.

Federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema and Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, State Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Chairman of PM Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Coordinator to PM Rana Ehsan Afzal, SIFC National Coordinator Lt. General Sarfaraz Ahmed, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan and senior officers attended the meeting.

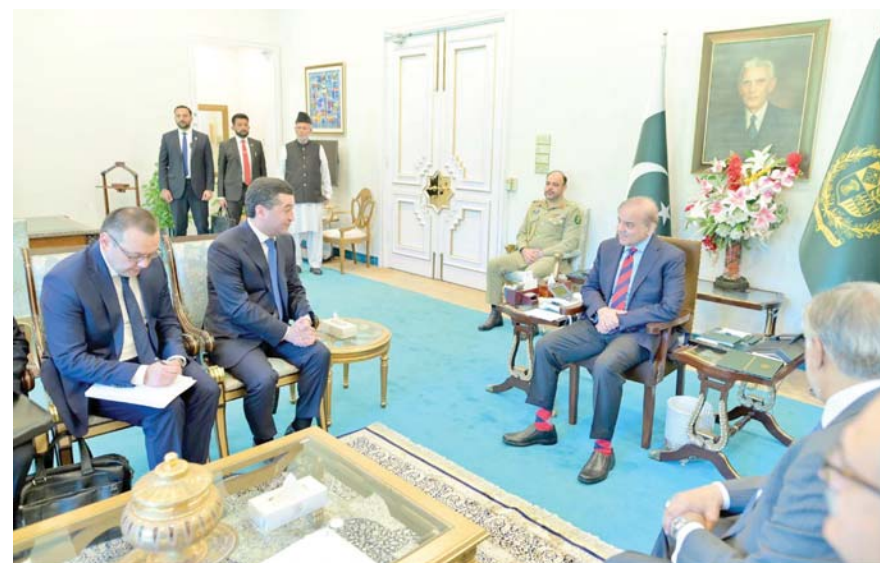
PM reiterates commitment to complete trade, connectivity projects with Uzbekistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday reiterated that Pakistan was committed to working with Uzbekistan to speed up and complete all bilateral trade and connectivity projects.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhtiyor Saidov, who is currently on a two-day visit to Pakistan, reaffirmed Pakistan's readiness to provide access to Uzbekistan to Pakistani Ports, a PM Office press release said.

He also emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project and Pakistan's commit-



The two sides discussed enhanced cooperation

ment to its early completion. between Pakistan and Uzbekistan in the fields of trade and economy, security and defense, connectivity and people-to-people contacts. The importance of peace and development in Afghanistan for regional connectivity was also discussed.

Congratulating the prime minister on his re-election, the Uzbek foreign minister also conveyed the invitation of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev for Prime Minister Shehbaz to undertake an official visit to Uzbekistan at his earliest convenience.

The prime minister expressed gratitude to President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and said that he was looking forward to meeting him.

President NBP inaugurated the newly renovated Main Branch, Multan

PPA

MULTAN: Rehmat Ali Hasnie, President National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), inaugurated the newly renovated Main Branch in Multan. Staff members, regional officials, and guests attended the inauguration ceremony. Mr. Hasnie extended his heartfelt congratulations to all contributors to the renovation project, with special recognition given to Mr. Imran Gul, the General Manager of Southern Punjab, and Mr. Aurangzeb Ahmed Shaikh, the Group Head, Engineering for their exceptional dedication and leadership.

During the event, NBP president expressed genuine appreciation for the hard work and commitment of the bank's staff. He also engaged with junior staff members.

Ambassador of France meets the Minister for Finance and Revenue

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of France to Pakistan Mr. Nicholas Galey, called on Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, at the Finance Division, today, to discuss matters of mutual interests and to further strengthen the bilateral relations between Pakistan and France.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the French Ambassador and appreciated the support extended by the French government for renewal of GSP Plus status to Pakistan.

The Finance Minister briefed the envoy on the steps taken by the government to stabilize the economy including notable increases in agricultural production, forex reserves reaching \$9 billion, stable rupee, declining inflation, and upswing in the stock market. He also informed the French Ambassador about the successful conclusion of the second IMF review under the



Standby Arrangement (SBA). The Federal Minister further apprised the Ambassador of key reforms being undertaken by the government including Privatization, SOEs reforms, FBR end-to-end digitization, export-led growth, and energy sector reforms to bring costs down. Moreover, the Finance Minister emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a key

platform for investor facilitation, streamlining processes to foster investment and economic growth.

