

AJK PM hails Shehbaz Sharif for announcing 23 billion rupees package for Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet meeting was held here with Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in the chair. In his initial remarks, the AJK premier Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq expressed his profound gratitude to the Prime Minister Sharif for announcing a historic package worth 23 billion rupees for the people of Azad Kashmir. Highlighting the age-old bond between the people of Pakistan and Kashmir, he said that Kashmiris have been aspirant of a strong, stable and prosperous Pakistan. Kashmiris, he said, consider Pakistan as their final destination. He said that this everlasting relationship will continue to grow stronger over the time. Referring to different issues that have become a subject of hot debate, the AJK premier said, "These are the long pending issues that did not arise



in a day". He said that apart from the Neelum Jhelum project agreement there were other problems that included the issue of Mangala Dam affectees, construction of Rathoa Hariyam Bridge, and water usage charges which

remain still unaddressed. He said that the government was sincerely pursuing a policy of austerity. "Not a single vehicle has been purchased in a year", he added. He said that social protection endowment fund has been estab-

lished under which financial assistance would be provided to widows, orphans, destitute, divorcees and disabled persons. Besides federal ministers Eng. Ameer Muqam, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Mohsin Naqvi and Muhammad Attaulah Tarar, the cabinet meeting was attended by senior Minister Col. (retd) Waqar Ahmed Noor, Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Mian Abdul Waheed, Ahmed Raza Qadri, Abdul Majid Khan, Raja Muhammad Siddique, Dewan Ali Khan Chaghatai, Muhammad Akmal Sargala, Javed Butt, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Sardar Mir Akbar, Nisar Ansar Abdali, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Asim Sharif, Sardar Muhammad Hussain, Faheem Akhtar Rabbani, Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, Sardar Javed Ayub, Chaudhry Akhlaq, Akbar Ibrahim, Ms. Imtiaz Naseem, Taqdees Gilani, Sardar Ahmed Sagheer, Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah, and others

RPO Faisalabad Dr. M Abid Khan organized open court at RPO office

Abdul Majid

RPO Faisalabad Dr. Mohammad Abid Khan organized an open court in the RPO office. He listened carefully to the requests and complaints of the citizens and issued orders on the spot for prosecution. More than 1900 citizens have been prosecuted this year. On this occasion, RPO Faisalabad, Dr. Mohammad Abid Khan, expressed his views and said that the protection of property and life of citizens and immediate delivery of justice is the first priority. He said that mistreatment of citizens or unnecessary delay in registration of cases. The zero-tolerance policy is being strictly enforced. He urged the police officers to investigate the cases on merit and did not allow any kind of pressure in this regard.



PMA condemns illegally raids in doctors private hospitals and clinics in South Punjab



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) South Punjab delegation Along Leadership Of President Of PMA Professor Doctors Masood Ul Rauf Hiraq met with the Deputy Director of the Health Care Commission against the harassment of doctors by the Health Care Commission teams in South Punjab including Multan. Demonstrations against the Health Care Commission across Punjab According to the PMA details, the delegation of Pakistan Medical Association President Prof. Dr. Masood Hiraq against the unnecessary and unjustified actions of the Health Care Commission Punjab teams on the private clinics and hospitals of qualified doctors in southern Punjab including Multan. Professor Doctor Masood Al-Ruf Haraj During a meeting with Director Health Care Commission Dr. Shafiq Ahmed in his office, he informed about the severe anxiety among the doctors of South Punjab including Multan. The Health Care Commission is being sealed Despite the registration, doctors are being harassed by imposing unnecessary fines, while there are a lot of donors in South Punjab against whom no action is being taken by the Health Care Commission. The higher officials of Health Care Commission Punjab should be informed if this If the unnecessary actions are not stopped, the PMA will boycott the Health Care Commission in the whole of Punjab and protest and Long March towards Lahore

17 May World Blood Pressure Awareness Day

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Hormone, heart, diabetes and blood pressure specialist Dr. Muhammad Akmal Madani said that more than two million people in Pakistan are suffering from high blood pressure and more than one hundred thousand people in the world die due to high blood pressure every year. Simple lifestyle to prevent high blood pressure Adoption, avoidance of Chicken and Beef Food and exercise should be a part of routine life. Hypertension can lead to heart disease, rupture of cerebral artery and kidney disease which can be life-threatening. Sometimes there are no symptoms and complaints, but they damage the body internally delivering and the person reaches the threshold of death, that is why this disease is called the silent killer. He expressed these views while speaking on May 17, World High Blood Pressure Awareness Day. He said that hypertension High blood pressure is not caused by mental stress and stress, but by fruits and vegetables Instead of using fast food, smoking can also be avoided to ensure a healthy life.



Rana Sanaullah lauds services of Malik Ansar

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The adviser to the prime minister on political and public affairs Rana Sanaullah has lauded the services of PML Hazro chapter president Malik Ansar Ahmed in strengthening the party and key role in electioneering during recent general elections. Mr Sanaullah called Mr Ahmed here on Thursday in which he lauded the decade's old services to the party and termed him as a valuable asset of the party in the North Punjab. He said that Mr Ahmed not only played his role in strengthening the vote bank of the party but also played a role in making the party candidates successful in district Attock in recent general elections. He said that the untiring efforts of Mr Ahmed for strengthening and popularity during the four years of tough tenure of PTI tenure would be written with golden words.

Motorcyclist crushed to death by dumper

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A motorcyclist was crushed to death by a speedy dumper on GT road near Manoonnagar area in the limits of Hassanabdal Police station on Wednesday, police sources said. Police sources said 13 years old Shahzaib was going on his motorcycle when a speedy dumper recklessly driven by unknown driver rammed over him resultantly he died on the spot. The dumper driver managed to escape from the crime scene successfully. Hassanabdal Police registered a case against unknown dumper driver and launched further investigation.

Two proclaimed offenders wanted in murder case registered

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police arrested two proclaimed offenders (POs) wanted in a murder case registered against them during this year. The police sources said that Shahzad Mehboob and his brother Sadiq Mehmoob both native of Kohat were wanted in a murder case registered against them. They went underground after registration of murder case against them and subsequently declared PO by the respective court. Acting on a tip off, a Police party raided their hideout on Wednesday and arrested them.

Mothers of Kashmir

ISLAMABAD: Vice-President Islamabad High Court Bar Association, Mujahid Asif Islam presetting souvenir to Hurriyat Leader, Shamim Shawl on the occasion of International Mother's Day, a tribute to mothers of Kashmir and Gaza at Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

All Parties Hurriyat hail Pakistan diaspora for raising global awareness on Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu Kashmir and Pakistan chapter have praised the diaspora's tireless efforts in raising global awareness about the Kashmir cause.

Addressing a function organized by APHC-AJK at Kashmir House Islamabad, today, the leaders acknowledged the diaspora's crucial role in advocating for a peaceful resolution to the longstanding dispute.

APHC-AJK convener Mehmood Ahmed Saghar chaired the event.

The Hurriyat leaders emphasized the importance of unity among the Kashmiri diaspora and the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They stressed the need for a shared agenda to address the Kashmir dispute and recognize the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people.

Speakers at the event highlighted the urgent need for a new strategy to address the Kashmir dispute, given the ongoing military siege, prolonged detention of thousands of Kashmiris, including top Hurriyat leaders, journalists, scholars, youth, and human rights activists.

Dr Ghulam Nabi Fai, Ghalib Ahmed, Nazir Ahmed Qureshi, Raja Najbat Hussain, Raja Faheem Kayani, Zafar Qureshi, Sardar Zulfiqar and Muzammil Thakur were among the speakers. They urged the international community, including the UN, OIC, and EU, to break their silence and support a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute.

Those who attended the function included Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Altaf Hussain Wani, Imtiaz Wani, Muhammad Hussain Khateeb, Nisar Mirza, Advocate

Parvez Ahmed, Syed Ejaz Rahmani, Raja Khadim Hussain, Muhammad Shafi Dar, Sheikh Muhammad Yaqub and Zahid Safi, Engineer Mehmood, Haji Sultan Butt, Altaf Ahmad Butt, Sheikh Abdul Majeed, Gulshan Ahmad, Manzoor Ahmad Dar, Mushtaq Ahmed Butt, Zahid Ashraf, Abdul Majeed Lone, Syed Kafayat Hussain Rizvi, Syed Mushtaq, Muhammad Ashraf Dar, Khurshid Ahmad Mir, Salim Haroon, Raja Afsar Khan, Najeebullah, Raja Parvez Ahmad, Dr. Waleed, Raees Ahmad Mir, Showkat Ali Abu Zar and others.

Delegation of Pakistan Youth Parliament called on Chairman PMYP at PM House Islamabad

Abdul Majid

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from the Pakistan Youth Parliament met with Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Program, at the Prime Minister's Office in Islamabad. The delegation, led by Founder President Muhammad Abubakar, presented a comprehensive 10-point agenda aimed at empowering and engaging the youth of Pakistan in national development. The proposed agenda includes establishing a data bank for youth-led organizations, encouraging youth leadership in events, revising the National Youth Policy 2024, engaging youth through the Higher Education Commission (HEC), introducing political



education programs, investing in soft skills alongside technical courses, forming a merit-based National Youth Council, involving volunteers at district and thesils levels, creating a Public Youth Secretariat, and launching an aggressive environmental awareness program.

The delegation also included Muhammad Faizan,

Senior Vice President; Nauman Majeed Khan, Project Coordinator; Mr. Umair Chand, Membership Coordinator; Mr. Waqas Awan, President of Punjab; along with other members. They expressed their gratitude by presenting a memento to the Chairman. Muhammad Abubakar highlighted the importance of youth

involvement in shaping the nation's future, while Mr. Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan commended the delegation's efforts and expressed commitment to working together on these initiatives. The meeting marked a significant step towards achieving the shared goals of youth empowerment and development in Pakistan.

