



Scientists crack code of this angry young star's violent eruptions
Some young stars in the Milky Way just cannot stop bedeviling scientists with their erratic behaviours and FU Orionis, a binary star system, which has been erupting violently since 1936, is one such glaring example, reported Science Alert Tuesday. According to the findings published in the Astrophysical Journal, the binary star system suddenly sparked flares 1,000 times its usual brightness, leaving experts to scratch their heads.



Conversion of 29,000 Agricultural TubeWells to solar on cards
The Chief Minister Balochistan in a meeting with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal has vowed that steps would be taken to convert around 29,000 registered Agricultural Tube Wells on solar energy as an alternative solution to growing power consumption. The chief minister has pledged to take more efforts aimed to resolve the problems faced by the province... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Cabinet meeting



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Tuesday.

Photo: PID

Putin to pay state visit to China



Xinhua
BEIJING: At the invitation of Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin will pay a state visit to China from May 16 to 17, foreign ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying announced on Tuesday.
This is Putin's first state visit after he was sworn in as Russian president for a new term, Wang Wenbin, another foreign ministry spokesperson, told a regular press briefing.
As this year marks the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia, during the visit, Xi and Putin will exchange views on bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, and international and regional issues of common concern, Wang said.
He added that China will release relevant information on this visit in a timely manner.

Cabinet approves Appellate Tribunals Inland Revenue (Conditions of Service) Rules 2024

Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet in its meeting on Tuesday with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, in the chair, approved Appellate Tribunals Inland Revenue (Conditions of Service) Rules 2024 under which the appointment of members of Appellate Tribunals would be made. The main purpose of the Appellate Tribunals was to dispose of pending cases related to tax matters, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.
The federal cabinet accorded its approval to Conditions of Service Rules 2024 on the recommendations of Ministry of Law and Justice. Cabinet approves Appellate Tribunals Inland Revenue (Conditions of Service) Rules 2024. The meeting also approved amendments in the laws related to Toshakhana gifts. Under the amended provisions, the recipients of shields, souvenirs and other such like gifts would not hold them but these gifts would be displayed at a prominent place within the premises of the recipients' institutions or organizations, besides maintaining of a record in this regard. With regard to gifts of books, the recipients would not keep them with themselves rather it would be displayed in their offices or in public libraries while a catalog would be maintained. Whereas those gifts deemed prohibited under the local laws would be wasted under the presence of committee constituted by the Cabinet Division. Similarly, the honorarium for the expert from private sector evaluating Toshakhana gifts would be enhanced.
Cabinet approves Appellate Tribunals Inland Revenue (Conditions of Service) Rules 2024. During the previous PDM government, the then federal cabinet had approved Toshakhana Policy 2023 which imposed restrictions on President, Prime Minister, cabinet members and government officials from receiving gifts valued more than US\$300. As per policy, no public holder could keep a gift worth the same value while the gift below US\$300 value could be obtained after due payment under the relevant mechanism. The cabinet ratified decisions of May 7 taken by Cabinet Committee for Legislative Cases. However, it directed for constitution of a special committee to hold consultations over amendments in Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016. The committee would comprise representatives from the coalition parties and headed by Adviser to PM on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah. The cabinet, on the recommendation of Ministry of Health, approved tax and duty exemption on 1 million bottles of Multi-Micro Nutrients for the pregnant women, donated by Kirk Humanitarian USA and Junaid Family Foundation USA. It also granted approval for amendment in section 3 (1) of the laws related to Appointment of Investment Mohtasib (Ombudsman) on the recommendation of Ministry of Law and Justice which made the holding of degree in commerce, finance and related sector as mandatory for the post of Mohtasib. The cabinet gave nod to the decisions taken by its Economic Coordination Committee on May 7 in its meeting.

Australian High Commissioner meets the Minister for Finance & Revenue



City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan H. E. Mr. Neil Hawkins, called on Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, at the Finance Division today, to discuss bilateral matters and to strengthen the longstanding relations between Pakistan and Australia.
The Finance Minister welcomed the Australian High Commissioner and underscored the long-standing mutual relations between Australia and Pakistan. Mr. Neil Hawkins extended his felicitations to Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on his appointment as the Finance Minister. The Minister highlighted that Pakistan greatly values the relation with Australian Government and emphasized on the need to work together to further enhance and strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries especially in the areas of economic cooperation and trade.
During the course of discussion, the Finance Minister apprised the Australian High Commissioner of the various initiatives being undertaken by the Government under the leadership of the Prime Minister. While underscoring the need for digitalization, it was highlighted that the services of McKinsey & Company have been engaged for digitalization of the tax system.
The Finance Minister further spoke of the resolve of government to privatize various

Govt prioritizing IT education, digitization of Pakistan: Shaza

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja Tuesday said that the information technology (IT) played a crucial role in global development, and the government is prioritizing IT education and digitization efforts within the country. Addressing the "1st SATRC Working Group Meeting on Policy Regulation & Services" organized by the PTA and APT, Shaza Fatima highlighted the formulation of a National Fiber Connectivity Policy aimed at increasing optical fiber network penetration across the country.
She stressed the signif-



icance of connectivity and telecom networks for the growth and development of the nation, underlining the need to bridge the digital gender gap through collaborative efforts among stakeholders. She said that the Ministry of IT had set an ambitious target of boosting information technology exports to \$25 billion. She also mentioned the implementation of the Prime Minister's National Digitalization Plan, which focused on digitalizing the economy
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Nearly 450,000 Gazans now uprooted from Rafah amid relentless Israeli bombardment

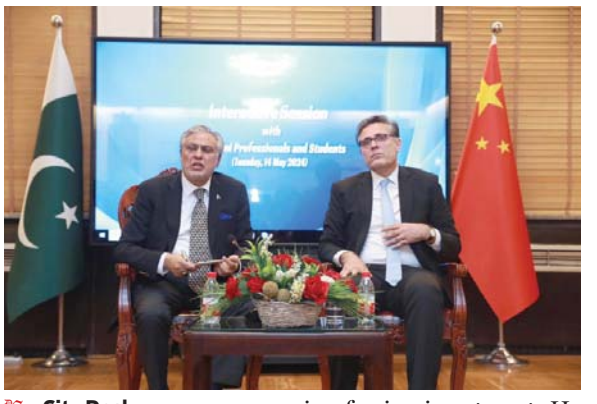
Spokesman Report
UNITED NATIONS: Almost 450,000 Palestinians have fled from Rafah over the past week, the UN says, as Israeli tanks reportedly pushed deeper into the southern Gaza city which now looks like a "ghost town". "People face constant exhaustion, hunger and fear," warned the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA.
"Empty streets in Rafah as families continue to flee in search of safety... UNRWA estimates that nearly 450,000 people have been forcibly displaced from Rafah since 6 May," said the UN agency in a post from western Rafah on X. "Inland in Rafah is now a ghost town. It's hard to believe there were over one million people sheltering here just a week ago," reported UNRWA spokesperson Louise Wateridge. "People face constant exhaustion, hunger and fear. Nowhere is safe. An immediate ceasefire is the only hope." The development comes as Israeli airstrikes continued to hit northern and southern Gaza amid reports that the Israeli military said it had hit 120 targets in the past 24-hour period. "Ground incursions and heavy fighting continue to be reported in eastern Rafah as well as Gaza City and the Jabaliya refugee camp," the UN aid coordination office, OCHA, said in its latest situation update late Monday. Many of those forced to leave eastern Rafah had already been displaced multiple times in the past seven months, the UN office explained. In the north, evacuation orders were also issued on Saturday "amid ongoing Israeli bombardment there", OCHA said, noting that some 100,000 people have left their homes and shelters so far. "OCHA remains deeply concerned about the lack of protection for civilians and the lack of safety for humanitarian operations," the UN agency said, noting that one fifth of Gaza's population had been displaced in just the last week. "Civilians must be protected and have their basic needs met, whether they move or stay. Those who leave must have enough time
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No compromise on national security issues: Atta Tarar

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday said there would be no compromise on national security issues that needed to be discussed at appropriate forums through proper procedure.
Addressing a news conference along with Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, he said the Attorney General of Pakistan was the representative of State and his request for in-camera briefing on a specific national security issue, had been taken out of context.
He pointed out the Attorney General had made the request just for the sake of national security.
Atta Tarar underlined the need of fully understanding the sensitivity of national interest, adding that the Attorney General had already clarified his position on the issue. He said the national security issues should be discussed at the appropriate forums.
"If a matter needs discussion, the chief justice has the authority to call a full-court," he added. The minister expressed the optimism that the institutions would collectively work for the national interests of the country.



Deputy PM highlights reform agenda aimed at economic growth



City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday outlined the comprehensive reform agenda of the Government of Pakistan that sought to foster economic growth and development by enhancing revenue, promoting austerity and harnessing foreign investment. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for the overseas Pakistanis and harnessing their ideas and potential for national development agenda.
The deputy prime minister and foreign minister held an interactive session of Pakistani
Continued on Page 8

Governor Punjab says will ensure basic services for the people of Attock district

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has said that Pakistan was achieved after many sacrifices and now we have to work together for the stability of this country and we are supporting Nawaz League only for the development of the country.

He said this while addressing a workers' convention in Pindigheb, Attock district. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that our international relations have also started improving and this will improve the country's economy. He said that the people of the People's Party are our pride and now after his appointment everyone in Punjab and Attock is the governor of the entire province. He said that he is thankful for the trust of President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and his mission is only to serve the people. He said that the doors of



the Governor House are open to the public at all times. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that all basic facilities including education

and health will be provided to the entire province and Attock district. Governor Punjab said that President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari and Chair-

man Bilawal Bhutto have entrusted us with the responsibility. He said that he will fulfill this important responsibility by serving the people. He said that after taking the oath, he is grateful for the wonderful reception by the people of Attock and he is very grateful for the recognition of all the local leaders, we will share our love and respect. He said that he wants to serve his country and region and this country Pakistan, which was obtained after great sacrifices, and now this country is being given economic stability with the support of IMF and World Bank.

The governor said that the blood of the leaders of PPP is in the foundations of this country and these sacrifices were given and are being given for the welfare and development of the people. He said that measures will be taken to provide all kinds of facilities to the people of the province and Attock because PPP is the representative party of the people and the people have always got relief during its tenure.

Sindh Govt plans to establish new industrial zones

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Government is planning to establish new industrial zones across the province, mainly in Karachi, under a new industrialization policy to attract local and foreign investors and businessmen to boost up economic activities across the province.

