

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
ہم سے جو اللہ نے سلسلے بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا ہم سے عبد العزیز بن ابی حازم نے بیان کیا ان سے ان کے والد نے اور ان سے ان کے والد نے کہا کہ میں نے آپ کو فرماتے ہوئے سنا کہ جنت میں ایک کوڑے جتنی جگہ دنیا اور اس میں جو کچھ ہے سب سے بہتر ہے اور اللہ کے راستے میں حج کویشام کو تھوڑا سا چٹان بھی « اللہ یبارک فیہا » سے بہتر ہے۔
(تجزیاتی صدمہ نمبر 415)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



CM Maryam inaugurates Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore

In a move to equip the youth with latest skills, the Chief Minister (CM) of Punjab on Saturday inaugurated the Nawaz Sharif Information Technology (IT) city project in Lahore. Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Nawaz Sharif IT City Project, CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz recalled that Nawaz Sharif laid the foundation of the IT City project with the... (Details on Page 3)



China-funded project helps preserve cultural heritage in Pakistan

Walking up the stone stairs ascending to the archaeological site of an ancient Buddhist monastery Takht-i-Bahi, Muhammad Haasan immersed himself in Buddhist history and culture as the exceptionally well-preserved majestic beauty of ruins bewildered the teenager. UNESCO World Heritage Site Takht-i-Bahi, one of the most prestigious Buddhist religious establishments in the ancient Gandhara region, is located... (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Mob violence in Bishkek

Bishkek: Several Pakistani students studying in Bishkek faced mob violence late Friday night, sustaining injuries, though no deaths have been confirmed.



Photo: Screengrab/X

Mob violence in Bishkek: Embassy says no confirmed reports of any Pakistani student's death

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN): A number of Pakistani students studying in Bishkek were subjected to mob violence late Friday night with many of them receiving injuries, though the embassy has far confirmed no death.

According to Pakistan's Embassy in Bishkek, foreign students living in Bishkek including those from Pakistan, were attacked by locals in the aftermath of their brawl with Egyptian nationals a few days ago.

Some hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students including Pakistanis were attacked.

However, contrary to the social media posts, the embassy said that so far, they had received no confirmed reports of death or rape of any Pakistani student there.

A midst the mob violence, the embassy strongly advised the Pakistani students to stay indoors.

In social media post, Ambassador of Pakistan in Bishkek Hasan Zaigham assured that the embassy was liaising with the local law enforcement authorities to ensure safety of the Pakistani students.

The envoy also shared help-line numbers +99655554476 and +996507567667, asking the students to call in case of emergency.

According to a public notice issued by the embassy, there had been a number of incidents of mob violence against foreign students in Bishkek since last evening.

Quoting the Kyrgyz press, it said that the matter boiled over after a video of a fight between Kyrgyz students and medical students from Egypt was shared on May 13.

It said that some hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students including Pakistanis have been attacked. The hostels are inhabited by students from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

PM says monitoring Bishkek situation; directs envoy to help Pakistani students

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressing concerns over the situation of violence in Bishkek, directed Pakistan's Ambassador in Kyrgyzstan Hassan Ali Zaigham to provide all necessary support to the Pakistani students. The prime minister asked him to personally visit the hostels of Pakistani students and meet them, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.



The ambassador apprised the prime minister that Pakistani students were safe and those

injured were being assisted by the embassy. The prime minister advised him to remain in contact with the parents and provide them timely information, adding that immediate arrangements should be made for those injured Pakistani students who wanted to return to Pakistan.

The government would bear all the expenses in this regard, he said. The prime minister, expressing his concerns, further said that he was monitoring the situation himself and would not

leave the students alone in this situation.

The Government of Pakistan was in contact with the Kyrgyz government, he added. PM says monitoring Bishkek situation; directs envoy to help Pakistani students "Deeply concerned over the situation of Pakistani students in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. I have directed Pakistan's Ambassador to provide all necessary help and assistance," earlier, the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

Kyrgyz authorities contacted to ensure Pak students' safety: Dar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday said that the government had established contact with the Kyrgyz authorities to ensure the protection of Pakistani students in Bishkek, amidst the incidents of mob violence. Accord-

ing to Pakistan's Embassy, foreign students living in Bishkek including those from Pakistan, were subjected to violence by locals in the aftermath of their brawl with Egyptian nationals a few days ago. Some hostels of medical universities in Bishkek and private residences of international students including Pakistanis were attacked.