Traders are the backbone of the country's economy. Waqar Azeem

Abdul Majid

BHAWANA: The businessmen have always supported the governments in difficult times and will continue to support this, said Patron-in-chief of Anjuman Tajran Bhawana, Waqar Azim while talking to the media. He has further said that traders are the backbone of the country's economy. We will solve the problems of Bhawana traders at their doorsteps. Waqar Azeem has thanked the government for reducing the petroleum products because the cheaper petrol will also reduce the inflation. Talking about the farmers of Bhawana, he has said that farmers and farmers' families and workers Ola is longing for two-day bread. White-clad farmers and farmers have no money for children's education and health and other necessities of life. The backs of the farmers have been broken. The government should bring good policies for the businessmen and farmers so that there is prosperity in the country.

IGP Ali Nasir Rizvi visits ICCI

Business leaders will be inducted in Reconciliation Committees for quick resolution of their problems: IGP



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, Inspector General of Police Islamabad has said that provision of peaceful and conducive environment for healthy activities and resolution of issues of business community on preferential basis is among the top most priorities of Islamabad Police and in this regard every potential step will be taken in consultation with the business community and other stakeholders to turn Islamabad a crime free city. He said that a full-fledged war, with complete strength, aggressive policing will be waged against the criminals to eliminate the atmosphere of fear and despair and restore peace and tranquility to ease for business doing.

IGP Islamabad said this while addressing an inspiring ceremony held in his honour at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Wednesday evening.

Ali Nasir Rizvi by describing the ICCI as a very prestigious forum which is meant to resolve the issues of business community by playing the role of a bridge between entrepreneurs and the government went on to say that all the required confidence building measures will be initiated to restore the trust of the community by practically implementing the pledges he has made.

He said that all the Reconciliation Committees will be



reactivated and Presidents of Market Committees will be awarded their membership to resolve their problems amicably, efficiently and on fast track basis to create a business friendly atmosphere for their and country's prosperity.

He added that functioning of all the Police stations will be streamlined within sixty days by

setting right all the necessary processes and responses and the citizens themselves will see a visible change in the working of the capital police.

In his welcome address President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while narrating in detail the problems the community is confronting

termed maintenance of law and order as pre-requisite for the businesses by assuring that ICCI will incorporate all out support to Police for making the capital a drug free abode.

Ahsan Zafar by presenting some significant suggestions for the resolution of the problems relating to police said that the business community is pinning

high hopes with the new IGP because it has found him an energetic officer and hopefully he will adopt all the measures to enhance its confidence in police.

Former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said that it is imperative for the youth to start accepting successful businessmen and efficient police officers as their role models for the progress and

prosperity of the country and IGP Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi enjoys all the required qualities to become a role model.

Former President ICCI Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi in his address assured the IGP that he will find the business community along with him for all the positives.

Chairman ICCI Police Committee Saif ur Rehman described the IGP as a visionary figure, determined to deliver for the community.

President All Pakistan Anjuman Tajran Ajmal Baloch, Group leader Blue Area Yousuf Rajoot in their addresses highlighted the problems like shortage of staff in police stations, non-use of modern gadgets some of the causes of the problems.

In his concluding remarks President ICCI Azhar ul Islam Zafar reaffirmed business community's all out support to Police in achieving the afore-

mentioned objectives.

Among other, Member National Assembly Farrah Naz Akbar, President TWA G-9 Raja Javid Iqbal, President Blue area Raja Hassan Akhtar, President F-8markaz Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President G-10-4 Ch. Zafar Iqbal Gujar, President D-12 M. Noman, President F-10 markaz Ahmed Khan, President E-11 Iftikar Abbasi, President Bara Kohu Raja Zahid Daniyal, President G-7 Altaf Hussain Shah, President Melody market Azhar Iqbal, President G-10 markaz Ikhlqul Abbasi, President I-8 Raja Fayaz Gul, General Secretary IEAA Ch. Zahid Rafique, Haji Naeem, Zahid Qureshi, Tahir Qureshi, former President Mian Shaukat Masud, Rizwana Chheena, Ch. Nasir, Khalid Ch., Zulkarnain Abbasi, Ch. Moham-mad Ali, Babar Ch. Ch. Waseem, Tehmas Butt, Zia Ch and other were also present.

Special 'Palestine Edition' for Children Launched

'Bachun Ki Awaz' brings out special Urdu edition spotlighting the plight of Palestinian Children in Gaza

Muhammad Amin

ISLAMABAD: To highlight the plight along with the relentless killing of hundreds of Palestinian children at the hands of Israeli forces and settlers across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 'Bachon Ki Awaz', Pakistan leading Urdu periodical dedicated to empowering and educating children below 16, has published an exclusive 'Palestine Edition.'

Filled with engaging articles, captivating stories, and heartfelt poems, this special edition is carefully curated to educate and inspire young minds. Through age-appropriate content, children will gain insight into the realities faced by their counterparts in Gaza, fostering compassion and understanding. This edition aims to raise awareness among young readers below the age of 16 about the struggles faced by their peers in conflict zones.

A special ceremony was recently held in Islamabad to launch the 'Palestine Edition,' which has been well received by both children and adults in Pakistan and abroad. "We believe in the power of knowledge and empathy to spark positive change," said Almass Ayoub Sabir, renowned educationist and magazine's Chief patron. "Our special Urdu edition aims to educate children about the challenges faced by Palestinian children and encourage them to stand in solidarity with those in need. Amidst



the ongoing crisis in Palestine, 'Bachon Ki Awaz' recognizes the importance of shedding light on the innocent lives lost and the hardships endured by Palestinian children. The special edition serves as a platform for young voices to learn, empathize, and advocate for peace and justice," Almass added.

The special edition features stories of resilience, courage, and hope amidst adversity, highlighting the strength and spirit of Palestinian children. Through these narratives, young readers will embark on a journey of discovery, gaining a deeper understanding of the human impact of conflict. In addition to thought-provoking articles and stories, the special edition includes

interactive activities and educational resources designed to promote critical thinking and empathy. Children will have the opportunity to engage with the material in meaningful ways, fostering a sense of global citizenship and solidarity.

"We are committed to amplifying the voices of children worldwide and fostering a culture of empathy and compassion," said Ms. Humaira Tayyaba, leader of 'Save Gaza' campaign and president of a local NGO 'Tameer.' "By educating and empowering young readers, we aim to cultivate a generation of change-makers who will work towards a more just and peaceful world," Ms. Tayyaba stated.



The launch of the special Urdu edition comes at a critical time, as the international community grapples with the ongoing crisis in Palestine. 'Bachon Ki Awaz' stands in solidarity with Palestinian children and their families, advocating for their rights and calling for an end to violence and

injustice. Among the other leading speakers included Ahmed Hatib Siddiqui, renowned Urdu writer, poet, and President, Department of Education and Literature Pakistan, Azam Tariq Kohistani, Editor Bachon Ki Awaz, Chairman, Aims Education System, Dr.

Muhammad Iftikhar Khokhar, Chairman, Daira Ilm-o-Adab, and Zainab Hashmat Sahar, Urdu scholar. - Ends
Photo Caption: Chief patron Almass Ayoub Sabir receives honorary shield from the chief guests. Humaira Tayyaba, leader of 'Save Gaza' campaign and president of a local NGO 'Tameer.

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DG ISPR Delivers Remarkable, Elaborate, and Clear Press Briefing - II

While significant progress has been made in countering terrorism domestically, the existence of safe havens and sanctuaries across the Afghan border poses a formidable obstacle. The ramifications of Afghanistan's involvement in terrorism within Pakistan are extensive, impacting innocent lives, infrastructure, economic development, social cohesion, and trust between neighboring nations. Moreover, it perpetuates a cycle of violence and retaliation, escalating tensions and impeding regional cooperation. Addressing Afghanistan's role in terrorism within Pakistan is a critical challenge that demands urgent and resolute action. By jointly confronting this mutual threat and honoring their commitments to counterterrorism collaboration, Pakistan and Afghanistan can pave the path towards a more tranquil and prosperous future for their populations and the broader region.

The Director General of ISPR emphasized that if a particular group persists in such actions, eventually they will turn against their own army. He warned against the propagation of falsehoods, underscoring the reality of the events of May 9: a political faction transgressed boundaries, targeting its own army and institutions. Nevertheless, the conscientious citizens of Pakistan rose against this faction, demonstrating their disapproval. They distanced themselves from this anarchic group, disavowed and condemned it. When the group witnessed the public backlash, they resorted to a second deception, alleging a false flag operation, claiming victimhood themselves. It is unacceptable to presume that the populace is so easily misled. If those responsible for the events of May 9 are not held accountable according to the law, then nobody's life, property, or reputation will be secure, undermining faith in justice. Hence, it is imperative to swiftly and justly punish the perpetrators of May 9 in accordance with the law and the constitution.

yet constitutional relationship with the army. All political ideologies, parties, and leaders are respected. However, any political entity that attacks the army, incites hatred, disparages national martyrs, or propagates against the army will find itself isolated. Major General Sharif emphasized the need for such political entities to engage in constructive politics rather than inciting hatred, as dialogue enhances the credibility of political parties and institutions.