Jam Ikramullah Dharejo, Minister for Industries and Commerce—Government of Sindh, stated this while talking to business community at the Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industries (FBATI) here on Tuesday.

He further said industrial zones are being considered at various locations, including Port Qasim, to enhance industrial activities and employment opportunities in the province and commercial capital.

The provincial government is also planning to allocate funds in the Annual Development Plan (ADP) to develop the required infrastructure across the seven industrial zones in Karachi aimed at facilitating the existing industrialists in the province.

The provincial minister further said the government will introduce a public-private partnership to promote the concept of setting up combined effluent plants in industrial zones as per requirement of exporting countries.

President FBATI Syed Raza Hussain said the provincial government should continue to collaborate with industrialists through monthly meetings of the industry liaison committee to address industry challenges meaningfully.

On occasion, CEO FITTE Babar Khan said Chinese investors are interested in setting up industrial units in Karachi but are reluctant to invest due to the city's lack of facilities, dilapidated infrastructure, and security issues.

He pointed out that several companies in Sindh that are mulling to relocate their operations to Punjab due to the availability of affordable lands, abundance of water, and required infrastructure.

There should be an industrial belt from the outskirts of Karachi to major cities of the Sindh to cater to industrial activities across the province with availability of infrastructure and utilities for investors.

UoG seminar explores AI's role in shaping future IT landscape

Bureau Report

GUJRAT: The University of Gujrat's Hafiz Hayat Campus was abuzz with ideas on Tuesday as the Hayatian Computing Society (HCS) and Hayatian Information Technology Society (HITS) hosted a pivotal seminar on Artificial Intelligence (AI). Titled 'Cultivating Efficiency and Innovation: Embracing AI in Software Industry', the event drew industry experts and students alike to explore AI's transformative role in technology and its burgeoning opportunities within Pakistan's IT sector.

Attending the event as the chief guest, Mr Khurram Shehzad, an Enterprise Architect from the Albertamotor Association Canada, delved into AI's multifaceted impact on software development. He emphasized AI's growing indispensability across professional domains and its potential to redefine human behaviour and interactions. With AI poised for exponential growth in the coming years, Shehzad encouraged students to harness their intellectual prowess and embrace perseverance as cornerstones for success and innovation in the field.

The seminar also served as a platform for technical skill-building, with Chairperson Dr Fayaz Majid and Society Coordinator Najeeb ur Rahman facilitating enriching discussions. In his closing remarks, Mr Najeeb ur Rahman underscored the university's commitment to fostering a culture of innovation, while Dr Majid honoured Mr Shehzad's contributions with a commemorative shield. The event concluded on a high note, with a significant turnout from the Computer Science and Information Technology departments, signalling a bright future for AI in Pakistan.

FIA NCB-Interpol Pakistan: 6 month performance report

PPA

ISLAMABAD: FIA National Central Bureau (NCB)- INTERPOL Pakistan has achieved significant milestones in combating transnational crime.

During the last six months, A total of 66 accused wanted for serious crimes, including murder, attempted murder, robbery, kidnapping, and corruption, were apprehended from different countries.

FIA NCB-INTERPOL had issued red notices for the arrest of these accused.

Among the arrested, 50 were wanted in murder cases, 5 in fraud and forgery, 4 in robbery cases, and 3 in cases of attempted murder.

The arrested accused were wanted by various law enforcement agencies, including FIA, NAB, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Azad Kashmir Police.

Accused were arrested from UAE (35), Saudi Arabia (18), Oman (5), Kuwait (2), Italy (2), and other countries. Accused arrested in Spain, Turkey, Bahrain, and Azerbaijan were also successfully extradited.

The arrested accused have been handed over to the concerned authorities.

Director General FIA, Ahmed Ishaq Jahangir, commended NCB Interpol Pakistan for its outstanding performances

NCB Interpol Pakistan, equipped with modern technology, remains in constant communication with law enforcement agencies worldwide, ensuring seamless cooperation. DG FIA

DG FIA urged accelerated actions to apprehend suspects wanted for serious crimes.

Solidarity

KARACHI: Supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami Minority Wing take part in a rally against Israeli airstrikes and to show solidarity with Palestinian people living in Gaza, on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

International Nurses Day Celebration at Children's Hospital Multan

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Children's Hospital Multan Dean Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti. Under the leadership of Medical Superintendent Dr. Kamran Asif and Nursing Superintendent Mrs. Tabitha Gohar, International Nurses Day ceremony was organized in which Nursing Superintendent of Children's Hospital and other senior staff nurses participated.

Dean Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti addressed all the nurses on this occasion and spoke about the importance of nursing staff in



the hospital and the role of nurses in patient care on the occasion of Inter-

national Nurses Day and said that the role of nursing staff is There is also a spinal canal in the hospital.

Dean Children's Hospital congratulated everyone on this occasion and said that we appreciate the services of all the hardworking nurses who are selflessly, diligently and honestly performing their duties in our hospital and thank them for their services. It is our duty to do.

At the end, Dean Children's Hospital Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti and Medical Superintendent Dr. Kamran Asif also cut the cake with all the participants.

Punjab Govt Struggling For Provide Better Healthcare. Education and Other Facilities: Marium Khan

Kiran Asim/Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan, Ms. Maryam Khan, is esteemed as one of the foremost talented female bureaucrats within the Pakistani bureaucratic realm. Ms. Maryam Khan has rendered her services across various districts of Punjab antecedent to her assignment in Multan, where the pace of developmental endeavors surpassed that of its counterparts.

I arrive imbued with the ethos of servitude and affluence, aimed at the denizens of the Multan Division, particularly within the confines of Pakistan. My aspirations entail the primacy of Multan's ascendancy within Pakistan's developmental narrative. To realize this vision, we are diligently marshalling our resources and expending concerted efforts, thereby precipitating rapid progress on a daily basis. Reflecting on the state of the cotton industry in the Multan Division two decades past, it is evident that we once held sway as a preeminent exporter of this commodity worldwide. Districts such as Multan, Lodhran, Khanewal, and Vehari boasted global repute for their cotton produce, attracting international clientele who



made pilgrimages to Pakistan, specifically the Multan Division, in pursuit of procuring said commodity.

We are dedicating our utmost efforts to achieve the complete restoration of this region, harboring optimistic expectations of swiftly reinstating it to its former stature. Diligent endeavors are underway to revitalize our textile industry, facilitating the resumption of cotton exports to global markets at pre-existing levels.

Speaking on the subject of education, Commissioner Multan Ms. Maryam Khan articulated her commitment to enhancing the educational standards, particularly for individuals belonging to the working class, such as rickshaw drivers and those engaged in daily labor for sustenance. She underscored

her dedication to fostering the educational advancement of their offspring, viewing it as her imperative. Her vision entails empowering these youth, who commence their toil at a tender age, to emerge as accomplished contributors to society subsequent to receiving a formal education. Initiatives have been initiated in various districts within the Multan division, with active endeavors already underway in Khanewal, and similar efforts poised for implementation in Multan, Vehari, and Lodhran in the near future. The overarching objective is to afford impoverished children access to education, thereby instilling within them a beacon of hope for their families, and positioning them to provide comprehensive support therein.

Furthermore, Commissioner Multan, Ms. Maryam Khan, articulated that the esteemed Chief Minister of Punjab, Madam Maryam Nawaz, has embarked upon a formidable mission, mandating the initiation of sanitation endeavors. This initiative is currently underway across all administrative districts within our jurisdiction, eliciting a commendable response from the populace. While the inception of this endeavor ought to have occurred earlier, by the grace of the



Almighty, progress is now evident—a significant stride forward. Anticipating consequential outcomes, we envisage transformative impacts in the foreseeable future. Concurrently, in addressing healthcare concerns, we endeavor to augment the medical infrastructure of all districts throughout our jurisdiction. Our unwavering commitment revolves around fostering a salubrious environment conducive to well-being. Recogniz-


ing the imperative of enhancing hospital facilities, particularly for maternal and pediatric care, stringent directives have been issued to the medical personnel, underscoring an unequivocal dedication to patient welfare.

We shall squarely confront the myriad challenges prevailing within the Multan division and earnestly endeavor to redress them. Additionally, the prevalent predicament of childhood blind-

ness in this locale warrants our concerted attention, and we are diligently striving towards its amelioration.

Regarding wheat, she articulated that the regions of Multan, Vehari, Lodhran, and Khanewal bear significant import in wheat cultivation, the yields of which hold paramount importance. Speaking on wheat procurement, Commissioner Multan, Ms. Maryam Khan, conveyed that directives have been disseminated to the Deputy Commissioners (DCs) and Assistant Commissioners (ACs) across all districts. It is anticipated that the wheat production within the Multan division shall surpass previous records substantially.

Regarding the infrastructure of the interconnecting roads spanning the four districts, Commissioner Multan, Ms. Maryam Khan, articulated that it holds paramount importance within my agenda. Deliberations concerning the allocation of funds for the Vehari Main Road are presently underway, and expeditiously, this endeavor shall come to fruition. It behooves us to labor incessantly, thus rendering the Multan Division a paragon for the entirety of Pakistan, thereby propelling our nation towards the trajectory of advancement.