Kyrgyz Charge d'affaires handed over a demarche over last night's violent incident against Pak students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Charge d'affaires of the Kyrgyz Embassy in Pakistan Melis Moldaliev on Saturday was called to the Foreign Office for a demarche by Director General (ECO & CARs) Aizaz Khan, conveying the deep concerns of the Government of Pakistan about the reports of last night's incidents against Pakistani students studying in the Kyrgyz Republic.

"It was impressed on the Kyrgyz Charge d'affaires that the Kyrgyz government should take all possible

Continued on Page 8

Nawaz Sharif names former judges, recalls meeting with Imran

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif has recalled his meeting with incarcerated ex-prime minister Imran Khan before the 2014 sit-in while naming former jurists involved in his apparent ouster from public office. "After assuming power in 2013, the first thing I did was visit Imran Khan in Banigala to agree on working together for the country's sake," he said while addressing the PML-N's Central Working Committee (CWC) in Lahore.

According to Sharif, Khan agreed with him on working together. He went on to add that the PTI founder urged him to build the road to his house after the meeting. "I accepted his request and constructed the road in 15 days." But the following events did not work out as planned as the PML-N supremo claimed that the PTI founder, along with PML-Q leader



Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, Maulana Tahirul Qadri, and former spy chief General Zabeerul Islam, went to London where a "plot was hatched". After this, he said that protests were launched in the country upon the PTI founder's return.

Sharif said the development left him confused, saying that he should have been informed and told about the matter or whatever the PTI's reservations were. "I did not understand where they get advice, how and what happened," he said.

"I visit you and you stab me in the back by assuring cooperation and then you begin protests in Islamabad's

D-Chowk?" The former prime minister added that he refused his cabinet members' suggestion to use police force against the protests. Despite this, Sharif said his government managed to secure the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project.

He reminded his political rival that he did not impede the formation of the PTI government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after the 2013 elections despite being in the position to do so through a coalition. While highlighting his ouster from the office, he asked, "Three people sit down and disqualify a prime minister representing 250 million people for life."

Sharif added that judges could not remove prime ministers or presidents in any other country of the world but he was removed on a "small matter" of not taking salary from his son. "Who will answer for this?" he said and added that he had the right to ask this question.

Kyrgyz foreign ministry issues statement on Bishkek attack on foreign citizens

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: According to the incident on the night of May 18, 2024 in Bishkek with the participation of foreign citizens, the Ministry reports the following.

From the moment information about the incident was received, law enforcement agencies of the Kyrgyz Republic took prompt measures to detain persons involved in the event, both foreign citizens and citizens of the Kyrgyz Republic.

The situation was completely under the control of law enforcement

Continued on Page 8

Mohsin Naqvi visits Saudi Embassy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Ahmad al-Maliki on Saturday welcomed Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, Pak-Saudi relations and cooperation in various fields. Saudi ambassador Nawaf

Bin Said Ahmad al-Maliki assured full support for Islamabad police for which Mohsin Naqvi thanked Saudi Arabia ambassador for arranging housing facility for FC personnel.

They also discussed Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to Pakistan. The minister said that the historic brotherly friend-

ship of Saudi Arabia and Pakistan is turning into the most beneficial economic relations. He said that the recent visit of Saudi Arabia's investors to Pakistan was very successful. The people of Pakistan are waiting for visit of Saudi Arabia's Wali Ahad, said Mohsin Naqvi adding that Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin

Salman lives in the heart of Pakistani people. He said that the visit of Saudi Crown Prince will prove to be a game changer in relations between the two countries because Saudi Arabia has always supported Pakistan in every difficult time. In the present era, relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are reaching new heights, said



Mohsin Naqvi. Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Ahmad al-Maliki assured that he will do everything possible to build the Islamabad police on modern lines. He said that Saudi Arabia attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan.

Ambassador Hassan Zaigham meets with Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister



Spokesman Report

BISHKEK (KYRGYZSTAN): At the instructions of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic Hassan Zaigham has met the Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister Imangaziev Almaz in connection with the incidents of violence in Bishkek. Ambassador Hassan Zaigham strongly raised the concerns of Pakistani nationals particularly the large number of affected Pakistani students and their families. He urged the Kyrgyz Government to prioritize the safeguarding of Pakistani nationals.