When these facts emerged, the public reacted with anger, distancing themselves from the anarchic group. Any notion of a false flag operation propagated thereafter is baseless. The spokesperson for the Pakistan Army said that the formation of a judicial commission was suggested to investigate the matter. He emphasized the readiness of their cooperation with the commission, provided it delves deeply into the core issues. The commission should investigate the underlying objectives of the 2014 sit-in, encompassing the attack on PTV and the incitement of civil disobedience, such as the encouragement to burn electricity bills. It should also examine the involvement of provincial resources from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the 2016 storming of the capital. Additionally, the judicial commission should scrutinize the circumstances surrounding the drafting of IMF Letters, including any lobbying efforts aimed at pushing Pakistan towards bankruptcy and withholding financial aid. It is crucial for the commission to investigate the sources and destinations of funding, as well as identify individuals responsible for spreading anti-institutional sentiments on social media. Failure to address these matters would render the events of May 9th inevitable. Indeed, in any society, the foundation of stability rests upon the rule of law, ensuring justice prevails and order is upheld. At the core of this principle lies the accountability of individuals who challenge the integrity, security, and sovereignty of the state.



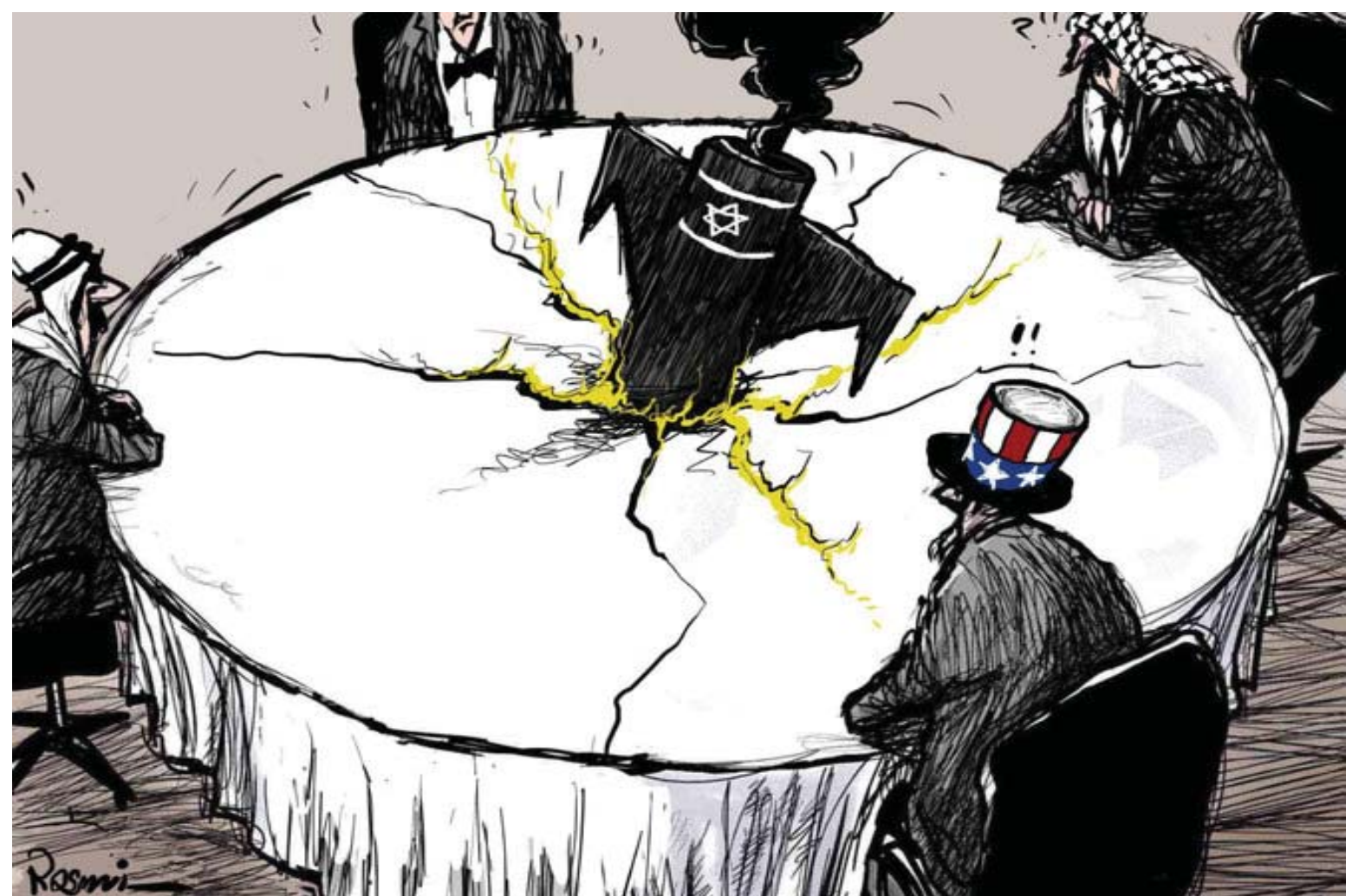
Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Regarding the incursions into Islamabad by provincial resources from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Major General Sharif cautioned that if a certain political group continues such actions under the guise of immunity, they may eventually provoke a response from the army. He underscored the transparent self-accountability process within the Pakistan Army, which has completed its investigation into the events of May 9.

He further stressed the importance of adhering to the system of punishment and law in Pakistan. Those responsible for the events of May 9 must be held accountable according to the constitution. The incident was witnessed by all, revealing how minds were manipulated and sentiments turned against the armed forces, their leaders, agencies, and institutions. The selective targeting of military installations by some political leaders

To be continued



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

US to go ahead with \$1 bln in new arms to Israel

The Biden Administration has told Congress it plans to send more than \$1 billion in new US weapons to Israel, according to media reports, amid concerns over the Israeli military's planned ground invasion of the southern Gaza city of Rafah. The move comes despite the US being opposed to the invasion, and last week it had even paused a shipment of bombs to Israel over concerns civilians would be killed if used in densely populated areas. Among the demands by large-scale pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the United States is an end to American arms to Israel.

The package, confirmed by US media, would include \$700m in tank ammunition, \$500m in tactical vehicles and \$60m in mortar rounds, according to the Wall Street Journal. The White House notification is part of a process mandated by federal law when a US arms sale to a foreign nation exceeds a set amount. Last month, Congress approved a package of military aid providing \$95 billion to Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan. On Tuesday, Israeli tanks advanced deeper into residential areas in the south-east of Rafah and are thought to be about a mile from the centre. Meanwhile, medical services are dwindling. Aid agency Doctors Without Borders said they had stopped operating at one of the area's field hospitals because it was too dangerous to stay. The White House notification is likely to spark objections from some members, although Congress has never successfully blocked an announced arms sale drawn from already approved funds. Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen was critical of the decision and told the Washington Post the US should not proceed with any additional arms transfers until the Netanyahu government had met President Biden's concerns about Rafah and the provision of humanitarian assistance. A US State department report last week found that some American-made weapons provided to Israel may have been used in breach of international law. While the report was a clear rebuke of some Israeli operations in Gaza, it stopped short of definitively saying that the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) campaign had breached international law. It added that assurances it had received from Israel about adhering to the legal use of US weapons were "credible and reliable". The Israeli arms-sale notification to Congress is the first since Mr Biden's administration paused arms transfers to Israel last week. He said he had delayed the shipment of 2,000 lbs (900kg) bombs to Israel because of how they might be used in such a ground operation. Asked by CNN about the delay, Biden said: "Civilians have been killed in Gaza as a consequence of those bombs." Weapons transfers to Israel have become a political liability President Biden ahead of this November's 2024 White House election. News of the latest arms package emerged soon after voting ended in a presidential primary election in Maryland, where activists had urged voters to register a protest ballot against what they see as Biden's favouritism towards Israel over the Gaza war. Republican lawmakers in Congress have introduced legislation intended to prevent any further pauses in weapons shipments to the US ally. The House of Representatives this week will vote on a measure that requires the State Department and Defence Department to ensure the "prompt delivery" of military equipment. The White House has vowed to veto the bill, if it manages to pass the Senate, which is unlikely. Nearly 450,000 people had been forcibly displaced from Rafah since May 6, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) said in a statement. Another 100,000 people have evacuated from the north in the face of fierce new attacks. According to Gaza's Ministry of Health, at least 35,173 people have been killed and 79,061 wounded in Israeli attacks on Gaza since October 7.

Pakistan's Path to Cultural Influence Inspired by South Korea's Hallyu Wave - I

Zoya Arshad

South Korea is a nation that has left an indelible impression on the world with its cutting-edge technological innovations and dynamic cultural landscape. The country has produced numerous trailblazing electronics firms, while its traditional music and art continue to captivate audiences around the globe. It is no surprise that the Korean wave has swept the world off its feet, given the country's diverse and rich cultural offerings.

South Korea boasts a diverse cultural heritage, with prominent influences from Confucianism and Buddhism, which are reflected in traditional Korean art and music. The global popularity of K-pop and Korean dramas has played a significant role in the dissemination of Korean culture, also known as the "Korean Wave" or "Hallyu". K-pop, K-dramas, films, fashion, beauty products, and cuisine are all part of the "Korean Wave" or Hallyu. This cultural phenomenon has captured millions of hearts worldwide and positioned South Korea as a significant soft power influence on the global stage.

The Hallyu Wave, also known as the Korean Wave, refers to the global spread of South Korean culture. This Hallyu wave is considered the "grand strategy" of South Korea. This phenomenon is commonly divided into three

distinct phases. The first phase, which began in the late 1990s, was primarily driven by the popularity of Korean dramas and pop music in other Asian countries.