Islamabad
15° - 23° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings
Fajr 3:32 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:58 pm
Maghrib 7:01 pm
Isha 8:38 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 Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

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

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

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

One killed, two injured in road incident

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: One killed while two others were injured in road incident on GT road in Kamra in the limits of Hazro Police station on Tuesday, Police and rescue sources said. Police and rescue sources said while overtaking a vehicle, the mini truck rammed in to a truck in to its rare resultant driver identified as 26 years old Farooq Ahmed died on the spot and two cleaners identified as 38 years old Ameen and 28 years old Sabir was injured critically. The dead and injured were shifted to tehsil headquarters hospital Hazro. The dead and injured belongs to Faisalabad. Meanwhile a motorcyclist was crushed to death by a speedy dumper on GT road near underpass in the limits of Taxila Police station on Tuesday. Police sources said Muhammad Shoab was going on his motorcycle when a speedy dumper recklessly driven by unknown driver knocked him resultant he died on the spot. The dumper driver managed to escape from the scene successfully. Police registered a case and launched further investigation. #

CCP signs MoU with directorate of legal education

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) and the Directorate of Legal Education (DLE) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at raising awareness among law students and lawyers. The signing ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Azam Nazir Tarar, Federal Secretary Law and Justice, Raja Naeem Akbar, Chairman CCP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Member CCP Salman Amin, CCP's Senior Legal Advisor Barrister Ambreen Abbasi, Director DLE Barrister Usama Malik, senior representatives of the Pakistan Bar Council, and senior officials from CCP. DLE is established by the Pakistan Bar Council under a supreme court order. It aims to enhance the quality of legal education by ensuring adherence to standards, promoting continued legal education, providing teacher training, and promoting legal research. The CCP regulates competition in markets, police cartels, market abuse, and protects consumers from anti-competitive behaviour. Under the MoU, CCP and DLE will collaborate to enhance awareness through consultations and support within their respective mandates. They will conduct workshops, focus groups, lectures, and seminars on competition law for students and faculty of law colleges and universities. Additional initiatives include integrating



a competition law module into LL. B and LL. M programs, introducing competition law in the Bar Vocational Course, arranging guest lectures on competition law and policy, and promoting continued legal education. Minister Azam Nazir Tarar welcomed the signing of the MoU, considering it a significant step towards capacity building within the legal community and enhancing the competition landscape in Pakistan. He highlighted that it would equip lawyers with the necessary knowledge and skills to address complex competition issues. The Minister appreciated the CCP's efforts to promote competition in the economy. Chairman CCP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu emphasized that the market-based system, designed to create wealth for many, is often exploited by a few. Therefore, CCP's efforts aim to educate the public about the market-based system. He further highlighted that public support is crucial for the success of CCP's efforts to identify and police cartels, particularly through the involvement of whistleblowers. He expressed confidence in the collaboration with DLE, believing it will significantly advance competition law in Pakistan.

Important institutions should be freed from political control

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Tuesday that Pakistan's economic autonomy is contingent upon the Federal Board of Revenue's autonomy. He stated that FBR should have autonomy in order to boost the nation's limping economy. In a statement issued today, Dr. Murtaza Mughal stated that one of the most important institutions, like FBR, should be liberated from the control of members of the political elite.



He said that as long as FBR remains the slave of politicians, Pakistan will have to accept dictates, continue borrowing, and never achieve economic freedom. He added that if FBR becomes independent, the country will have economic freedom and not have to take dictation from any other country or institution. According to Dr. Murtaza Mughal, every patriot wants to see a significant increase in the tax net. Still, certain influential sections reaping the benefits of tax concessions and exemptions do not want it. International institutions have tried hard to improve the FBR, but those who benefit from the weakness of FBR have frustrated all such efforts. To improve the economy, it is necessary to widen the scope of the tax net and remove the loopholes in the tax system. Currently, some significant sectors are either tax-exempt or have paid very little in taxes, but this process cannot continue because continuous borrowing is not an option. He pointed out that despite investing billions of rupees in the track and track system, the mafia's unique relationships with influential figures prevented the expected tax increase. Dr. Mughal said that FBR, which is the tax system's foundation, must be reorganized with a primary focus on personnel quality and overstaffing. Many officers perform audits and evaluations that frequently end up in appellate forums because they are overburdened by revenue targets. Tax administrators shouldn't be in charge of policy matters, and automation should take precedence over manual procedures. It is imperative that taxpayers' perceptions of the FBR be improved to promote compliance, he observed. A single tax collection agency for all taxes in Pakistan could improve efficiency and effectiveness in tax administration. The emphasis should be shifted to tax base expansion as there are still not enough taxpayers who are actively filing returns. Many register with lower incomes below the taxable levels in order to avoid paying higher rates, which should be streamlined. He said that foreign investors' confidence increased due to government policies. The rupee's value has stabilized, inflation is decreasing, and the country's economy is expected to improve further in the coming days.

Harevesting

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



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Female students of over 30 countries participate in spring gala at IIUI

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Samina Malik, Rector International Islamic University (IIU) inaugurated the annual Spring Gala and cultural exhibition at the female campus of university on Tuesday. The inaugural ceremony of the gala was joined by the female students hailing from more than 30 countries. The gala includes dozens of competitions between 9 faculties and around 50 departments. These events of sports and co-curricular activities include cricket, athletics, tug of war, badminton, volleyball, futsal, basketball, Hifz, naat, quiz, bait bazi, essay writing, photography and making, flower arrangement and many more.



The IIU Rector visited the stalls established on the occasion of the gala which included stalls of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Palestine, China, Egypt, Afghanistan, Turkey, Thailand and provincial stalls of Pakistani cultures. On the occasion, Prof. Dr. Samina said that encouragement of women youth to participate in sports and co-curricular activities is our top priority. She added that students shall be provided equal opportunities to excel in sports.

The inauguration of Spring Gala was also attended by In-Charge (Female Campus) Dr. Sumayya Chughtai, Students Advisor female Dr. Sadia Saleem Cheema, Provost female Dr. Humaira Ashfaq, Ms Nuzhat Zreen, Director UA&FA, In-Charge sports Nadia Mukhtar and senior female faculty members of the university. According to details, Dr. Sumayya, In-Charge, Female Campus (IIUI) briefed that the purpose of the gala is to provide opportunities to the female students to establish their businesses which will provide them an opportunity to learn how to contribute towards the socio-economic development of society by participating in such activities.

Phone addiction a significant health risk: Dr. Tayyab Afghani

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The leading ophthalmologist at Al-Shifa Trust, Prof. Dr. Tayyab Afghani, said on Tuesday that smartphones have developed into a significant risk for youngsters. Mobile phones keep children connected at all times and serve many positive purposes, but overuse has become common, leading to serious eye complications, he said. Talking to media men, Dr. Tayyab Afghani said smartphones can have severe and long-lasting effects on children's eye health. He said parents and teachers should know about the consequences of children staring at smartphones for too long.



According to him, most children with access to a smartphone use it almost all the time, while those whose eyesight is still developing have disastrous impacts on their vision. Afghani said smartphones can potentially contribute to epidemic levels of eye problems, and a research shows that by 2050, the vision of 50 percent of the world's population may be affected. He said mobile phones have anti-glare screens and settings that reduce the emission of blue light, which may damage the cornea. However, adjusting the brightness, contrast, and size of the text can reduce some harm to the eyes. Teaching children to blink frequently when watching the screen and ensuring the screen is at least 16 inches away from their eyes while watching is always helpful. He stressed that parents and teachers should try to involve children in other activities that distract them from the screen. He said that setting time limits on how long kids can stare at screens is the best way to keep them from getting eye problems. Every six months, a trained ophthalmologist should examine children's eyes, lubricant eye drops should be used, and the 20-20 rule must be followed. According to this rule, a person using a screen should shift his eyes to look at an object 20 feet away for at least 20 seconds. This should be repeated after a 20-minute gap.

Training Workshop on infection Prevention and control standards organized by WHO

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Standards for prevention and control of other infections with focus on prevention of outbreak of measles in health care settings in collaboration with Department of Primary and Secondary Health, Punjab organized by WHO (World Health Organization) A one-day training was conducted at Dean Children's Hospital by Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti, Children's Hospital Multan was conducted. The goal of training is to reduce the risk of infection transmission, the development of antimicrobial resistance, protect healthcare providers from infection, and prevent the spread of infection from one patient to another. Dean Children's Hospital Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti along with Medical Superintendent Dr. Kamran Asif and other administrative staff and clinical staff including senior registrar, medical officers, PGRs, staff nurses and paramedical staff participated fully in this training.

Modernization never meant Westernization

I went to shop some outfits this weekend, since I was looking to redress my wardrobe for this summer, however I came home with only a pair of heels and a few unstitched linens. These days, on the pretext of modernization the shops are selling bizarre styles, I don't understand while dyeing if the dupatta tied off, or they mixed the trousers of XS with Medium. Besides in the ethnic section, there were just some poor labor's used and torn off jeans options. What is happening to us, if you advertise nudity, the result is obscenity and that is the catalyst of destroying

family life style, which is the strongest pattern of the East. Our generation is our valuable asset which we jeopardize today in the name of modernization. Dear reader modernization is never a concept of Westernization, instead Modernization means developing any country through economic growth, technology development and infrastructure raise. Whereas, Westernization means adopting the ideology, lifestyle and infrastructure of western countries. Modernization increases the use of science, while Westernization is just a notion of copying the Western theme.

How on earth you allow your heart to follow or appraise the West, won't for a moment you recall the crimson turning River Jumna, blood soaked alleys of Delhi, the loud shrieks coming from noble residence, our gold and diamond filled country spinning into dust. If you talk about Modernization, when British I mean to say the SEA DOGS came to Hindustan, at that time we had two celebrated Madrasa in Delhi, whose

education standard was far much higher than Oxford and Cambridge, where without discrimination Hindu, Muslim and Sikhs get their education, in comparison British Daly Collage was of old-fashioned standards and people prefer to get enrolled at those Madrasas. Our ancient brilliant system was destroyed by British, let's say when they came to our country Punjab literacy rate was 85% however when they

let it was just 9%. Another example is of the science of Mathematics, in Arabic or Urdu we call the numbers as HINDSE, read it once again HIND SE meaning "from HIND", it's the name from which this science known in Arabia. The science of Astronomy, in Hind whose knowledge even existed in Vedic times. Aryabhata, born in 476 CE calculated the length of the solar year to be 365.3586805. Brahmagupta of 7 Century who postulated, a thousand years before Newton, that gravitation is a force of attraction. Well known is Ayurveda, which seeks

to deal with the root cause of disease is another Indie science. Our whole system has been fractured on purpose, since West couldn't shine when Orient/East was already at its brilliant, there comes no comparison. Hence, for displaying the enlighten West, East has to be portrayed as Dark. And that is what happening since ages. The media is sold you know, as this land have produced lots of Mir Jaffers and Sadiqs, they are bent on destroying the populace. Where went the incredible thinkers, the astronomers, the scientists, the revolutionist minds?



Analysis
Munaza Kazmi

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Social Media Regulatory Authority: Will It Work?

Personally for me and most patriotic Pakistanis, the army stands as the bulwark of a nation's sovereignty, defending its people and safeguarding its borders against external threats. It embodies the collective strength and resilience of a nation, serving as a symbol of unity and national pride. It embodies a profound appreciation for the soldiers' selflessness and bravery in the face of adversity. Equally significant is the reciprocal relationship between the army and its people, where mutual respect and affection foster a bond essential for the nation's stability and progress. As the guardians of national security, the army's love for its people and their reciprocal love form the bedrock upon which the prosperity and well-being of the nation rest.