The Kyrgyz Deputy Foreign Minister informed that the Kyrgyz authorities have controlled the situation which is now back to normal. He said that the Kyrgyz Police is providing security to all the hostels and the matter is being directly supervised by the Kyrgyz President.

Deputy Foreign Minister Almaz assured the ambassador that the Government of Kyrgyzstan would take legal action against the perpetrators yesterday's attack. He shared that fourteen foreign nationals including some Pakistanis were discharged after first aid. One Pakistani national remains under treatment.

Pakistan People's Party called meeting on Azad Kashmir affairs on Sunday

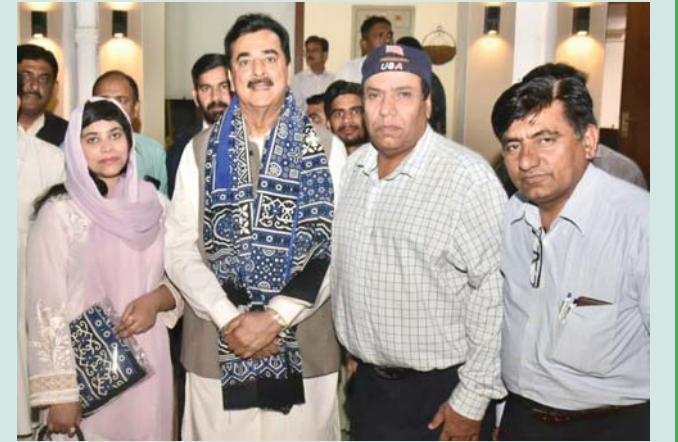
Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: On the instructions of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, an important meeting of the Central Secretary General, Local Government Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the party's central office bearers, taksa holders, members of the Central Executive Council, district presidents, gener-

al secretaries, chairman/presidents of sub-organizations was held on the eleventh day yesterday. At 11 o'clock on Sunday at Blue Lagoon Hotel Rawalpindi, which will be chaired by party president Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, the worst atrocities in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Palestine, the overall political situation of Azad Kashmir, electricity from the federal government. Decisions will be made in consulta-

tion on organizational issues including the bailout package of 23 billion rupees given for the subsidy on the production cost of flour. Yesterday, the Party's Central Deputy Secretary of Information, nominated candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven, Shaukat Javed Mir, timely on behalf of the party leadership. While appreciating the called meeting, all the respected Ideological House members have been request-

ed to attend the meeting in a timely manner. Proposals will be made to prepare recommendations by consensus on the party's one-year government period in Kashmir. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unjustified interference in the meeting to stop the harassment of some elements against the brave forces of Pakistan and national security institutions. The public communication campaign will be finalized



Daily The Spokesman Team Multan Asim Tanveer, Kiran Asim and Syed Nadeem Gazzmi Meet With Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani

Sardar Attique called a meeting of the central council Muslim Conference

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, former prime minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, called a meeting of the central council in view of the current alarming and uncertain situation of Azad Kashmir. Majlis-e-Amila, divisional, district and city presidents while provincial, circle and district presidents from Pakistan will participate. The meeting will start on Sunday, May 26, 2024 at Allah Deen Hall Sixth Road Rawalpindi at 10 am. Senior workers of Muslim Conference and Officials ensure their participation.

DFP tributes martyred leaders on their martyrdom anniversary

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has paid rich tributes to the martyred liberation leaders, Mirwaiz Mohammed Farooq and Khawaja Abdul Ghani Lone on their martyrdom anniversary.



In a statement issued here today, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal, while recalling the martyred leaders' contribution to the ongoing freedom struggle said that the duo would be remembered for a long time in the annals of Kashmir history for their unprecedented role and supreme sacrifices the duo had rendered for the noble cause of freedom. Lauding the Kashmiri masses' undying spirit and resolve to rid their motherland of India's illegal occupation, he said that every drop of blood being shed on the Kashmir's soil had strengthened the Kashmiris' resolve besides rejuvenating their passion for freedom. Reiterating Kashmiris' pledge to uphold the martyred leaders' mission, he expressed the hope that the day was not far when Kashmiris would achieve the cherished goal for which they rendered matchless sacrifices. Reaffirming his party's stand on the issue of Kashmir, the DFP spokesman reminded the international community that the election drama staged in the region by the Indian government cannot be a substitute to plebiscite.