The second phase, which began in the mid-2000s, saw the Hallyu wave expand to other parts of the world, including Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. This phase was characterized by the rise of K-pop and the increasing global popularity of Korean films and TV shows. The third phase, which began in the 2010s, has been marked by the continued growth of K-pop and the emergence of new forms of Korean entertainment, such as webtoons and video games, which have gained a significant following worldwide.

The Korean Wave has brought many benefits to Korea, including its business, culture, and country image. Since the early 1990s, Hallyu has become a significant cultural phenomenon across Asia. This phenomenon had an immense impact on the South Korean economy, contributing 0.2% of Korea's GDP in 2004, which amounted to around USD 1.87 billion. In 2019, Hallyu's estimated boost to the Korean economy was USD 12.3 billion.

K-pop single-handedly has contributed significantly to South Korea's soft power strategy. K-pop is a global expression of soft power, fueled by the Hallyu wave, which has sought to expand South Korea's influence since

the late 1990s. The popularity of K-pop has given South Korea influence in countries with diplomatic, political, and economic relations.

The Hallyu wave has had a significant impact on South Korea, creating a new national identity that has not only improved the domestic situation but also influenced the international community. Prior to the 1980s, South Korea was seen as a politically unstable country with an authoritarian government, similar to the situation that Pakistan is currently facing. K-pop has become a form of unofficial diplomacy, with many Korean artists using it to perform soft diplomacy by attending diplomatic events on a global level. One noteworthy example is the popular K-pop group BTS, who attended the UN General Assembly session in 2021 as presidential envoys and performed one of their songs at the UN headquarters. South Korea's soft power has been recognized worldwide, ranking at the top in several soft power measures.

"The country was once largely known for cars and smartphones, but a global audience has become mesmerized by its entertainment, and creators say success didn't happen overnight." The New York Times November 2021 article explores South Korea's rise in soft power and global reputation. It highlights the country's cultural exports, strategic investments, economic growth, and technological advancements.

To be continued

Pakistan's Economic Challenges and the IMF Bailout

Muhammad Hamza Kamran

Pakistan's economy finds itself precariously balanced on a tightrope. Crippling inflation, a depreciating currency, and dwindling foreign reserves paint a grim picture. In a desperate bid for stability, the country secured a \$3 billion bailout package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in July 2023. This article delves into Pakistan's economic challenges, analyzes the IMF's intervention, and explores the trade-offs involved.

A Perfect Storm of Economic Woes:

Pakistan's current economic woes are a culmination of internal and external factors. Years of high government spending, coupled with inefficient state-owned enterprises, have led to a ballooning budget deficit. The deficit stood at a staggering 8.8% of GDP in 2022, according to the World Bank. This, in turn, fueled inflation, which reached a scorching 21.3% in June 2023. The Pakistani Rupee also took a beating, depreciating by over 30% against the US dollar in the past year.

External factors further exacerbated the situation. The global surge in commodity prices due to the Russia-Ukraine war pushed up import costs for essential goods like oil and wheat. Devastating floods in 2023, estimated to have caused over \$30 billion in damage, added another layer of strain on the already depleted national coffers.

A Lifeline or a Shackle? The IMF Bailout:

The IMF stepped in to provide a much-needed financial lifeline. The \$3 billion loan comes with a set of conditions, aiming to put Pakistan's finances back on track. These conditions include raising taxes, particularly on the wealthy, and cutting subsidies on electricity and fuel. The government also pledged to raise interest rates to curb inflation and implement reforms to improve tax collection and reduce public spending.

The potential benefits of the bailout are undeniable. The immediate injection of funds will bolster foreign exchange reserves, preventing a potential default on external debts. Furthermore, the IMF's involvement can instill confidence in investors and pave the way for additional funding from other lending institutions. This financial stability is crucial for jumpstarting economic activity and promoting growth.

The Price of Austerity:

However, the IMF's austerity measures often come with a social cost. Raising taxes and cutting subsidies will likely squeeze household budgets, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable segments of society. Higher interest rates, while effectively addressing inflation, can also stifle business investment and job creation. This can exacerbate income inequality and social unrest, potentially derailing the very stability that the bailout seeks to achieve.

Effectiveness of IMF Interventions: A Debate Rages On:

The effectiveness of IMF interventions is a topic of constant debate. Critics argue that the one-size-fits-all approach often ignores the specific context of a country's problems. Focusing solely on fiscal discipline, they contend, can hinder long-term growth prospects by neglecting investments in infrastructure, education, and social safety nets. Additionally, past IMF interventions in Pakistan haven't always yielded lasting results, raising concerns about the sustainability of the current bailout.

Beyond the Bailout: Seeking Sustainable Solutions:

While the IMF bailout offers immediate relief, it cannot be a silver bullet. Long-term solutions require addressing structural issues within the Pakistani economy. The government needs to undertake comprehensive reforms to improve tax collection by tackling corruption and broadening the tax base. Boosting exports and attracting foreign direct investment are crucial for diversifying Pakistan's economy and reducing its vulnerability to external shocks. Investing in education and skills development can help create a more competitive workforce, fostering long-term economic growth. Additionally, promoting energy independence by diversifying energy sources and improving energy efficiency can help mitigate the impact of global oil price fluctuations.

Conclusion: A Balancing Act for Pakistan:

Pakistan's economic future hangs in the balance. The IMF bailout offers a much-needed respite, but it comes with strings attached. The government must navigate the path of fiscal consolidation without jeopardizing social welfare and long-term growth prospects. Embracing structural reforms, fostering a business-friendly environment, and investing in vital sectors like education hold the key to unlocking Pakistan's true economic potential. This requires not just navigating the immediate crisis but also laying the foundation for a more resilient and sustainable future.

Corrupt IPPs are hindering economic development

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Thursday that economic development will remain a pipedream in the presence of Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

He added that the controversial agreements made with IPPs make it impossible to make electricity affordable or provide relief to the people.

According to Dr. Hanif Mughal, paying these power plants in US dollars and capacity payments has not only helped them earn billions of dollars but has also severely damaged the economy.

All major political parties are complicit in this crime, and all governments provide full protection because their ministers are IPP owners.



He said that whenever the looting of IPPs is proven and a decision is made regarding recovery, they are given safe passage by invisible hands.

The highly controversial deals not only ensured incredible profits for crooked businesses but also ruthlessly looted the country's resources and deceived the public about the ownership of IPPs.

The owners of many IPPs are not foreign investors but important leaders of Pakistan's major political parties.

They have imposed such a burden on the whole nation because of their illegitimate profit, which has destroyed the economy and earned billions of dollars in the process.

The political elite that benefited from this scam often protested against this corruption to deceive the masses.

Secret contracts were signed with IPPs for commissions and kickbacks, and long-term contracts were preferred over short-term deals to

enrich themselves, leaving Pakistan deeply entrenched.

IPPs are the primary cause of unjustified electricity costs. Inflated invoices from IPPs have burdened consumers, and it is crucial to address the issue to overcome the electricity crisis effectively.

Now, after national defence and debt repayment, payments to the IPPs are the top expenditure, while circular debt credit is increasing rapidly, proving that the IPP experiment has turned into a nightmare of inflated and seemingly insurmountable bills for the masses.

These agreements allow the elites to have billions while the masses bear the brunt of this corruption. He observed that no one would have dared to strike such deals if the country had a working accountability system.

China's Longi, Huawei get license for solar panels in Pakistan and Afghanistan



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Chinese Technology JI has got license for solar panels of Longi and Huawei Invertors in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The companies have started their operations after being inaugurated by CEO Mr JI from China.

Mr. JI while talking after opening ceremony said the demand for solar panels in Pakistan is increasing day by day.

"We will provide complete solar panel solution with big finance and these two companies Longi and Huawei are of international standard," he said.

Mr JI said the Pakistani industry and people will benefit from the cheaper electricity, adding to the growth and development of the economy of Pakistan.

General Manager LONGI Ali Majid and other businesses men were also present on the occasion.

Training program on Crowd Management held at Jinnah Hospital



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A training program was held on Crowd Management and Happy to help you" at Jinnah Hospital Karachi. In 02 days training held at Karachi on 15th & 16th May 2024. The topic was proposed by Administration of Jinnah Hospital to improve the public and staff relation as the NFPA had a guidelines how to control crowd through barriers and keeping the crowd calm by applying "Happy to help you" strategy which control the energy of crowd positive direction. On this occasion Dr. Muhammad Imran Taj Phd and President Fire Protection industry of Pakistan also delivered the Lecture on training.

Mobile banking, online shopping on hit list of cyber scammers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky has released its annual Financial Threats Report for 2023, offering a detailed analysis of the evolving financial cyberthreat landscape. The report reveals significant increases in mobile banking malware and cryptocurrency-related phishing, signaling growing threats to digital financial assets.

The previous 12 months has witnessed a substantial rise in the number of users encountering mobile banking Trojans, with attacks on Android users surging by 32% - contrary to 2022.

While the number of users affected by financial PC malware saw an 11% decline in 2023, Ramnit and Zbot were identified as the predominant malware families, targeting more than 50% of affected users. Consumers continued to be the primary target, comprising 61.2% of all attacks. In 2023, online fraudsters continued to lure users to phishing and scam pages that mimicked the websites of popular brands and financial organizations. The attackers employed social engineering techniques to trick victims into sharing their financial data or making a payment on a fake page. Overall, among the three major financial phishing categories, online store users (41.65%) were targeted the most, followed by banks with 38.47% and payment systems at 19.88%.

The most frequently impersonated e-commerce site was Amazon, which was mimicked in more than one third (34%) of all online store phishing attempts. Apple came in second with 18.66% of fraudulent pages, followed by Netflix, with 14.71%.