While soul-searching about why political leaders, certain segments of the general public, elements in Balochistan and KP provinces, and social media activists criticize and denigrate the army and its leadership, one glaring fact became apparent: the army is not being criticized for its core function of defending the country from external aggression, but rather for issues unrelated to its primary mandate.

The army has faced criticism for its alleged interference in political affairs, purported human rights abuses in conflict regions like Balochistan and FATA, media censorship, and its economic dominance across sectors, raising concerns about monopolies and lack of accountability. It is perceived to prioritize security interests over diplomatic solutions, handling Balochistan insurgency and imbalance of power favoring the military over civilian institutions. Debates persist regard-

ing human rights implications of the army's counterterrorism operations and its involvement in regional conflicts, such as its support for militant groups in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

The criticism directed towards the army has intensified, becoming more aggressive and vitriolic, particularly on social media platforms. Social media activists, both within the country and abroad, seem to have free reign to express their grievances against the army without fear of repercussions.

During a recent press conference, the Director-General of the Inter-Services Public Relations (DG-ISPR) extensively addressed the harmful use of social media to spread negativity against the army. He warned that existing regulations would be rigorously enforced, and new laws would be proposed by the parliament to curb, silence, and penalize those who were spreading malicious content against the army.

The tone and demeanor of the DG-ISPR strongly suggested that legislation to regulate social media had likely already been drafted and would soon be presented to parliament. Shortly thereafter, reports emerged that the Prime Minister had approved the establishment of a social media authority despite the absence of formal legislation. This move prompted criticism, with one Supreme Court judge remarking that the government appeared to be hastily prioritizing the creation of a social media regulatory authority over pressing issues such as climate change.

Unlike PEMRA, which possesses a range of punitive measures to discipline traditional media, the tasks facing the social media authority will be considerably more challenging. While PEMRA can impose hefty fines, revoke licenses, ensure compliance with codes of conduct, and address violations through fines, suspensions, or license cancellations, the social media authority may lack similar leverage due to many pressing reasons.

Social media is difficult to harness due to its globalized nature, constant evolution, and the prevalence of anonymity and operating across national borders. The platforms like Facebook and Twitter make it difficult to apply consistent regulations due to varying legal jurisdictions, and the ever-changing landscape of social media renders regulations obsolete quickly, as new features and formats emerge.

The anonymity and pseudonymity afforded to users further complicate matters, hindering efforts to hold individuals accountable for harmful content, particularly in regions with lax regulations.

The social media platforms rely heavily on algorithms which can inadvertently amplify harmful content or create echo chambers, making it difficult to regulate their impact.

Besides, enforcing social media regulations can be resource-intensive especially in a poor country like Pakistan, requiring dedicated teams and sophisticated technology.

This necessitates adopting a comprehen-

sive protocol for disseminating the army's perspective in the public domain through civilian or political leadership equipped with the necessary skills and training to engage with the media in a manner that minimizes controversy and backlash. Any potential backlash could then be directed towards the civilian leadership, thereby insulating the army from direct criticism.

Later, it should minimize its overt supremacy over civilian institutions, such as the government and judiciary and ensure a clear delineation of authority between military and civilian spheres.

Simultaneously, the army should prioritize transparency and accountability, particularly in matters concerning human rights. Any allegations of abuses must be thoroughly investigated and addressed in accordance with international standards, fostering trust and legitimacy.

Economically, the army's activities at least overtly should be subject to civilian oversight to prevent monopolies and ensure fair competition.

The army should adopt a more professional and scientific approach towards public relations and should minimize and finally stop altogether its overt interaction with the public on political affairs or governance.

Above all, ISPR's public relations strategy, tactics, and methodology are attracting unfavorable criticism across both traditional and social media platforms. Urgent action is required to initiate a comprehensive reset of ISPR's approach for nurturing positive relationships with its publics.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan advises Indian politicians to cease dragging it into domestic politics

Pakistan on Tuesday urged the Indian politicians to cease dragging Pakistan into their domestic politics for electoral gains and to handle sensitive strategic matters with the utmost caution. "We call upon the international community to take note of Indian leadership's belligerent rhetoric, which poses a grave threat to regional peace and stability," Spokesperson Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, said in a press statement, in response to media queries regarding a series of Pakistan-related remarks made recently by the Indian Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister and other cabinet members.

The spokesperson said that they were witnessing an alarming surge in anti-Pakistan rhetoric from various Indian leaders amidst the ongoing Lok Sabha election campaign. "We outrightly reject these irresponsible statements, which cover a wide array of topics including the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, counter-terrorism efforts, state of bilateral relations, and nuclear capabilities," it was added. Regrettably, the spokesperson said these statements reflected an unhealthy and entrenched obsession with Pakistan and revealed a deliberate intent to exploit hyper-nationalism for electoral gains. These also signified a desperate attempt to deflect attention from mounting domestic and international criticism, she added. "The bravado and jingoism exhibited by Indian leaders expose a reckless and extremist mindset. This mindset calls into question India's capacity to be a responsible steward of its strategic capability," the spokesperson maintained. On the other hand, she further said the purpose of Pakistan's strategic capability was to safeguard its sovereignty and defend its territorial integrity. "Pakistan has also clearly demonstrated its resolve to defend itself in the past, and would not hesitate to do so in the future should the Indian side choose to embark on a misadventure," it was asserted. Just a few months ago, Pakistan exposed details of India's campaign of extrajudicial and transnational assassinations on Pakistani soil and India's continuous emphasis on its readiness to take aggressive actions within Pakistan constituted a tacit admission of guilt. Regarding the inflammatory rhetoric about Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan reiterated that historical facts, legal principles, moral considerations, and ground realities refuted India's baseless claims. "Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally-recognized disputed territory, and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions clearly mandate a plebiscite under UN auspices for its final determination. No amount of inflated Indian statements can change this reality. India should, therefore, focus on implementing these resolutions instead of indulging in fantasies of grandeur," it was reiterated. The spokesperson emphasized that vision of peace, progress, and prosperity in South Asia could only be realized through the peaceful resolution of all outstanding disputes, including Jammu and Kashmir, and a shift from confrontation to cooperation.



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

Failed Indian Attempts to conduct peaceful and open elections in IIOJK - III

The situation in IIOJK remains far from normal, with inhabitants facing significant constraints on their freedom to live and work. Despite this reality, India maintains a facade of normalcy, asserting plans for forthcoming elections as evidence of stability while obscuring the true nature of conditions in the region. In light of recent failed attempts to misrepresent reality, both the Indian Civilian Administration and Indian Army, operating under stringent security measures, orchestrated a Voting Awareness Campaign (VAC) in the villages of Tith-waal and Seemari near the Nauseri sector, culminating in a rally in Seemari. Dignitaries such as Commander 104 Brigade Brigadier M. K Dass, Gen-

erals of the Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, school children were compelled to participate in an Indian-flagged rally at the First Polling Station in Seemari LoC. Kabul Bukhari, a well-known singer, performed a diverse range of songs, including Pakistani ones in Punjabi, Hindi, Pahari, and Kashmiri. This event was evidently orchestrated to distort reality and suppress the truth, with villagers from Teh Karnah coerced into attending. The march from Tith-waal to Seemari was forcefully organized under both civilian and military supervision, predominantly involving children who have no stake in the elections. The musical show was intended to attract attendees, even incorporating Pakistani songs, indicating both frustration and an attempt to appeal to locals' sentiments toward Pakistan. Speeches by Civil Administration Officials urging locals to participate in the elections further underscored their apprehension and frustration regarding potential low voter turnout. It's evident that organizing such an event under the direct auspices of the Indian Army aimed to send a coercive message to compel participation in the electoral process. Reports suggest that attendees were brought in from outside the state to create the appearance of a large gath-

ering and to ensure the event's perceived success. Videos from the event depict a situation akin to a curfew, with most shops closed and restricted movement for the residents. However, the reality in the area contradicts this portrayal, as local sentiment toward India and its policies is unfavorable due to perceived Indian atrocities. The local populace is disinterested in Indian-managed elections. This raises the question: if India truly believes that the people of IOJK support them, why resort to such events under the heavy security presence of its army rather than conducting them openly and publicly? The falsehoods perpetuated by India, Modi, and its leadership are laid bare for the world to see. In the intricate web of human interactions, lies often act as a veil concealing reality, obscuring the truth behind a facade of deceit. Whether crafted to safeguard oneself, manipulate others, or mask inconvenient truths, lies have remained a pervasive aspect of human behavior. Yet, beneath the surface of deception lies a fundamental paradox: the more one endeavors to hide the truth, the more glaringly it clamors to be unveiled. Lies manifest in myriad forms, from whispered falsehoods within personal relationships to the grand deceit of politics and propaganda. At its essence, lying involves a calculated distortion or suppression of reality, typically driven by self-interest, fear, or the quest for control.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Evolution of Public Diplomacy in the Digital Age: Opportunities And Challenges

Maria Tariq

Digital diplomacy has revolutionized the landscape of international relations, empowering individuals and organizations to access information and engage in diplomatic activities with unprecedented ease. Through digital platforms, interactions among various stakeholders, regardless of borders, have flourished, ushering in an era of enhanced transparency in diplomatic proceedings. This transparency extends to public online spaces where diplomatic communications and activities are now frequently conducted, allowing for broader participation and scrutiny. Moreover, the emergence of new influencers, such as social media personalities and online activists, has reshaped public opinion and exerted significant influence on diplomatic endeavors.

However, alongside its myriad benefits, digital diplomacy presents complex challenges that require adept navigation. The proliferation of misinformation and disinformation online demands vigilant discernment, while the prevalence of online harassment and hate speech underscores the imperative of safeguarding digital engagement. Despite these obstacles, digital diplomacy has catalyzed an evolution in traditional diplomatic practices, with diplomats leveraging digital tools for intra-diplomatic interactions and public engagement. This shift has underscored the critical importance of digital literacy, as diplomats and stakeholders alike must possess the skills and knowledge to navigate the complexities of online diplomacy effectively. Thus, as digital interactions continue to shape international relations, diplomacy must adapt to mitigate risks while harnessing the transformative potential of the digital age.