25 Years after Devastating Cyclone, Thatta, Sujawal Coastal Villages Await Development

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Twenty-five years have passed since Cyclone Oa2 struck the coastline of Sindh on May 19, 1999, causing widespread destruction and loss of life in Thatta and Badin districts. The cyclone affected several villages, including Taluka Jati, which was declared the most affected area.



According to Abdul Rasool Alwani, who was posted as Malaria Supervisor at Taluka Hospital Jati at the time, the Pakistan Army took control of the hospital after the cyclone and heavy rainfall on the night of May 18-19, 1999. The hospital lacked the resources to deal with the emergency, but the staff's dedication helped them cope with the situation. The cyclone caused massive destruction, with 6,500 people from coastal villages going missing, and most of them believed to be dead. The fisher folk of the coastal areas of Thatta and Sujawal districts were severely affected, with many losing their loved ones. Dr. Wazir Ali Karimi, the then Medical Superintendent of Taluka Hospital Jati, recalled the challenges they faced during the emergency. "The hospital lacked the efficiency to deal with such a critical situation, but despite that, we coped with the emergency thanks to the dedication of the staff." Khamiso Muhammad Khan, a senior clerk and administrator at the hospital, described the devastating scene. "Bodies were wrapped in bushes and thorny shrubs in the remote areas of Taluka Jati." He added that dead bodies were brought to the hospital in tractor trolleys and Suzuki pickups. The cyclone not only caused loss of human life and infrastructure but also had a severe impact on the environment.

Press conference

LAHORE: Provincial Transport Minister Bilal Akbar Khan holding a press conference in the DGPR office of the provincial capital.



Photo: Online

Fawad Rabbani inaugurated the Train Bogie Restaurant at Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Additional Chief Secretary of South Punjab, Fawad Hashim Rabbani, inaugurated the train bogie restaurant located in the Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh area near Ghanta Ghar Chowk, Multan. Special Secretary of Housing South Punjab, Rana Saleem Khan, and Director General of PHA, Asif Rauf Khan, were also present on this occasion.



Addressing the opening ceremony and speaking to the media, Additional Chief Secretary Fawad Hashim Rabbani stated that the train bogie restaurant was the result of the efforts of the South Punjab Secretariat. He mentioned that, at the request of the Secretariat, four Train bogies (Coach) were provided by Chairman Railways, with two handed over to Patk and PHA Administration Multan, one to Bahawalpur, and one to DG Khan PHA. Fawad Hashim Rabbani said that the Train Bogie Restaurant has already been established in Bahawalpur and has now been inaugurated in Multan. The purpose of the Train Bogie Restaurant is to offer a

beautiful spot for citizens to enjoy tea, coffee, and Fresh food with their families. Mr. Rabbasa said the renovation of the Train Bogie Restaurant was carried out by the contractor, and PHA funds were not spent on this project. Instead, the lease of the train bogie restaurant will increase PHAs income. He added that, alongside regional development, the South Punjab Secretariat is also committed to providing entertainment

opportunities for the people. Director General PHA Asif Rauf Khan stated in his address that the train bogie restaurant has been leased for five years on a Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) basis. PHA will receive a monthly rent of Rs 1.7 lakh, with a ten percent annual increase. He told that the location for setting up the second train bogie restaurant will be selected soon.

Jameel Awan elected Senior Vice President of Tanzeem-ul-Awan Pakistan

PPA

RAWALPINDI: After the mutual consultation of the central and provincial leadership of Tanzeem-ul-Awan Pakistan, Malik Jameel Awan, Superintendent, Directorate of Education Colleges, Rawalpindi Division and President APCA Department of Education Colleges Wing, Rawalpindi was elected Senior Vice President of Tanzeem-ul-Awan Pakistan, Punjab.

Malik Jameel Awan, on being elected Senior Vice President, said that I am extremely grateful to the central and provincial leadership of Al-Awan Pakistan, especially the Central President of Al-Awan Pakistan Malik Hasrat Hussain Awan, Central Chairman Malik Azhar Naveed Awan and Malik Farooq Awan. Those who considered me worthy. In Shaa ALLAH, I will try my best to serve the Awan community and humanity from this platform of the organization and play a positive role in the welfare of Tanzeem Al-Awan Pakistan and the Awan community.

Hypertension Day seminar held in DHQ Hospital Wana, took out awareness walk

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A walk was also held on the occasion of World Hypertension Day at District Headquarters Hospital Wana of Lower South Waziristan district.