Financial phishing remained a significant threat, accounting for 27.32% of all phishing attacks on corporate users and 30.68% on home users. E-shop brands were identified as the top lure, with 41.65% of financial phishing attempts. Additionally, PayPal phishing represented 54.78% of phishing pages targeting electronic payment system users. The report also highlighted a 16% year-on-year growth in cryptocurrency phishing, with 5.84 million detections in 2023 compared to 5.04 million in 2022.

Philip Morris Int'l demonstrates clear progress toward its purpose as it releases 2023 integrated report

PPA

LAHORE: Philip Morris International ("PMI") has released its fifth annual Integrated Report, which outlines the company's ongoing work to advance toward its 2025 Roadmap goals, with the primary focus on addressing the health impacts of the company's products.

The 2023 Integrated Report highlights PMI's continued expansion of smoke-free alternatives in markets worldwide including Pakistan, as well as social and environmental programs deployed with and in parallel to these products—including the deployment of responsible marketing and sales practices and efforts to reduce post-consumer waste. Further, PMI reports its progress toward fostering an empowered and inclusive workplace, improving the quality of life of people in its supply chain, decarbonizing its operations and value chain, and preserving nature and biodiversity.

"2023 was a year marked by unity, determination, and a continued commitment to our vision of a smoke-free future," said Jacek Olezak, CEO of Philip Morris International. "As we encounter new challenges, our people's enduring resilience, exceptional talent, and depth of purpose ensure we are well-equipped to continue our journey—pursuing progress, embracing innovation, and fostering sustainability."

PMI's supply chain sustainability efforts include water stewardship certification, aiming to optimize 25 million m3 of water by 2033. In line with this, Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited ("PMPKL") is also committed to sustainability and social responsibility. The "Laser Land Leveler" project, which entails using laser technology to enhance traditional land leveling, contributes to this goal.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan presided over a meeting of "Ease of Doing Business" on Thursday.



Photo: PID

ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition to be held from May 17-19 in Lahore

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The most exciting ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition & Conference will begin from today at Expo Centre, Lahore. This ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition & Conference announced by White Paper Summits a leading events management Company, While Pakistan Solar Exhibition and Conference will be continuing from 17th May to 19th May, 2024.

This three-day event promises to be a pivotal gathering for professionals, stakeholders, and enthusiasts within the solar energy industry in Pakistan and globally.

The ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition and Conference aims to spotlight Pakistan's growing prominence



in the renewable energy sector, particularly solar power. With increasing global awareness towards sustainable energy solutions, this event becomes a crucial platform for exploring opportunities, fostering collaborations, and advancing discussions on the latest innovations and trends in solar energy.

"We are excited to host the ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition and Conference in Lahore," said Managing Director of White Paper Summits. "Pakistan's solar

energy sector is experiencing rapid growth, and this event provides a unique opportunity for industry leaders, policymakers, and stakeholders to come together, exchange insights, and chart the path towards a sustainable energy future."

Attendees can expect a comprehensive showcase of solar technologies, products, services, and solutions from leading local and international exhibitors. The exhibition segment will provide a hands-on experience with

the latest advancements in solar panels, inverters, energy storage systems, monitoring devices, and more.

Participants can also anticipate networking opportunities to connect with industry peers, forge strategic partnerships, and explore business collaborations. The event's holistic approach aims to empower stakeholders with knowledge, resources, and networks essential for driving sustainable growth and development in Pakistan's solar energy sector.

ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition and Conference is open to professionals, businesses, academia, government representatives, investors, and all stakeholders interested in contributing to Pakistan's renewable energy journey.

Integrated system to be evolved to promote trade, investment: Aleem Khan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan Thursday said that a coordinated and integrated system in collaboration with the provinces would be evolved to promote trade and investment, besides ensuring the investors protection. While presiding over a high level meeting on "Ease of Doing Business", organized by the Board of Investment, the minister said that the consultation with the provinces would be done for legislation to be enacted at provincial level so that the investors can get a more satisfactory environment.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Advisor to Prime Minister Rana Ehsan Afzal attended the meeting, where as federal secretaries and Chairman Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan were also present in the meeting, said a press release. Aleem Khan said that all the four provinces and their chief ministers would also be taken into confidence in this regard.

Health activists proposed 26% increase on tobacco products

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC), held a briefing session with journalists on Wednesday at local hotel in which it was shared that SPARC along with other organizations wrote a letter to Finance Ministry of Pakistan and demanded to increase taxation on cigarettes.

It was proposed that tobacco taxation needs to be increased by at least 26% in upcoming federal budget. Pakistan faces a significant challenge with widespread tobacco consumption, with over 31.9 million adults aged 15 years and above identified as current tobacco users, constituting nearly 19.7% of the adult population. Smoking-related illnesses claim over 160,000 lives annually, representing a substantial 1.6% of the nation's GDP

each year. However, in the fiscal year 2022-23, cigarette taxes covered only 16% of these expenses, marking a decline from 19.5% in 2019.

Dr Khalil Ahmad, program manager SPARC stated that, the affordability of cigarettes and the devastating toll of smoking on public health are indeed pressing concerns that demand urgent action. When cigarettes are inexpensive, it can encourage more people, especially the youth and those with limited financial means, to start smoking or to continue the habit despite the known health risks. The loss of innocent lives due to smoking-related illnesses is tragic and preventable. It underscores the importance of implementing effective tobacco control measures, including increased taxation on cigarettes, to make them less affordable and discourage consumption.



Furthermore, comprehensive tobacco control strategies should encompass not only taxation but also measures such as public education campaigns, smoke-free policies and support for smoking cessation programs.

Country Head Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) said, that increasing tobacco taxes, as recommended by global health organizations like World Health Organization and the World Bank, can indeed be an effective measure to reduce consumption and

generate revenue for healthcare. A 26.6% FED increase, as proposed for the fiscal year 2024-25, appears to be a significant step forward. Not only could it help recoup a substantial portion of healthcare costs, but it also has the potential to discourage hundreds of thousands of individuals from smoking. Additionally, the projected revenue increase could be valuable for funding various public health initiatives and strengthening the national economy.

It's concerning to see the extent of tobacco consumption in Pakistan and the associated health and economic burden it brings due to easy availability of cigarettes. Organizations such as Human Development Foundation, Aurat Foundation and Chromatic Trust alongside SPARC have raised their concerns on this crucial public health issue.



Special Edition on

The Daily Spokesman

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD 2024)

Friday, May 17, 2024

Unlocking Pakistan's Connectivity

Enablement of Next-Gen Wi-Fi for a Sustainable Tomorrow

Ch. Mudassar Naveed
DG (Strategy & Development), PTA



Every year on World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD), we celebrate the potential of technology to create a more sustainable and prosperous future for everyone. WTISD raises awareness of the benefits that the internet and other communication tools (ICTs) bring to societies and economies. This year's theme, "Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development," emphasizes how advancements can bridge the digital gap and contribute to a greener world. RLAN (Radio Local Area Network) or WLAN (Wireless LAN), which is dominated by IEEE 802.11 family of standards and branded as Wi-Fi technology highlights its significance in advancing global connectivity and empowering communities.

The ubiquity of Wi-Fi access for wireless connectivity of devices - mobile phones, tablets, laptops, desktops, TVs, set-top boxes, surveillance cameras, sensors, ACs, etc. - cannot be overstated. Wi-Fi has transformed the way we work, live & interact. It has empowered countless innovations across industries and applications and thus has become an engine of economic growth and societal progress. The global embracement of one standard for very last "Deca-meter" connectivity has enabled global roaming and interoperability across borders.

Globally, more than 21 billion Wi-Fi devices are in use today and over 4 billion new devices shipped in last year. Further, as per study, ~80% of data traffic in carried in Indoor environments and more than 70% of mobile traffic is offloaded to Wi-Fi when moved indoors. Thus Wi-Fi is seen as a complementary wireless technology to cellular mobile and eases out congestion on networks to make available capacity & enhance experience for users in the outdoor environment.

The current Wi-Fi in Pakistan runs on two bands: 2.4 GHz and 5GHz with available bandwidth of 100MHz and 150MHz respectively. However, these bands are classified by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations (RR) as Industrial, Scientific & Medical (ISM) radio bands in which multiple applications can co-exist under Unlicensed Regime. These include everyday technologies like Microwave Oven, Bluetooth, Cordless Phones, Plasma Lamps, Industrial Induction Heating, Backhaul Communication

Links, Medical Imaging and so on. All these applications together with Wi-Fi are competing for resources in the scarce frequency spectrum for throughput and user experience and thus are limited by interference.

Wi-Fi Alliance introduced the next evolution Wi-Fi 6 in 2019 but was limited in actual performance due to the limited bandwidth and interference in existing 2.4GHz & 5GHz bands. Globally, 6GHz band (5,925- 7,125 MHz - 1,200 MHz) was identified as the new band to support the next generation of Wi-Fi and was branded as Wi-Fi 6E. Pakistan is taking a leap forward in wireless connectivity with the opening of the 6 GHz spectrum band (5,925 - 6,425 MHz - 500 MHz) for unlicensed use for RLAN. This move will provide ample bandwidth to support the advanced Wi-Fi 6E and newer Wi-Fi 7 & beyond generations. It promises cleaner, non-overlapping channels with significant bandwidths. PTA's intention is to align Pakistan with global wireless innovations and the decision paves the way for the deployment of

Wi-Fi 6E, the latest Wi-Fi standard promising significantly faster speeds, lower latency, and a more reliable & superlative internet experience for users across the country.