In today's digital age, public diplomacy has transcended traditional boundaries, leveraging digital platforms to reach a vast and diverse audience worldwide. Social media and other digital tools have revolutionized communication, enabling swift responses to global events and issues while fostering collaboration among governments, NGOs, corporations, and individuals. This interconnectedness fosters cross-cultural interactions, promoting mutual understanding and fostering people-to-people diplomacy on a global scale.

Furthermore, the abundance of data in the digital realm empowers public diplomacy strategies with valuable insights, while innovative storytelling formats like podcasts, videos, and infographics enrich cultural exchanges and facilitate message dissemination. Governments are establishing virtual diplomatic presences to expand their reach, while digital tools facilitate rapid response and communication during international crises. Through online resources and courses, public diplomacy professionals are enhancing their skills and knowledge, while digital platforms serve as hubs for global networking and collaboration. Embracing these opportunities promises to amplify the effectiveness and impact of public diplomacy in an increasingly interconnected world.

In the digital era, the abundance of information online presents a formidable barrier for public diplomacy efforts aiming to resonate with their intended audience. False narratives, propagated amidst the vast sea of data, pose a particularly daunting challenge, as countering misinformation and promoting accurate information becomes increasingly arduous. Moreover, the democratization of influence in the digital landscape has shifted the dynamics of public opinion shaping, granting significant power to individuals and groups, thereby complicating the efforts of governments and traditional institutions to assert influence.

To navigate these complexities, public diplomacy practitioners must cultivate robust digital literacy skills to effectively leverage digital platforms. However, achieving impact requires striking a delicate balance between traditional face-to-face engagement and digital outreach. Yet, measuring the efficacy of digital public diplomacy remains a formidable task, given the difficulty of tracking online engagement and influence accurately. Additionally, resource constraints, including limited funding and personnel, often hinder the capacity of public diplomacy efforts to effectively engage in digital diplomacy. Addressing cultural and linguistic barriers, as well as privacy and security concerns, further underscores the multifaceted challenges inherent in digital public diplomacy. As digital platforms continue to evolve, necessitating continual adaptation and innovation, public diplomacy practitioners must embrace new skills, strategies, and approaches to navigate the complexities of the digital age effectively.

Writer is Doing BS in Defense and Diplomatic Studies

Korea and UNHCR mark contribution of 1 million dollars to support refugees

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Republic of Korea Tuesday marked the contribution of one million dollars, aimed at bolstering UNHCR's response in supporting Afghan refugees and their host communities in Pakistan.

This one-year project focuses on livelihoods assistance, prevention and response to gender-based violence, community-based protection and updating of critical identity documentation, benefitting more than 125,000 people across the country.

The announcement was made at a

ceremony held at the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), Centre of Excellence in Islamabad, where the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Park Ki Jun, and UNHCR Representative, Ms. Philippa Candler signed an agreement. The Chairperson of NAVTTTC, Ms. Gulmina Bilal, was also present for the occasion.

Speaking at the ceremony, Ambassador Park expressed his appreciation to the government of Pakistan and UNHCR for their collaborative efforts to support Afghan refugees. "The refugee issue is not the sole concern of any

one country, but a global agenda that the international community must work together on in solidarity," he said.

UNHCR's Representative welcomed Korea's generous assistance, underscoring that the funding is already transforming lives, with 1,000 Afghans and Pakistani students enrolled in the NAVTTTC training programmes this year, along with strengthened prevention and response to gender-based violence, children's protection, provision of legal aid and documentation.

Ms. Gulmina Bilal, the Chairperson of NAVTTTC, highlighted the importance of the Republic of Korea's contri-



but and partnership with UNHCR to continuing providing youth skills development training and enhance their social and economic opportunities during the ceremony.

In closing the ceremony, Mursal, an

Afghan refugee who participated in a NAVTTTC training and is now a project coordinator, shared her views on the importance of empowering youth, including women. "When I first learned about this opportunity to participate in

this programme, I saw it as a chance to accomplish my dreams," she noted. "Like many others, I seized this opportunity knowing that it held the key to a brighter future not only for myself but for my loved ones."

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan Mr. Mitsuhiro WADA called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Orcas sink yacht in Strait of Gibraltar

Several orcas stormed a yacht named Alboran Cognac in the Strait of Gibraltar, sinking the vessel in the territorial waters of Morocco.

Spain's maritime services noted that people on the vessel, which sunk on Sunday, were rescued by an oil tanker passing by, according to Sky News.

It is being dubbed as a new attack in what has become a trend in the past four years as angry orcas have damaged and scuppered many small vessels in that period.

Experts have been wondering what triggers the killer whales to behave in such a way; however, they do believe that mammals are highly intelligent and could display "copy-cat" or "playful" behaviour.

Business community is ready to help the government: Atif Ikram

Commerce Desk



ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that Business Community is ready to help the government in taking domestic exports to 100 billion dollars. The solution to energy problems in Pakistan is necessary now and must be a business-friendly environment because Without a business-friendly environment, it will not be possible to take exports to 100 billion dollars by 2030. We demand that incentives should be given to the export

industry in the budget of the new financial year. Federation President Atif Ikram Sheikh said that the Saudi business delegation's visit to Pakistan has been very positive. Investors from other countries, including Saudi Arabia, should be invited. In the joint coordination committee meeting with China, the discussion on economic zones should be taken forward. If industries are set up in economic zones, employment opportunities will be created in the country. The government's initiatives to attract foreign investment in Pakistan are commendable. The country's economy can be improved only through investment.

RCCI's 16th APCPC on May 15

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: The 16th All Pakistan Chambers Presidents' Conference organized by Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) will begin on May 15 at a local hotel in Islamabad.

Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce President Chamber Saqib Rafiq and Group Leader Sohail Altaf have said in a joint statement that the aim of the Chamber Presidents Conference was to The purpose of the conference was to formulate the business community's perspective on current economic challenges including restoring the confidence of the business community, discuss budget proposals, key economic indicators and facilitation under Special Investment Council. The main objective of the conference is to gather feedback and recommendations from key stakeholders of the business community and present it to the government, they added.

President Saqib Rafiq said that the Special Investment Council (SIFC) is playing an important role in economic improvement and confidence restoration.

Group leader Sohail Altaf said that the biggest issue in the current economic challenge is to restore confidence, it is very important to restore the confidence of local and foreign investors.

Saqib Rafiq said that in the two-day conference, the presidents of the chambers from all provinces, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan including women and small chambers are also participating in the conference. The agenda has been shared with all the presidents, the main agenda items include the annual budget, devaluation of the rupee, increase in cost of production, petroleum products, electricity and gas prices, alternative sources of energy, solar installation, federal and provincial taxes, Tajir Dost scheme, broadening the tax net and privatization of State owned enterprises.

The joint declaration of the conference will be issued at the concluding session on May 16.

NAVTTTC and KCCI forge new partnership to enhance skills development

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Today marked a significant milestone in the realm of skills development as the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) welcomed Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, Chairperson of the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC), to its premises. The purpose of the visit was to solidify a collaborative effort aimed at addressing the gaps in skills development training under the Prime Minister's Youth Skill Development Program (PMYSDP) implemented by NAVTTTC.

In a fruitful meeting, both parties expressed their commitment to fostering a new partnership geared towards promoting skills training initiatives. The agreement entails KCCI providing on-the-job training opportunities to NAVTTTC trainees within KCCI industries. This hands-on experience is envisioned to complement the theoretical knowledge imparted by NAVTTTC, equipping trainees with practical skills essential for success in the workforce.

Moreover, KCCI has pledged to identify and introduce new avenues for practical training within the industry, ensuring that NAVTTTC trainees



receive exposure to diverse sectors and emerging technologies. This strategic collaboration between KCCI and NAVTTTC signifies a joint effort to bridge the gap between academia and industry, ultimately contributing to the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

During the visit, Mr. Iftikhar Ahmed

Shaikh, President of KCCI, extended a warm welcome to Ms. Gulmina Bilal Ahmad, showcasing the enthusiasm and eagerness of KCCI to embark on this transformative journey. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Junaid Ahmed Makra and Mr. Azizullah Chandio, Director-General of NAVTTTC, further emphasizing the

mutual dedication of both organizations towards the advancement of skills development in the country.

As Pakistan strives towards a knowledge-based economy, collaborations such as these underscore the importance of partnerships between public and private entities in driving sustainable growth and fostering innovation.

PPF alarmed by PML-N governments' push to regulate free expression in digital spaces

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: In the past few weeks, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz-led government at the helm of the federal government and in the Punjab province has demonstrated its lack of regard for the need to protect free expression online, presenting and approving different bills that increase the regulation of free speech online. Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) is concerned by this regulation and legislation at the federal and provincial levels. The lack of clarity, transparency, and consultation with stakeholders and groups likely to be impacted is alarming. It raises concerns about the potential misuse to target critical voices, journalists, and media professionals under the guise of cyber security and defamation.

The government must also

explain why multiple regulatory and oversight bodies for the digital sphere are required. At a time when digital spaces are increasingly relevant for discourse and expression, the push for monitoring, regulation, and clamping down on content shared online is counterproductive.

The unilateral approval and passage of such legislation and regulatory bodies give the impression that the input of stakeholders is not welcome or worthy of consideration. It also raises questions about how these laws will function. PPF urges the government to hold meaningful consultations with relevant stakeholders before making any amendments or passing legislation.

PPF urges the government to provide clarity on the functioning of two new bodies to regulate content online in Pakistan — the

National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency and the Digital Rights Protection Authority — that have been introduced or approved.

Additionally, we urge the government to maintain transparency in the functioning of the new regulatory bodies and the use of the defamation law in Punjab.

Digital Rights Protection Authority Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif approved a draft to amend the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, 2016, under which the Digital Rights Protection Authority would be set up. The News reported on May 9. The bill will be presented before the parliament after the federal cabinet's approval without meaningful consultation with relevant stakeholders.

According to The News, the digital protection authority will

have a broad scope of responsibilities, including advice to the government on digital rights, enforcing regulations, investigating violations of the PECA law on social media, taking action against those who are in violation, "demand information" for individuals and others.

The broad scope of the protection authority and the need to further amend the already draconian PECA, 2016 law that has been used to target media professionals is concerning. PPF urges the government to provide clarity on the need for multiple regulatory bodies for the digital sphere and emphasizes the need to ensure that these bodies are not used to clamp down on the right to free expression as enshrined in the Constitution.

Additionally, we urge for transparency in data handling by the NCCIA and the digital

rights protection authority once established. Ensuring that data protection laws are respected and adequate safeguards are in place is essential to maintaining trust in digital communications.