Acknowledging the efforts of the Pakistani government, the French Ambassador expressed optimism about the future trajectory of economic cooperation between Pakistan and France. The Ambassador offered technical cooperation in the areas of interest for sustainable

economic growth. He recognized the progress made by the government of Pakistan in stabilizing the economy and expressed confidence in the potential for further collaboration.

Looking ahead, both parties affirmed their commitment to deepen economic relations, exploring investment opportunities, and expanding bilateral trade.

May 9 to be remembered as 'dark day' in Pakistan's history: President

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday asserted that May 9, 2023 will always be remembered as a dark day in Pakistan's history when a politically instigated mob ran amok across the country, damaging public property and military installations.

On May 9, 2023, charged mobs vandalised private and public properties including military installations following the arrest of PTI founder Imran Khan, which formed the basis of a severe state crackdown against him and his party.

In a statement issued on X, President Zardari strongly condemned the violence and said the unfortunate incidents severely tarnished the country's image, which only served the interests of Pakistan's enemies.

He termed the mob attacks as an attempt to challenge the writ of the state, undermine the rule of law and weaken the institutions.

The President said that peaceful demonstrations and constructive criticism were the essence of democracy, emphasizing that Pakistan's Constitution enshrined the fundamental rights of assembly and expression.

Nonetheless, he stressed the vital



importance of exercising these rights with utmost responsibility, adhering strictly to the bounds of constitutional and legal provisions. He affirmed that any attempt to misuse these rights to incite violence would never be tolerated.

"We have never seen such vandalism in responsible democracies, with violent mobs wreaking havoc on state properties for political gains," he remarked.

The President expressed pride in Pakistan's Armed Forces and its institutions, which had been a vanguard in defending the nation against various threats. He emphasised that those responsible for the May 9 violence should be held accountable according to the law.

EDOTCO Group delegation calls on Minister of State for IT Shaza Fatima



PPA

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of Telecom Infrastructure Services Company EDOTCO Group from Malaysia led by its Group CEO Mohamed Adlan Ahmad Tajuddin called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja in her office on Wednesday.

Matters of mutual interest and related to Telecom infrastructure were discussed in the meeting.

The other members of the delegation included Annis Sheikh Mohammed, Group CFO, Noreen Sabrina Mohd Noor, Group Head, Corporate Communications, Abdul Aziz, Country Managing Director, and Muhammad Rehan Farooqui, Director of

Corporate Affairs and Planning.

While talking to delegation, Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima said that steps are being taken for digitalization in the country. She said that the present government is committed for the provision quality broadband and Internet services to masses.

EDOTCO delegation said that role of the Ministry of IT & Telecom in the promotion of IT and Telecommunication sector is laudable. The two sides also agreed to form a working group.

Additional Secretary MoITT Ms. Aisha Humera Moriani, CEO NITB Babar Mujaheed Bhatti, Member Telecommunication Muhammad Jahanzeb Rahim, DG International Coordination Syed Jawwad Ali Sherazi were also present.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan minister discuss trade, economic ties at sidelines of high-level meeting

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and Uzbekistan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bakhtiyor Saidov, convened on Wednesday at the Ministry of Commerce to deliberate on matters of mutual interest and trade augmentation.

During, a side line meeting, Jam Kamal underscored the profound, amicable, fraternal, religious, and strategic ties existing between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, emphasizing the significance of nurturing these relations further.

Extending a warm reception, Jam



Kamal cordially greeted the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, affirming Pakistan's eagerness to strengthen collaboration. In response, the Uzbekistan Minister acknowledged the gracious hospitality extended and expressed a commitment to bolster bilateral relations across all sectors.

Bah Bahamas to recognize State of Palestine

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates welcomes the decision of the Bahamas to recognize the State of Palestine and considers it an important decision consistent with the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people at a time when all Palestinians are subjected to an attempt to displace and obliterate their cause at the hands of Israel, the occupying power.

The importance of this decision also comes within the framework of its contribution to embodying the independent Palestinian state on Earth with East Jerusalem as its capital, which will contribute to achieving stability and peace in the Middle East region.

The Ministry appreciates the posi-

tions of all Caribbean Basin countries and their noble endeavors to push towards achieving justice and freedom for the Palestinian people, and for their actual support for the principle of the two-state solution, starting with the recognition of two states, as all of these countries have now recognized the State of Palestine and are working to establish diplomatic relations with it on the basis of respect and mutual recognition.

The Ministry calls on the remaining countries that have not yet recognized the State of Palestine to join the Caribbean countries and to rely on the popular will and international legitimacy to do justice to the Palestinian people and support their right to independence and to live in dignity and justice like the rest of the peoples of the earth.