Some of the key features of the new generation of Wi-Fi are:

- Larger capacity with more spectrum resources: Wi-Fi 6E & later generations have 500 MHz of spectrum in 6GHz band, providing abundant spectrum resources that are even more than the combined resources of the conventional 2.4 GHz and 5 GHz frequency bands. This significantly increases network capacity and reduces congestion.
 - Wider channels for faster speed: Wi-Fi 6E has three contiguous 160 MHz channels in 6GHz band, improving the user experience by at least 3X
 - Less interference: 6GHz spectrum provides a clean spectrum range and is therefore free from interference from other wireless networks such as microwave ovens, lamps, etc.
 - Support for enhanced security over air WPA3
- PTA with active support Frequency Allocation Board (FAB) & Ministry of IT & Telecom, under the overall GoP vision of "Digital Pakistan" strives to be pro-active and progressive towards the embracement of new technologies, thus enhancing the user experience and driving positive impact on economy. Pakistan joins a growing list of countries, including the United States, the European Union, KSA, Australia, Japan, South Korea, that have already adopted Wi-Fi 6E.



To date, over 60 countries have adopted it, with Pakistan being the 10th country in Asia (excluding the Middle East) to do so. This move positions Pakistan as a regional leader in embracing next-generation RLAN (Wi-Fi) technology.

With the rapid developments in computing & graphic processing power, electronics & economies of scale, Wi-Fi 6E shall drive the uptake of diverse use cases building upon low latency, high bandwidth, such as:

- Multi User Immersive Reality Metaverse-Augmented Reality / Virtual Reality / Extended Reality (AR/VR/XR)
- Remote Learning & Immersive 3D Training
- HD Video Streaming (8K & beyond)
- Gaming Online & Real-Time
- Trading Online & Real-Time
- Home Server, Screen Mirroring & Office Intranet (Cloud)

- Industry IOT enabled Automation
- Rich Media Applications
- Cellular Offloading

The wider bandwidth and reduced interference offered by Wi-Fi 6E will be a boon for businesses and individuals alike, serving as a catalyst for innovation in sectors such as Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Finance, Hospitality, Entertainment, and Smart Cities. The new Wi-Fi generations have the potential to bridge the digital divide in Pakistan, empowering individuals and communities with greater access to information and opportunities. By leveraging Wi-Fi 6E and beyond, countries like Pakistan can enhance their digital infrastructure and provide better internet access to underserved & unserved areas by connecting the very last mile i.e. last deca-meter access, promoting digital inclusion and socio-economic development.

The decision to open the 6 GHz spectrum demonstrates PTA, FAB & MoIT&T commitment to foster innovation and ensuring Pakistanis have access to emerging technologies. This aligns with the goals of World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD 2024), which focuses on "Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development." Wider adoption of Wi-Fi 6E & beyond technology, particularly in conjunction with improved infrastructure and affordability initiatives, could contribute to closing digital divide by offering faster and more reliable internet access in underserved areas. The PTA is committed to working with industry stakeholders to facilitate the deployment of Wi-Fi 6E networks nationwide. This collaboration will be crucial in accelerating Pakistan's digital transformation journey and achieving the Digital Pakistan Vision.

World Telecommunication Day to be celebrated today with theme 'Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development'



Naveed Ahmad Khan

The World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) will be celebrated in the country tomorrow with the theme 'Digital Innovation for Sustainable Development'.

WTISD-2024 will offer the chance to explore how digital innovation can help connect everyone and unlock sustainable prosperity for all.

According to the United Nations, the World Telecommunication Day has been celebrated annually on May 17 since 1969, marking the founding of ITU and the signing of the first International Telegraph Convention in 1865.

The UN General Assembly adopted a resolution in March 2006 stipulating that World Information Society Day shall be celebrated every year on May 17 to focus on the importance of ICT and the wide range of issues related to the information society. Innovative technologies hold immense promise for tackling major global issues like climate change, poverty, and hunger. Digital tools and solutions can help make significant progress towards achieving 70% of the targets outlined in the UN Sustainable Development Goals by the year 2030.

Yet, there are significant disparities in digital access and adoption across different parts of the world. Insufficient policies, inadequate investments, and a lack of digital skills are hindering many countries from keeping up with the rapid pace of technological change.

As World Telecommunication and Information Society Day serves as an opportunity to reaffirm our collective commitment to promoting digital inclusion and harnessing the power of digital

technologies for sustainable development, here is all you need to know about the day.

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) is observed annually on May 17th, and this year, in 2024, it will be falling on Friday. The day can be traced back to commemoration of the two significant events in the history of global communication.

World Telecommunication and Information Society Day (WTISD) commemorates two significant events in the history of global communication. Firstly, it marks the founding of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) in 1865, when the first International Telegraph Convention was signed.

Followed by, in November 2005, the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) called upon the United Nations General Assembly to also declare May 17th as World Information Society Day. And then in 2006, the ITU Plenipotentiary Conference in Antalya, Turkey, agreed to combine the two events as World Telecommunication and Information Society Day.

Globally, 2.6 billion individuals remain disconnected, creating significant digital gaps that inhibit innovation. Many nations, lacking essential legislation, investments, and digital skills, are failing to keep up with today's rapidly changing digital

world. This year's World Telecommunications and Information Society Day 2024 focuses on how digital innovation may help link everyone and create sustainable prosperity for all.

As a result, the simultaneous commemoration of World Telecommunication Day and World Information Society Day demonstrates the worldwide community's commitment to promoting the development and application of ICT for the benefit of all people.

It provides a forum for discussing the difficulties and possibilities posed by the fast-changing digital world, as well as reinforcing the importance of digital inclusion and sustainable development via the use of new technology.



Pakistan's IT Industry Surges: A Comprehensive Overview of Recent Developments

Shehroz Ali

Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) sector is experiencing a significant upswing, evident in the remarkable surge of IT exports by 24% in May 2023. This growth reflects the industry's resilience and adaptability, positioning Pakistan as an emerging player in the global IT landscape.

1. Exports on the Rise

According to a report by Tribune, Pakistan's IT exports witnessed a substantial 24% increase in May 2023 compared to the same period last year. This growth is a testament to the sector's ability to thrive amidst global challenges, showcasing its potential to contribute significantly to the country's economic development.

2. Government Support and Initiatives

The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT) in Pakistan has played a pivotal role in fostering the growth of the IT industry. The official IT Industry Report by MoITT provides insights into the government's initiatives and policies that have facilitated the sector's expansion. The

report outlines key areas of focus, such as infrastructure development, skill enhancement, and creating a conducive environment for IT businesses.

3. Investment Opportunities

The Investment Promotion and Facilitation Portal of Pakistan highlights the immense potential for investors in the IT sector. A detailed report on IT investment opportunities by invest.gov.pk provides valuable information for potential stakeholders, emphasizing the government's commitment to promoting a favorable investment climate.

4. Central Bank's Perspective

The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) sheds light on the IT industry in its special section report. This document provides a comprehensive analysis of the sector's performance, including key financial indicators and trends. The SBP's involvement in monitoring and supporting the industry underscores the importance of the IT sector in the overall economic landscape.

5. Recognition on the Global Stage

Pakistan's software developers are gaining recognition globally, particularly in the United States. A report by Brecorder highlights the increasing preference for Pakistani soft-



ware developers among US-based companies. Turing CEO, Jonathan Siddharth, acknowledges the talent pool in Pakistan, positioning the country as a hub for skilled IT professionals.

6. The Evolving Role of Software Developers

Forbes explores the evolving landscape of software development, emphasizing its continued relevance in various industries. Major organizations are recognizing the crucial role of

software developers in driving innovation across sectors such as finance, healthcare, automotive, and manufacturing. This recognition bodes well for Pakistan's IT industry, showcasing the increasing demand for skilled professionals.

7. Emergence of Software Engineering in Pakistan

Global Village Space reports on the growing popularity of software engineering as a field in Pakistan. The article highlights the shift in career preferences, with more individuals opting for careers in software engineering. This shift is indicative of the increasing recognition of the IT industry as a viable and lucrative career path in the country.

Conclusion

Pakistan's IT industry is at a pivotal juncture, with robust growth, government support, and global recognition propelling it to new heights. The surge in IT exports, coupled with strategic initiatives and a skilled workforce, positions Pakistan as a formidable player in the global IT arena. As the industry continues to evolve, sustained efforts from both the public and private sectors will be essential to capitalize on the momentum and ensure long-term success.

PM orders policy on financial security for sportsmen through jobs in departments

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed formulation of a policy to employ athletes through departments to ensure their financial security and promote sports in the country.

He tasked Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood to personally oversee the policy and ensure its implementation within one week.

The prime minister was addressing an event held to celebrate the achievement of Pakistan hockey team that recently won silver medal in the final of 30th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup 2024 in Malaysia.

PM Sharif said jobs for athletes would free them from the struggles of earning livelihood, thus helping them to focus on their sports.

He lauded the outstanding performance of the national hockey team, terming it a step to revive the glory of national sport.

He said the hockey team had won the hearts of the entire nation, adding that



winning or losing was part of the game. "The way you came up with a challenging and competing spirit in the final shows a high potential of several victories in future," he told the hockey team as Pakistan made it to the final of Azlan Shah Cup after 13 years.

PM Sharif said the government was taking steps to promote sports in the country with a special focus on hockey. The renewed interest in hockey throughout Pakistan signalled a promising trend

for future, he added. "The days are not far when the glory of hockey will be revived in Pakistan and we will have more legends like Islahuddin, Samiullah and Shahbaz," he said.

He appreciated the hard work of team, coaches and officials of sports board. He announced to soon invite the relevant officials from sports board to discuss ways for the revival of hockey in the country.

The prime minister gave away cheques

to the players of hockey team as a token of appreciation.