Punjab defamation law

On May 13, the Punjab Defamation Bill 2024 was presented at the provincial Punjab Assembly without stakeholder consultations. The PML-N government is also at the helm of the province.

According to The Express Tribune, under the law, fines can be imposed and social media accounts can be blocked of those found to be spreading defamatory content.

The Council of Pakistan Newspaper Editors (CPNE) has rejected the bill and termed it a prohibition on freedom of the press and free expression.

Defamation laws globally

have, in some instances, been used to stifle free expression. Similar to policing content online for being propaganda, defamation can be subject to interpretation and PPF is wary of misuse of the law to target media professionals found to be critical.

National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency

Per a notification issued by the Minister of Information Technology and Telecommunication, dated April 24, the federal government has announced the formation of a new cyber-crime agency — the NCCIA — set to replace the functions of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Cybercrime Wing without civil society consultation.

According to the notification, the personnel, cases, inquiries, investigations, assets, liabilities, rights, obligations, privileges and matters of the "defunct cyber

crime wing of the FIA" would be transferred to the NCCIA.

According to Dawn, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar had said that a separate authority was being formed to "safeguard the digital rights of people" and, to "counter propaganda and rumors on social media" as well as to end harassment online.

Vague terms such as propaganda and rumors are open to interpretation, PPF is cautious about the state determining what propaganda and rumors are so that such labels are not misused to censor and target the media. The former iteration of the NCCIA, FIA Cybercrime Wing, has displayed a targeting of the media under the guise of cybersecurity, which has involved issuing notices and arrests of media professionals for content shared online or on social media platforms.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
74,531.19	73,799.11
Day's High	Day's Low
74,575.30	73,977.00
Index Value	Change
14,871,574,535	+732.08
Percentage	Time
+0.99%	14 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,428.13	+13.14
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	14 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,421.65	-9.86
Percentage	Time
-0.025%	14 May, 12:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,356.06	+176.60
Percentage	Time
+0.46%	14 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	180.5	182.2
Bahrain Dinar	739.77	747.77
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.49	38.89
Danish Krone	40.25	40.65
Euro	296.25	299
Hong Kong Dollar	35.61	35.96
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	904.28	913.28
Malaysian Ringgit	58.69	59.29
New Zealand \$	167.45	169.45
Norwegians Krone	25.67	25.97
Omani Riyal	722.59	730.59
Qatari Riyal	76.41	77.11
Saudi Riyal	73.5	74.2
Singapore Dollar	203	205
Swedish Korona	25.67	25.97
Swiss Franc	306.51	309.01
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.15	75.9
UK Pound Sterling	344.5	348
US Dollar	277.25	279.8

easypaisa partners with IGI Life & IGI General to enhance insurance-based offerings



PPA

KARACHI: easypaisa, has signed an agreement with IGI Life and IGI General, laying the foundation for digital distribution of various insurance-based products, ensuring provision of ease and convenience to millions of Pakistanis.

Remarking on the strategic alliance with IGI Life & IGI General, Kashif Ahmed, Acting President & CEO, TMB/easypaisa stated: "This transformative partnership underscores our unwavering dedication to elevating every facet of the customer journey for our insurance-based product offerings, symbolizing our relentless pursuit of seamless convenience and unparalleled user experience. As we transition toward establishing a digital retail bank pending regulatory approvals, these strategic alliances magnify the significance of our vision to become Pakistan's leading digital bank, serving the diverse digital financial needs of millions of Pakistanis with ease and convenience."

Commenting on the collaboration with easypaisa, Ali Nadim CEO, IGI Life Insurance, said "This collaboration will help improve financial inclusion and access to simple and affordable products by enabling a fully digital journey." Faisal Khan CEO, IGI General stated, "Traditionally general insurance has had a lengthy enrollment process; with this innovation, we will provide a completely digital onboarding journey for customers that will bring unmatched convenience to our customers."

Finance Minister's determination to sell state-owned companies is laudable

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has successfully regained the confidence of the lenders and other international institutions.

He said that under PM's guidance, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb would successfully negotiate a new contract with the International Monetary Fund, which would positively impact the economy.

He observed that the Finance Minister's resolve to sell state-owned firms is commendable, as it will help save trillions of wasted rupees to keep these companies artificially alive.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the country was saved

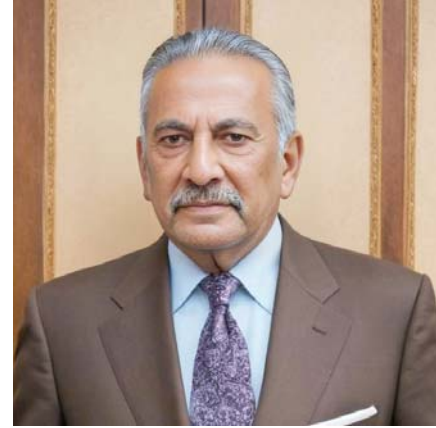
from bankruptcy by the Prime Minister's efforts, and now the confidence of the international institutions has been restored.

The country also prioritizes investment because it is the only way to overcome its problems.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that the previous governments only relied on tall claims. Still, the present administration is also seriously improving the economy, the results of which are coming to light.

He noted that inflation is coming down, and people are optimistic about better conditions while the business community is on the upswing.

He said that the Finance Minister is sure that the country cannot bear the burden of failed state-owned companies and that it is better to sell them to avoid the annual loss of trillions of rupees.



He said that some elements always oppose privatization for their politics' sake without considering its economic implications. They

are now trying to become obstacles in the process of selling SOEs.

The finance minister should stick to his position and sell all the loss-making government companies without caring about anyone because it is a matter of national security.

There is no such thing as strategic state-owned companies, according to the Finance Minister, who feels that the economy of Pakistan can no longer take the load of state-owned enterprises.

He believes that transferring all state-owned enterprises, regardless of their classifications to the private sector is a very positive stance.

He said that the International Monetary Fund and influential circles do not accept any other economic concept about state-owned firms; therefore, privatization of these enterprises is necessary as soon as feasible.

Agreement

Bank of Khyber (BoK) has signed an agreement with Shaukat Khanum Memorial Cancer Hospital (SKMCH) for access to top-tier Medical Care and Services at discounted rates for their employees and their dependents.



Photo: Online

Chairman OMAP calls for urgent action on safety of petroleum industry

PPA

LAHORE: Chairman OMAP Tariq Wazir Ali said that ensuring the safety of the public is everyone's responsibility, and steps must be taken to make the petroleum industry a secure one.

He added, "At the OMAP, we believe that safety isn't just a protocol but it's our responsibility. Our commitment transcends the operational norms to integrate safety into the very DNA of Pakistan's petroleum industry."

According to Tariq Wazir Ali, safety of petroleum industry depends on these objectives including Proactive Prevention, Training Excellence, Community First, Innovation in Safety and Regulatory Compliance.



Chairman OGRA Masroor Ahmad, in his address, highlighted the role of artificial intelligence in preventing accidents, stating that incidents are not even reported in our premises. He emphasised that Ogra has undertaken various tasks in the past three years, including ending penalties for oil marketing companies, which is a priority. He acknowledged that all issues have not been resolved yet, but they will move forward with all stakeholders.

Finance Facility Agreement for Export of Chillies to China signed between PCICL & LTEC

ISLAMABAD: Pak China Investment Company Limited (PCICL) and LTEC International Agriculture Development Company Limited (LTEC) finalized and have signed a finance facility agreement for the export of chillies from Pakistan to China. This agreement marks a significant milestone as LTEC becomes one of the flagship agricultural projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), facilitating Pakistani businesses to access the expansive Chinese market.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Mr. Yang Guangyuan, Minister Counsellor from Embassy of China, Ms. Naghmana Hashmi, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to China and EU & Dr. Akmal Siddique, Technical Advisor, Ministry of National Food Security & Research. Mr. Hassan Raza, Managing Director PCICL, Mr. Jiang Ketao, Deputy Managing Director PCICL & Mr. Duan Hongjun, CEO LTEC along with the management teams from both sides were also present on the occasion.

PCICL is striving to promote trade and investment between Pakistan and China. Company's involvement in numerous CPEC projects, including mega power ventures, underscores its pivotal role in Pakistan's economic development. The extension of finance facility



to LTEC marks a significant initiative of PCICL, solidifying its position as a key local lender of CPEC projects. LTEC, with its strong presence in the food industry in China, is establishing its mark as a distinguished company renowned for pioneering Chinese chilli contract farming project.

Under the agreement, PCICL will provide advisory and funding to LTEC to facilitate its chilli exports to China, aligning with PCICL's mission to catalyze economic growth and export opportunities between Pakistan and China. Speak-

ing at the ceremony, Mr. Raza expressed confidence in the potential of Pakistan's agriculture sector to expand exports to China and PCICL's commitment to provide advisory and financing facilities to the industry to capitalize on this potential.

Mr. Duan highlighted Pakistan's significant position as the fourth largest chilli producer globally and China's soaring demand for dry chilli, which presents a significant opportunity for Pakistan to tap into a lucrative market & expand its pepper export to China.

Coca-Cola's solar-powered water filtration plant in Megwarh Village



PPA

ISLAMABAD: With 800 households, Megwarh is a small village near Umerkot Sindh, birth place of the great Mughal Emperor Akbar. Coca-Cola has set up a filtration plant in the village with a maximum capacity of discharging 1000 liters per hour. The solar-powered pump uses ultrafiltration system to clean water which women of this community earlier fetched from another pump which is five kilometers away.

Speaking about the experience, Aisha Sarwari, Senior Director Public Affairs said,

"By coming to Marvi's village we are commemorating her love for her land, and her people. But it is not easy to have a folklore without water. Pakistani women struggle with access to clean drinking water nationwide, especially in arid areas. Speaking about the experience of hosting the Coca-Cola team at her village, Chand Kumari, a mother of three said, "My feet used to hurt carrying water-filled pitchers and walking for hours under harsh sun. I am happy that I got to meet the people who have brought this source of clean drinking water closer to our homes."

ICCI-RWU to collaborate for advancing industry-academia linkages: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has always worked for the industry and academia linkages and would continue to do so in future as well for the betterment of the youth and for the economic well-being of the country.

This has been stated by President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while addressing as chief guest at the closing ceremony of 1st RWU-IDEA FEST-24, an inter-Universities competition held at Rawalpindi Women University on Tuesday.