Officials said in the statement the aim of the event was to create awareness about hypertension, its risks and preventive measures. Deputy Commissioner of South Waziristan Lower Muhammad Nasir Khan was the chief guest of the event.

On this occasion the District Health Officer (DHO) South Waziristan Lower Dr. Inayat Ur Rehman and Assistant Commis-

sioner (AC) Wana Faisal Ismail also participated in the seminar.

Officials said, the seminar started with the opening address of renowned medical specialist Dr. Shan Ullah.

He gave a detailed presentation on diagnosis, treatment and prevention of hypertension.

Dr. Shan Ullah emphasized the importance of early detection of hypertension, and informed about the potential health risks of uncontrolled blood pressure such as heart disease, stroke, and kidney failure.

His presentation provided practical advice on lifestyle changes, regular use of medications, and routine monitoring, while

emphasizing that active management is essential to reduce the adverse effects of hypertension.

On this occasion, Dr. Hammad Mehmood, Medical Superintendent and Health Manager of DHQ Hospital Wana, provided an update on the performance of the hospital after taking over the management of Non Government Organization MERF (Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation).

Dr. Hammad highlighted significant improvements in health services, increased emergency response, improved patient care protocols, and the introduction of new medical devices.

He appreciated the joint efforts

of the hospital staff and MERF Organization.

He said the administration who transformed the hospital into an important health facility in the region.

South Waziristan Lower DHO Dr. Inayat Ur Rehman praised the excellence and dedication of the hospital staff and management of MERF.

He appreciated their continuous efforts in health delivery and expressed their commitment to public health.

Dr. Inayat also spoke on the importance of public involvement and education, which plays an important role in the fight against a wide range of health problems



like hypertension. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Nasir Khan, Chief Guest of the event, gave an effective speech on the importance of World Hypertension Day. He appreciated the efficiency

of the hospital management measures and emphasized the need for public awareness and preventive measures. He encouraged people to take practical steps to adopt a healthy lifestyle, these include regular

exercise, a balanced diet, and routine health checkups. DC also pledged its continued support for health campaigns and initiatives, which are being done to improve the overall health of the community.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:28 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:59 pm
Maghrib 7:04 pm
Isha 8:42 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4

CM Maryam inaugurates Nawaz Sharif IT City in Lahore

Bureau Report

LAHORE: In a move to equip the youth with latest skills, the Chief Minister (CM) of Punjab on Saturday inaugurated the Nawaz Sharif Information Technology (IT) city project in Lahore.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of Nawaz Sharif IT City Project, CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz recalled that Nawaz Sharif laid the foundation of the IT City project with the first IT City inaugurated in a short period of two and a half months.

She announced that the IT city project, spanning 853 acres, will be tax-free for the next 10 years, while a Knowledge City and Film City are also being developed in this project.



She mentioned that various universities will open campuses in Knowledge City, and the government will provide facilities to investors, noting significant interest from major IT companies in the Nawaz Sharif

IT City. She expressed her commitment to ensuring that the youth of Pakistan were financially empowered.

In her address, Maryam Nawaz compared the IT revolution in India to the potential for a similar transformation in Pakistan, questioning why Pakistan cannot achieve the same success.

She criticized the current situation, stating that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had provided laptops to hundreds of thousands of students, but these were replaced with batons and petrol bombs.

She affirmed that the aim of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N) is to bring an IT revolution to the country, including the provision of free Wi-Fi throughout the province, including Lahore.

While concluding her address, the CM Punjab announced to resume the laptop scheme for the deserving students of Pakistan.

Zindigi Partners with One Network for M-Tag Top-Ups



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Commuters with M-Tags can now enjoy hassle-free journeys through toll plazas without stopping, reducing congestion and wait times, by simply topping up their M-Tag accounts through the Zindigi app. One Network, the ICT services company managing the M-Tag infrastructure and services for Frontier Works Organization has orchestrated an integration agreement between FWO and Zindigi, the digital banking initiative of JS Bank for integrating M-Tag top ups with no extra charges for convenience and efficiency.

Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer at Zindigi added: "Our latest initiative is solely focused on enhancing customer experience by providing seamless top-up option for their m-tags. Our collaboration with One Network aligns perfectly with this vision, providing a convenient solution for toll payments."