Captain of national hockey team Ammad Shakil Butt expressed his passion to keep up the spirit of his team and bring more laurels to the country.

Hockey legends including 'Flying horse' Samiullah, Olympian Islahuddin and Shahbaz Ahmed on the occasion lauded the keen interest of PM Shehbaz Sharif for the promotion of national sport in the country.

Pakistan team intensifies training ahead of FIH Nation's Cup

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The training camp of the national hockey team is in full swing here at the Nasir Banda Hockey Stadium as the players gear up for the FIH Nation's Cup, scheduled to take place in Poland from May 31 to June 9. According to national coach Usman Sheikh, the players are training rigorously to ensure they are in top form for the upcoming tournament.

The team comprise a talented pool of players, including: two goalkeepers — Abdullah and Muneeb-ur-Rehman, six defenders — Usman Bashir, Athisham, Mohammad Abdullah, Sufyan, Abu Bakar and captain Shakeel Butt. Midfielders Salman Razaq, Arshad Liaqat, Moin Shakeel, Zakriya Hayat, Murtaza Yaqoob, and Ghazanfar Ali have also been



selected. Forwards Abdul Rehman, Hanan, Rana Waheed, and Ejaz Ahmed complete the squad. Meanwhile, seven players have been selected as standbys, including Akmal Hussain, Aqeel Ahmed, Arbaz, Hammad Anjum, Abdul Rehman Jr., Abdul Manan, and Rooman. The team officials comprise Coach: Usman

Sheikh, Assistant Coaches: Zeeshan Ashraf and Nadeem Lodhi and Manager: Waqas Mehmood. Pakistan team would also tour the Netherlands before the FIH Nation's Cup. The Green Shirts would face the Dutch national side, followed by two to three fixtures against the local clubs in the Netherlands. With just weeks to go before

the Nations Hockey Cup, the team is leaving no stone unturned in their preparation, determined to make a mark on the international stage. It may be mentioned here that Pakistan team qualified for the final of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup for the first time in 13 years and bagged a silver medal in the mega event.

PCB 'in a fix' over T20 World Cup 2024 squad

KARACHI: As the deadline for the squad announcement nears, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is facing a difficult situation with regards to the finalisation of its 15-member team for the upcoming T20 World Cup 2024, Geo News reported citing sources.

The PCB will announce the squad after first match of the T20I series against England on May 22 as the International Cricket Council (ICC) has set deadline of May 25 for announcing a 15-member WC squad.

It should be noted that Haris Rauf, Usman Khan and Salman Ali Agha did not get a chance to play in Ireland. While, Hasan Ali, who was added to the team as Rauf's backup, played one match during the Ireland series.

The sources said Rauf would have to prove his 100% fitness in the coming days ahead of the World Cup. Whereas, Usman, Salman, Hasan are expected to be incorporated in the squad as travelling reserves. Pakistan are in Group A of the World Cup alongside arch-rivals India, Ireland, Canada and the USA.

The national side will play their first T20I World Cup match on June 6 against the USA in Dallas. While, the most anticipated clash of titans between Pakistan and India will take place on June 9 (Sunday) in New York.

Minister affirms support for hosting fourth T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in Karachi

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Sindh Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Bux Khan Mahar, has highlighted Pakistan's prominent position in the world of Blind Cricket, noting that the nation's blind cricketers excel across all formats of international cricket. He made these remarks during a meeting with the Chairman of the Pakistan Blind Cricket Council (PBCC), Syed Sultan Shahat his office. The meeting was also attended by Provincial Secretary Sports Jalaluddin Mahar, Chief Engineer Aslam Mahar, Media Advisor of the Pakistan Olympic Association Asif Azeem, and Secretary of the Sindh Olympic Association Ahmed Ali Rajput.

Minister Mahar welcomed the upcoming Fourth T20 Blind Cricket World Cup in Pakistan, stating that the Government of Sindh is ready to host this significant event in Karachi. He affirmed his commitment to playing a full role in organising the World Cup in Karachi. In his conversation with PBCC Chairman Sultan Shah, Mahar expressed confidence in discussing the matter with Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, aiming to ensure that the province does not miss this crucial opportunity. He promised to follow up next week. Hosting the Blind Cricket World Cup, Mahar noted, would not only aid in reviving international sports in the country but also give Pakistani players a chance to display their talents before a home audience. During the meeting, PBCC Chairman Syed Sultan Shah shared details about the Fourth T20 Blind Cricket World Cup, which will take place from November 22nd to December 3rd. Seven countries, including India, have confirmed their participation in this prestigious event.

Edgbaston to "transform" into Fan Park for Pakistan-India T20 World Cup clash

A Sports

BIRMINGHAM: Edgbaston Cricket Ground is all set to transform into the Fan Park for the highly-anticipated ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India on June 9.



According to the details, the cricket stadium here will accommodate up to 8,000 fans after the International Cricket Council (ICC) confirmed the venue among just a few of the host venues globally.

This is the first instance when the ICC is giving the United Kingdom (UK) fans an opportunity to watch the eagerly-anticipated clash on the big screen.

Comedian and cricket commentator Aatif Nawaz will take the stage, alongside former India and Pakistan players, as part of the build-up to the match.

Edgbaston Chief Executive Stuart Cain expressed his delight over being chosen as one of the few venues as the Fan Park for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Cain further reiterated that Pakistan and Indian fans can generate enough energy to replicate the atmosphere during their 2019 World Cup match at the Old Trafford.

"We're the only venue in the country to have been chosen by the ICC as a T20 World Cup Fan Zone location which is amazing. "It's an opportunity for our local communities to really feel part of the T20 World Cup experience and I'm sure it will be a fantastic occasion.

"Pakistan and India fans generated an electric atmosphere here in the 2019 Cricket World Cup and I've no doubt we can get close to replicating that in the Fan Zone."

In addition to enjoying live commentary during the game, fans may participate in cricket skill challenges and observe cultural performances from the Pakistani and Indian communities at the family picnic area.

ICC Head of Events, Chris Tetley explained the importance of the Fan Parks, stating they are essential to taking the World Cup fever to more people across the globe.

"Fan parks are an important part of bringing World Cups to more people across the globe," he said, "and we are delighted Edgbaston Stadium will be hosting the screening of one of cricket's biggest rivalries.

"I am sure there will be a great atmosphere on the day and based on previous India and Pakistan matches that have taken place at Edgbaston it will be an occasion not to be missed."

Shoaib Malik opines on Pakistan's opening pair for T20 World Cup 2024

A Sports

NEW YORK: Senior all-rounder Shoaib Malik commented on the ongoing debate regarding Pakistan's opening pair for the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to take place in the West Indies and USA in June.

Malik, while speaking at a media conference held at the newly-built Nassau County International Cricket Stadium here on Thursday, suggested considering Saim Ayub for the opening slot for high-scoring games.

"Look, Saim Ayub is the kind of player who plays a high-risk game. Any batter who plays with high risk has fewer chances of consistent performance, but there is a lot of talent in him," stated Shoaib Malik.

"You need to see that if high-scoring matches are happening, then you will have to open with Saim Ayub.

"But if high-scoring games are not happening, then it depends on the conditions, if it's those 160-170 score matches again, then I guess Babar and Rizwan should open," he added.

Iga Swiatek sinks Coco Gauff to storm into Rome Open final

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Iga Swiatek won her 11th straight clay-court match on Thursday as the top seed moved closer to another record with a 6-4, 6-3 semi-final defeat of Coco Gauff at the Rome Open.

World number one Swiatek now stands one victory away from duplicating the Madrid-Rome clay trophy double achieved by Serena Williams 11 years ago.

The 22-year-old Pole defeated third-seed Gauff for the 10th time in their 11 encounters, with her only loss in the series coming last summer in a Cincinnati semi-final.

Iga Swiatek, a four-time Grand Slam winner due to defend her Roland Garros title starting a week from Sunday, will play the Saturday Rome Open

final against either second-seed Aryna Sabalenka or American Danielle Collins.

The top seed spent one and three-quarter hours in dispatching Gauff, the reigning US Open champion.

Iga Swiatek ended with 26 winners and broke four times. "I'm not thinking about statistics or history," she said after the victory. "I'm just playing day by day.

"It's easier that way, it lets you play more freely.

"I'll just try to play as good as possible in the final, no matter who it is.

"I won't be thinking of any records, there is still work to do."

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On the men's side, American Paul reached a clay court semi-final for the first time in his career



with a 7-5, 3-6, 6-3 upset of Hurkacz.

The 14th seed is the first American to reach the final four at the Foro Italico since Reilly Opelka in 2021.

The momentum-shifting quarter-final came down to the wire, with a 15-minute final

game capping off nearly two and three-quarter hours on court.

Paul finally came through on his fourth match point as Poland's Hurkacz sent a return long.

The match featured 13 breaks of serve, with Paul advancing with 29 winners and 41 unforced

errors; and Hurkacz having 22 and 44 respectively.

"I started well but it got away from me in the second and start of the third," Paul said. "I had to stick around in the match.

"I found the energy to get it going again. I was hitting my forehand bigger and with more intensity because Hubii can really crush the ball."

Paul will wait for an opponent from sixth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas and Chile's Nicolas Jarry.

Hurkacz, who knocked Rafa Nadal out in the Rome second round, was unable to get his massive serve up to speed as he faced Paul, winner over defending champion Daniil Medvedev in the fourth round.

Hurkacz won the clay title in Estoril last month and suffered only his third loss on clay this spring.

Pakistan women's team partakes in indoor practice session for second England T20I

Sports Desk

NORTHAMPTON: The Pakistan women's cricket team on Thursday, underwent an indoor training session for the second T20I of the three-match series against England, scheduled on Friday.