He emphasized that entrepreneurs can play a vital role in the development by taking a moderate amount of risk that entrepreneurship has its importance in the corporate sector as well as social sector. No doubt, entrepreneurship is profit generating but yet responsible to give back to the soci-

ety, and develop civic sense and character building characteristics.

He lauded the initiative of the Vice Chancellor and expressed the hope that it will go a long way in preparing useful entrepreneurs for the country who will not only be able to turn up successful businesspersons to earn their own livelihood honorably but would also help the country for strengthening of its economy.

He added that ICCI would be happy to share the award-winning ideas with the business community for giving them practical shape for the promotion of export oriented products.

Dr. Anila Kamal, Vice Chancellor Women University, in her keynote address, encapsulating the essence of the RWU-1: IDEA FEST-2024 by emphasizing the pivotal role education plays in reshaping societal norms, said that the University is focusing on the skill development of the students



to enable them to become job providers instead of job seekers after the completion of their education. She said that the basic cause of this competition was to motivate the students to establishment of their business and become successful entrepreneurs.

She expressed her gratitude to the ICCI for extending every help to the

University for the Promotion of entrepreneurship.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that women empowerment is much needed for the development of the country, therefore they should come forward and demonstrate their skills and emerge

as successful businesspersons.

President ICCI along with Dr. Anila Kamal and Zafar Bakhtawari also distributed cash prizes, awards and shields among the winners.

On this occasion ICCI executives Ch. Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Malik Nadeem and Zia Ch. were also present.

Karachi University clinch All Pakistan Intervarsity Chess championship title

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: In the 8th HEC All Pakistan Intervarsity Chess Championship 2024 hosted by Rawalpindi Women University, in the collaboration with Higher Education Commission.

Karachi University won the title by beating last year champion university of Lahore.

Players Uraiba Hasan, Aisha Manzoor, and Adeena Shoaib Ansari played exceptional games and managed to maintain an impressive score of 6.5/7 in the whole tournament.

Team manager Miss Batool

Kazim was always at the forefront and managed the team impressively through the ups and downs of the tournament.

Team coach Mustafa Adil helped the players secure the win with his amazing insights into the game.

Aisha Manzoor managed to draw a game with the top female player and National Champion, Mehak Gul.

Adeena Shoaib Ansari remained the undefeated Board 1 player throughout the tournament.

Uraiba Hasan, President KUCC, UOKSS, showed exceptional tactical skills and dominated her games since

the start.

Special thanks to the Director of Directorate of Sports, Sir Rashid Qureshi, for his ultimate support to the team and showing his confidence

in the fresh players of the debutante team.

We feel blessed for the win and hope for even better achievements in the future.



Group photo

LONDON: Pakistan Women's Cricket Team in a group photo with High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK, Dr. Mohammad Faisal at Pakistan House.



Gary Kirsten to Join Pakistan Team Head Cricket Coach Ahead of England Series

Asim Tanveer

Gary Kirsten will join the national men's side in Leeds on 19 May to commence his two-year tenure as the white-ball head coach, the Pakistan Cricket Board announced today.

Kirsten's arrival will be three days prior to the start of the four-match T20I series against England at Headingley on Wednesday, 22 May. The series will be followed by the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 in the United States and Caribbean, with Pakistan taking on the hosts in its opener in Dallas on 6 June.

The 56-year-old South African was confirmed as the white-ball head coach along with Jason Gillespie as red-ball head coach last month. The Australian will arrive in Pakistan in July for August's ICC World Test Championship fixtures against Bangladesh to start



his journey.

Apart from next month's ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 and other bilateral white-ball series, Kirsten will be the head coach for the ICC Champions Trophy

2025 in Pakistan, ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka, and the ACC T20 Asia Cup 2025.

Gary Kirsten said I'm truly excited to embark on this new journey with the Pakistan men's cricket team. It's an honor to coach such a talented and dynamic team, and I'm eager to contribute to their success on the international stage.

These are indeed thrilling times for Pakistan cricket, with a new administration and players who are driven to deliver solid results. The upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 presents a fantastic opportunity for us to showcase our skills and uphold Pakistan's legacy as a formidable force in cricket.

However, success will require collective effort, meticulous planning and unwavering support for one another. With 19 other teams vying for the title, we must consistently outperform our

rivals to realise our aspirations.

On a personal level, I've missed the experience of coaching at the international level and nurturing talented players to reach their full potential. I'm committed to working closely with the team to elevate their game and bring joy to fans around the world.

Meanwhile, the PCB, on the recommendation of the team management, has added Simon Helmot (fielding coach) and David Reid (mental performance coach) to the player support personnel for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Reid will join the side on 20 May, while Helmot will team up with the national side on 31 May. Aftab Khan, who is presently serving the side as the fielding coach, will assume responsibilities of High Performance Coach following the arrival of Helmot.

Defending champion Lahore skandars continued their winning streak in the Pakistan Champions League

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In the first match of the Pakistan Wheelchair Champions League played at the Faisalabad Cricket Stadium, Peshawar Lions scored 137 runs for the loss of 9 players in 20 overs while playing first. Musal Khan scored 42 runs and Bilal Rani scored 37 runs while Mohammad Faiz and Mohammad Ahsan dismissed two players each and the partnership Hussain took a wicket. Thanks to Muhammad Faiz's brilliant century, the defending champion Lahore Sikandars achieved the target of 138 runs without any loss and beat Peshawar by 10 wickets to win their second consecutive victory in the Pakistan Champions League. Mohammad Faiz played an innings of 115 runs with the help of 47 balls. His innings included 28 fours. Mohammad Faiz was adjudged the man of the match for his all-round performance.

In the second match, Multan Kings set Islamabad a target of 219 runs to win, Mohammad Latif and Shabia Haider scored half-centuries while Sajid Ali took two wickets. Winners Islamabad Stylions achieved the required target in 18.1 overs with the loss of two players and defeated Multan by 8 wickets. Sajid Ali scored 102 runs on 56 balls. Captain Mohammad Zeeshan scored 38 runs and Mubeen scored 30 runs.

Two matches of Pakistan Champions League will be played on Wednesday in which Peshawar Lions will face Karachi Archers and Islamabad Stylions will face Quetta Strikers.

Saudi Arabia Football Federation delegation visits Islamabad ahead of FIFA qualifiers

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: A two-member delegation of Saudi Arabia Football Federation, on Tuesday visited Jinnah Stadium, the venue for the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 Qualifiers match between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The two-member delegation of the Saudi Arabia Football Federation, included Fitness Coach Claudio and Logistics Manager Musab Ibrahim, said a press release.

The delegation was received by the officials of Pakistan Football Federation, who were also present during the inspection. The FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers Round 2 between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia is scheduled to take place on June 6. FIFA has also announced the match officials for the match, with Bahrain's Hassan Mhofoud set to be the referee while Kemal Tokabev from Kyrgyzstan will serve as the match commissioner. The Jinnah Stadium was all set to host this exciting encounter, and football fans from across the country are eagerly looking forward to cheer on their team.



PCB officials meet ICC head of security ahead of Champions Trophy 2025

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The International Cricket Council (ICC) Head of Security Dave Musker met with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) COO Salman Naseer and other officials to review the preparations for the Champions Trophy 2025.

According to the details, the high-profile meeting was held at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) here with security arrangements for the eight-team tournament its core agenda.

"ICC Head of Security, Dave Musker, met with PCB Chief Operating Officer Salman Naseer and other officials at the NCA on Tuesday," stated PCB.

"Musker is visiting Pakistan as part of ICC Champions Trophy 2025 preparations. The eight-team event is scheduled in Pakistan in February-March 2025."

Earlier this year in March, a three-member ICC delegation visited Pakistan to inspect different venues and facilities in the country for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025.

The delegation led by Chris Tetley, ICC's Head of Events, included Sarah Edgar, Senior Manager event operations at ICC and Aun Zaidi, Manager event operations.

After inspecting Karachi's National Bank Stadium, Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium and Rawalpindi's Pindi Cricket Stadium, the ICC delegation insisted on the extensive preparations needed to host the Champions Trophy 2025.

Acknowledging the importance of hosting a successful tournament, PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi gave the delegation assurances of thorough preparations at every stage.

The eight-team tournament is slated to be held in February next year in Pakistan and is likely to span for over two weeks.



Pakistan football team will be among the best teams in the world: Roy Saifur Rahman

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Roy Saifur Rahman Bhatti, President of PMC Football Club and former Secretary of District Bar Association has said in a special conversation with Abdul Majid that, God willing, Pakistan football team will be among the best teams in the world.

He said that I joined Wapdaco as a football player and left the football team after getting a lawyer's license in 1996. He was elected as the District Secretary in 2001, he became the president of PMC Football Club. In 2006 PMC qualified for B position for the first time. Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti represented the Pakistani team in 92.

Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti further said that 2007-08-09 Pakistan Premier League was

played only by PMC team. He said that we are lucky to have a coach like Mohiuddin. Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti is currently also working as a member of Congress in 2009, Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti was elected as the Secretary of the District Bar Association. Explaining the incident of Pakistani football players slipping in Japan in the past, Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti said that it was Crescent's team with the connivance of the official, who took money and added non-footballers to the team and they reached Japan. They slipped.

He added that our team has also won U-13 Malaysia. He said that after Faisal Saleh Hayat took charge as the president of the Football Association in 2003, he has launched a whole European style system, which

has greatly improved football. Ever since I became the president of PMC football team till date, 6 youths from our PMC club have been playing at the national level in the national team. Since I joined, 11 players have made it to the national team. Among them, MCB's Haroon Yusuf, Sarfraz Rasool, Tanveer, all of them have been captains of the Pakistan national team.

He said that after Haroon Yusuf became the captain, the national team ranked from 207 to 197 in the football category. Rai Saifur Rahman Bhatti said that there are very responsible people in District Football Association. There is no team of any department which does not have less than 6 players from PMC Club. The current captain of Pakistan Football Team Samar



Ishaq also belongs to Faisalabad and he also belongs to PMC of Faisalabad. Regarding the land, he said that this land has produced great football players and these players are an asset to the football team. Saifur Rahman Bhatti said that after 1996 I did not play football but I go to the ground every day to guide the children and supervise them. Regarding the football ground, he said that this is the only football ground of PMC which meets the standards of football.

There are 53 football clubs in Faisalabad which have the right to vote in the district body. The Premier League consists of 16 teams that are crowned cham-

pions, with the champion team playing abroad as a tour. Saifur Rahman Bhatti said that unfortunately there is no good ground for national event games in Faisalabad city, but the people of the village have built a ground on Jhang Road with their help and football matches are practiced daily. Rahman Bhatti said that national event was held in Faisalabad after 30 years and this national event was very successful.

The event was sponsored by National Bank and the players were provided with the best ground, security and all facilities. Talking about his game, he said that in 1992, I played the qualifying round match of the Asia Cup,

which was held at the Kerala Ground in India, in which there were around 50,000 spectators and the majority of the spectators supported the Pakistan football team. They also threw stones but the Sikhs cooperated a lot. Although we tied match 2 with two goals, but our performance was highly appreciated. Talking about football lovers, he said that I did Uka tours and we got a sponsor for a huge sum of Rs 15 lakh so that we could pay our boys monthly salaries. He said that after I became the president of PMC, I never took funds for PMC from the district committee.

The annual fund of PMC team is 30 lakhs which we meet

through our friends and our support. About 97 lakh rupees were spent on the national event which took place in Faisalabad after 30 years, out of which we got 37 lakh rupees in the form of sponsors and the rest we afforded together. There were 32 matches of the national event and in these 32 matches the chief guest was different and did not demand even a single rupee from any chief guest. The happiest thing was that the fans in Faisalabad liked football very much and the number of fans in every match was in thousands and we will continue to organize such matches so that the young generation can be given a healthy society.

Green Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari being briefed about Green Pakistan Initiative and Land Information and Management System, in Rawalpindi on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

President lauds Green Pakistan Initiative

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday visited the Green Pakistan Initiative Headquarters where he was given a detailed briefing about the Initiative, Land Information and Management System operations.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti and Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari were also present on the occasion, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

The president was briefed about the improved water irrigation system based on modern patterns.

A briefing was also given over agriculture, dredging of canals, IT-based operations and effective irrigation

water system under the Green Pakistan Initiative.

The president was also apprised of the concepts of model agri-farms and agricultural smart farms operations to facilitate the farmers' community for progress of the agriculture sector.

President Zardari appreciated the working of Green Pakistan Initiative and Land Information and Management System under the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). While lauding the team of Green Pakistan Initiative, he stressed upon working with equal zeal for the national and economic development of the country.

For the bright future of Pakistan, the president also assured complete cooperation of all the provinces for achieving the objectives of Green Pakistan Initiative.

Dar meets CTGI chairman; highlights FDI opportunities in Pakistan



News Desk

BELJING: Executive Vice President of China Three Gorges Corporation (CTG) and Chairman of China Three Gorges International Limited (CTGI) Wu Shengliang called on the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar here on Tuesday. The deputy prime minister, who is on a four-day visit to China, highlighted Government of Pakistan's reform agenda and shared an overview of

the opportunities for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Pakistan, especially in infrastructure development and renewable energy sectors.

He appreciated the renewable energy projects of CTG in Pakistan, including in Karot and Jhimpir that serve as model projects. Dar noted renewable energy as one of the priority sectors identified by the incumbent government in Pakistan, along with the incentives offered to international investors in this regard.

PM directs routing proportion of country's imports through Gwadar Port

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday directed the authorities concerned to ensure routing a proportion of country's imports, particularly related to the government, through the Gwadar Port. The prime minister made this landmark decision with a view to fully operationalise the Gwadar Port.

He was chairing a high level meeting on the projects under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor and Chinese investment. The prime minister instructed all the ministries



to enhance collaboration for swift execution of the CPEC's second phase and warned against any laxity by the minist-

ries and government departments. Instructing the provision of foolproof security to the Chinese workers, he said

the promotion of trade and commerce ties with time-tested friend China was welcoming. He told the meeting that

Pakistan-China partnership was on the highest ever level, so the relevant officers and departments should strive for the positive outcomes of this relationship. Federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Dr Musaddik Malik, and Abdul Aleem Khan, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and relevant senior officers attended the meeting. The provincial chief secretaries joined the meeting via video link.

PM's timely decision on AJK situation averted a tragedy: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar said on Tuesday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's decision to resolve the ongoing crisis in Azad Jammu and Kashmir had averted a tragedy.

Addressing a press conference along with Federal Minister of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Balochistan Engineer Amir Muqam at the Parliament House, he said that the conspiracy of the inimical fore-

es was foiled who faced humiliation due to the Prime Minister's timely actions.

Terming Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf as "Tehreek-e-Intishar", he said its dreams of creation of chaos and anarchy had also been shattered.

"Along with the enemy, the 'Tehreek-e-Intishar' also thought that in some way or the other, chaos would spread and there would be anarchy" as its leadership wanted to benefit from the sad situation.

Tarar said that the Prime Minister took all the coalition

parties and stake holders on board and heard their views.

"Yesterday's meeting was attended by all the political leadership including the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir", he remarked.

The minister said the political leadership and federal ministers resolved the issues through mutual understanding. The minister said that the prime minister resolved the issue with excellent decision making as the crisis can be eliminated only by timely decisions.

"There is a world of difference between the incompetent government of the past and present elected regime", he added.

He said that inflation was being controlled by prudent government policies and measures.

The minister maintained that foreign investment was increasing, the stock market was breaking records which proved that the economy was on the right track.

Reduction in inflation is not being digested by certain

elements. He said that every conspiracy will be thwarted by the grace of Allah, and all conspirators will be exposed.

Lashing out at the founder of PTI, he said Imran Khan was a convicted prisoner facing trial in several corruption cases. He said that Imran's letters to the International Monetary Fund or Chief of Army Staff had no significance. He remarked that in the past PTI's conspiracies regarding IMF loan agreement and GSP plus status failed and in future too such plots will also fail.

Conversion of 29,000 Agricultural Tube Wells to solar on cards

Bureau Report

QUETTA: The Chief Minister Balochistan in a meeting with Federal Minister for Planning,



Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal has vowed that steps would be taken to convert around 29,000 registered Agricultural Tube Wells on solar energy as an alternative solution to growing power consumption. The chief minister has pledged to take more efforts aimed to resolve the problems faced by the province, said a press release issued by CM's Secretariat on Tuesday.

On the occasion, the Power Division in briefing told the meeting that over 11000 illegal agricultural electricity connections have been detected in the province. Planning minister said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had also ordered to resolve the problems of Balochistan on priority. Discussions were also held with the Power Division to provide electricity to agricultural tube wells of Balochistan during midtime besides converting it on solar energy. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has proposed steps for immediate restoration of electricity with the support of Power Division. Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari requested the Balochistan government to work together to curb electricity theft in the province. Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti invited Federal Minister Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari to visit Balochistan and assured his full cooperation in this regard.

Program prepared to improve literacy rate: Maqbool Siddiqui

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Maqbool Siddiqui Tuesday informed the National Assembly that a program is being prepared to enhance the literacy rate in the country. In response to a calling attention notice regarding the cessation of nearly twenty school buses designated for student transportation and their conversion into the Pink Bus Project, along with the non-appointment of teachers for vacant positions in Islamabad Capital Territory, he called upon the elected representatives and other societal segments to actively contribute to this cause. He said that the government has declared an education emergency to enroll out-of-school children in educational institutions. Regarding transportation, he said that in addition to existing school and college bus services, the ministry plans to deploy 20 buses from urban to rural areas specifically for girl students and female teachers from both public and private schools. These buses will make five daily trips to accommodate students, teachers, and other working women. He explained that out of 385 buses in Islamabad's schools and colleges, 75 were currently unused. Among these, 20 buses are being repaired to serve the transportation needs of students and teachers. The addition of these 20 buses will complement the fleet of pink buses previously announced, thereby addressing the transportation requirements of students and teachers in Islamabad Capital Territory. Additionally, the National Assembly passed a resolution to extend the Apostille Ordinance 2024 for an additional 120 days.

IHC bars govt from blocking non-filers' SIMs

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday barred the federal government from blocking the SIMs of non-filers, ARY News reported.

IHC Chief Justice Aamir Farooq issued the order in response to a writ petition filed by the telecom operator.

The court also issued notice to the federal government in this regard, with the next hearing on the matter scheduled for May 27, 2024.

The petition challenged Clause 114-B of the Income Tax Ordinance and the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Income Tax General Orders against non-filers.

The petitioner argued that the tax regulator's new-found authority violated the fundamental right to freedom of business under Article 18 of the Constitution.

The petitioner warned that if implemented, this law would allow the government to deprive citizens of services in other business areas as well.

The development comes a day after the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and telecom operators had agreed to block the mobile SIM cards of non-filers, with 5,000 SIMs to be blocked daily.

FBR stated that telecom operators will receive additional lists of non-filers on a daily basis, and have already started sending messages to non-filers warning them of SIM blocking.

The FBR believes that blocking SIMs of non-filers will increase tax revenue.

Govt prioritizing IT education...

Continued from Page 1

and governance processes. She said that the government was ready to introduce 5G technology in the country, demonstrating Pakistan's commitment to advancing telecommunications infrastructure. She reiterated

the government's dedication to achieving the objectives of APT (Asia-Pacific Telecommunity) and SATRC (South Asian Telecommunication Regulators Council), highlighting the importance of regional cooperation in advancing telecommunications policies and services.

Nearly 450,000 Gazans now ...

Continued from Page 1

to do so as well as a safe route and a safe place to go." Deep concerns remain about a lack of lifesaving aid reaching the enclave since Israeli troops seized the Rafah crossing and restricted access to the nearby Kerem Shalom crossing last week in response to a deadly rocket attack by Hamas fighters. "The Rafah crossing remains closed," OCHA said late Monday, "and there is a continued

lack of safe and logistically viable access to the Kerem Shalom crossing". Echoing fears for the people of Gaza, the UN World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the incursion into Rafah had jeopardised access to health care, the provision of health services and the delivery of lifesaving supplies. The UN health agency noted that partners working on medical relief in Gaza "require a minimum of 46,000 litres of fuel every day just for their operations".

Deputy PM highlights reform ...

Continued from Page 1

professionals and students in China. Deputy PM highlights reform agenda aimed at economic growth organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing, the event brought together a diverse group of Pakistani professionals and students residing in China, a

press release said. The deputy prime minister commended the Pakistani diaspora for its unwavering loyalty and commitment to Pakistan, its exceptional competence, talent and invaluable contributions to the socio-economic development of both Pakistan and China.