According to the details, the national team had to settle for an indoor training session due to persistent rain here.

Notably, the touring squad also trained indoors on Tuesday due to heavy downpour in the city.

The Pakistan women's team underwent several batting, bowling and field-

ing drills under the supervision of the coaching staff, led by interim head coach Mauhtashim Rasheed.

England are currently leading the three-match T20I series 1-0 after defeating Pakistan by 53 runs in the first match on Saturday.

The second T20I will be played at the County Ground in Northampton, starting at 18:30 local time on May 17. Meanwhile, the last match will be played in Leeds on May 19.

Pakistan will then take on England in a three-match ODI series, part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25, scheduled to be played from 23 to 29

May in Derby, Taunton and Chelmsford.

Pakistan squad for England T20Is: Nida Dar (c), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Fatima Sana, Gull Feroza, Muneeba Ali (wk), Najiha Alvi (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadaf Shamas, Sadia Iqbal, Sidra Amin, Tuba Hassan, Umm-e-Hani and Waheeda Akhtar.

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

Ahmed (analyst) and Hina Munawar (chief security officer)

Tour Schedule

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

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

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

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

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

23 May - 1st ODI, Derby (1.00 pm



local time) (ICC Women's Championship)

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

pionship)

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

Urgent inquiry

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses at Neelum-Jhelum Hydro Power Project on Thursday.



Photo: Online

PM orders urgent inquiry into Neelum-Jhelum project's technical fault

Commerce Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed for an urgent probe, within days, into reasons for the technical fault in the Neelum-Jhelum Hydro-power Project (NJHP) that led to suspension of power generation.

The prime minister issued the directives at the project site during his day-long visit to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir

(AJK) where he was briefed by the officials of NJHP Company about the recent technical fault during the last month.

The 969 megawatts project first faced suspension of power generation in 2022 due to the fault in head race tunnel and was later restored after a year in September last year, and the recent one in April this year due to the same technical fault.

The prime minister, while speaking on the occasion, expressed his displeas-

ure that the findings of the inquiry into the recent fault were still awaited and directed the officials concerned to submit the report within days and restore the power generation after repair work as early as possible.

He said it was unfortunate that \$5 billion had been spent on the project despite an initial estimate of \$40 million, but it was still facing technical issues.

"I am very much clear. I

need a thorough probe whether lapses were in the design or in the construction, and the responsibility should be fixed. No more delay will be acceptable," he added.

PM Shehbaz said it was a project of national significance in the power sector after Tarbela and Mangla dams with a huge cost and must remain functional for decades.

He directed that the inquiry should be carried out by third party experts and not by the

designer or contractor of the project.

He also directed the Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) and NJHP Company to complete the repair work of the tunnel at the earliest and resume generation.

The prime minister appreciated the WAPDA chairman and his team for their efforts to repair the fault in the tunnel and resumption of generation last year.

We will solve the problems of the region and end the deprivations: Chairman Gillani

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The series of meetings of delegations continued with Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at Circuit House Multan. On this occasion, the Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said while talking that the people of the region have always loved us. We will solve the problems and end the deprivations.

He said that I promise you that we will start the journey of development without discrimination from where it ended. Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that I feel relieved and happy to serve my Sarai-ki Waseb. Because the people here The love and respect given to the Gillani family can never



be forgotten. Before that, the President Anjuman Tajran South Punjab Arif Faseehullah along with a delegation met the Chairman Senate and informed about their

problems.

Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said on this occasion that traders not only play an important role in the development of South Punjab but also in the

country's economy. There is a delegation of lawyers under the leadership of Member Pakistan Bar Council Mirza Aziz Akbar Baigalso met Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza

Gillani and congratulated him on assuming the post of Chairman Senate. Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani thanked the delegation of lawyers and said that the voice of lawyers has been effective in every period and they have contributed to the development of the region. He has the best character Lawyers also have an equal role in the struggle and they value it. Other delegations include Mian Salahuddin Bhutta, Mian Younis Bhutta, Malik Asif Kadol, Syed Mehdi Shah, Rana Arshad, Malik Saeedullah, Ghulam Mustafa Gillani, Sajjad, Hussain Raan, Qasim Raan, Muhammad Ashraf Bhatti along with their delegation also met the Chairman Sent.

NymCard Partners with Dellsons Associates to promote Fintech Innovation

PPA

KARACHI: NymCard, a leading embedded finance solutions provider in MENAP, has signed a strategic partnership with Dellsons Associates (Pvt) Ltd, a renowned banking consultancy firm, to promote innovation in the fintech landscape and empower businesses across the Middle East and Pakistan.

Ibrahim Amin, Dellson Associates, Chairman, added: "We at Dellsons Associates are working in Pakistan and Middle East region to promote fintech innovation, financial inclusion, and digitization of cross-border channels of remittances to facilitate different states. Our key objective is to bring social and economic development through technological solutions, collaborations with emerging players, and networking with communities in Pakistan, the UAE, and different countries of the Middle East and South Asia."

Pakistani envoy addresses summit on Bridging Silos to Increase Manufacturing Capacity

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: The Embassy of Pakistan, Brussels, in collaboration with international NGO PATH EU, and EUTOPIA University Consortium, hosted a panel discussion and networking session on "Bridging Silos to Increase Manufacturing Capacity through Science Diplomacy" in line with the ongoing European Public Health Week.

In her opening remarks, Ambassador Amna Baloch highlighted the crucial role of science diplomacy in bridging gaps and fostering international partnerships. Emphasizing the shared objectives of Pakistan and the EU in improving health outcomes and driving economic development through enhanced local manufacturing capabilities, the ambassador called for an impactful technology transfers as a pathway to health equity.

The panellists for the event included Dr. Rolando Tomasini (Director of Partnership Development, PATH Belgium), Eric Piaget (Science Diplomacy Coordinator for the EUTOPIA University Alliance), and Nienke Buisman (Head of Unit, Interna-



tional Cooperation Policy, DG RTD, EU Commission).

The speakers deliberated on strategies to create supportive frameworks and policy pathways for supporting global health infrastructure improvements, especially in developing countries. Successful examples of technology transfers, knowledge instruments, and collaborative efforts facilitated by science diplomacy were also shared

with the view to further scaling the impact. Academic representatives emphasized the importance and value of collaborative research and knowledge sharing to drive innovation for public health solutions.

The event concluded with a commitment to continue fostering international collaboration through science diplomacy to build stronger, more resilient health systems in developing countries.

KP Governor Kundi calls on President Zardari



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday called on President Asif Ali Zardari here. The president congratulated the governor on assuming the office, according

to a President House press release. Faisal Karim Kundi thanked the president for reposing trust in him and appointing him as the governor. President Zardari instructed Governor Kundi to work in people's interest and expressed good wishes for him.

PM wants ICT free from single use plastic bags: Romina



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said the prime minister wants Islamabad Capital Territory free from single use plastic bags under the single use plastic (prohibition) regulations 2023. She stated that plastic pollution was the biggest threat for our generations to come. She remarked this in a meeting with Ivonne Julitta Bollon, Senior Vice President of Metro AG (Global),

a news release said.

Ivonne Julitta Bollon apprised the PM's coordinator that Metro has completely banned the single use plastic or polythene bags respecting the prohibition regulations, during their sale and purchase operations. The PM's Coordinator said that on the direction of the prime minister, letters for strict implementation and execution on plastic bans had been sent to all the provinces. Both sides also discussed to hold an expo of the products made up of recycling techniques.

Commerce minister chairs high-level Committee on export facilitation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Thursday chaired a high level meeting to address pressing issues in Pakistan's export and business sectors.

On the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a high-level committee was notified to address issues and challenges faced by the business sector, said a press release issued here.

Attendees included top exporters, business leaders, the Director General of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Maj. Gen. Tabassum Habib and various ministry representatives from the FBR, finance, industry, maritime and information technology sectors.

The meeting focused on creating

actionable solutions by directly engaging with stakeholders and relevant government bodies on matters periodically communicated by chambers of commerce, the Pakistan Business Council (PBC), the business community, and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) to the ministry. Minister Jam Kamal Khan stressed the need for high-ranking officials to ensure effective decision-making.

He expressed concern over the absence of the FBR Chairman, SBP Governor, and Secretary of Finance, emphasizing their importance in future meetings.

Exporters and business representatives voiced concerns, which were directed to pertinent departments for an immediate response, with feedback required within 24 hours.

SECP enters second phase of digital transformation

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) entered the second phase of its end-to-end digital transformation and automation project, LEAP: Leading Efficiency through Automation Prowess, thereby automating its regulatory approvals and licensing regime.

Phase 2A begins with the automation of licensing and regulatory approvals of insurance, followed by the end-to-end automation of Non-Banking Finance companies, the Securities Market, and Section 42 companies. In the initial phase of LEAP, the SECP successfully launched its new corporate registry, "eZfile," which is an advanced, sophisticated, and user-friendly online portal for company registration and post-incorporation filings.

Transworld petition against CCP disposed off

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has allowed the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) to proceed with its enquiry against M/s Transworld Associates (Private) Limited for alleged abuse of dominant position.

The CCP initiated the enquiry and sent letters to M/s Transworld regarding its suspected abuse of dominant position, potentially violating Section 3 of the Competition Act, 2010.

M/s Transworld had challenged the CCP's letters in court and obtained a stay order, halting the CCP from concluding its enquiry. During the court proceedings, the CCP informed the court that it had internally concluded that the complaint against Transworld raised suspicions of breaching Section 3 of the Act, warranting an enquiry.