"We're aiming to provide maximum top up options for M-Tag customers and thus we have integrated with Zindigi Mobile Wallet to leverage upon their active user base. By integrating our M-Tag services with their digital platform, we empower travelers to navigate motorways seamlessly through Express Lanes" says Ms. Fatima Anila, Chief of Business Strategy at One Network; while expressing her enthusiasm about the digital transformation of motorways and toll tax collection in Pakistan.

Debt servicing economy's biggest issue as public debt rises to over Rs39.5tr



PNP

LAHORE: The governments' borrowing policy over the last decade has brought the country to the brink, as the debt servicing has now become the biggest challenge on expenditures front in the federal budget in the wake of huge domestic and foreign borrowings, as Pakistan's external public debt rose by \$1.2 billion in six months to \$86.35 billion as of Sept, 2023.

APBF president Syed Maaz Mahmood, quoting the data, pointed out that the external debt was recorded at \$86.36 billion and domestic debt was recorded at Rs39.5 trillion of the total public debt at the end of Sept 2023. In its first quarterly report on Foreign Economic Assistance of the current fiscal year, the ministry said Pakistan had received total foreign inflows of \$3.5b in July-Sept 2023 against loan repayments of \$1.5b, resulting in a net inflow of \$1.97b.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi observed that country's fiscal policy over the past decade has focused primarily on macroeconomic stabilization in response to the financial crisis, calling for more emphasis on reforms to foster long-term inclusive growth by adapting to advancing technology and deepening global integration.

Ibrahim Qureshi said that reforms will require a growth-friendly budget, re-composition to upgrade tax, social spending, and active industrial policies in close consultation with the real stakeholders to achieve sustainable development goals.

Online order

ISLAMABAD: Vendor providing sacrificial animals to different areas through online orders in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Historic agreement signed between IIMCT/Riphah International University and NAVTTC

PPA

ISLAMABAD: AN agreement was signed between RIPHAN and National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) at the NAVTTC Headquarters in Islamabad recently. IIMCT/Riphah International University was represented by Mr. Ahmed Nauman Anees, CEO/Project Director, Riphah ExcelTech Institute and Group Director of Human Development Services and Strategy while the Director General/Chairperson of Planning and Development signed on behalf of NAVTTC.

This agreement marks the largest collaboration regarding vocational training in recent memory. The project



is funded by the Prime Minister of Pakistan's Office and is part of the prestigious SFIC forum at the national level. This collaboration aligns with Chancellor, Hassan Muhammad Khan's vision of bridging the gap between industry and academia by transferring essential skills to the youth.

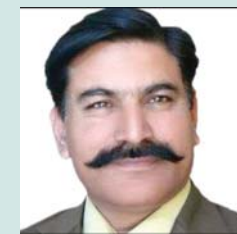
The agreement aims to empower the Pakistani youth with the necessary tools to become proficient professionals through hands-on skills acquisition locally and globally. The project focuses on various aspects of Allied Health Sciences and is designed to equip teams and faculty with

substantial practical experience, turning them into vocational training experts. The ongoing mission is to equip Pakistani youth with 21st-century skills, aiming not only to contribute locally but also to export trained manpower overseas thus bringing in precious foreign exchange to the nation.

As part of this initiative, a comprehensive, well-equipped micro-credentialing Academy is also being established. The Institute will be run by top industry experts and academicians having foreign exposure. RIPHAN International University is known for consistently working for the development of Pakistani Youth in terms of knowledge and skills development.

Biography of new appointed governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider

Czechangez Khan Jadoon



Born on June 1, 1969 at Dhurnal, a small town in Fatehjang tehsil of Attock district 75 kilometres southwest of Islamabad, Sardar Salim Haider Khan studied at Talagang up to Middle Standard. He got BSc degree in mathematics and statistics from the Satellite Town Degree College, Rawalpindi. During his early life, he used to play sports like cricket, football and hockey. His father Sardar

Jang Bahadar Khan was a landlord, Sardar Salim Haider idealised politics as his career since his childhood. He was twice elected secretary general and thrice president of the Muslim Students Federation (MSF) in the college days. Being inspired by the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Sardar Salim Haider is affiliated with the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) since joining the national politics, was elected to the Attock District Council in 1997. He contested election for a Punjab Assembly seat from PP-18 constituency in 2002 on the PPP ticket but finished as runner-up with 38,000 votes. A close relative of PML-N stalwart Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan, Sardar Salim Haider contested election for a National Assembly seat from NA-59 Attock-III constituency on ticket of the PPP in general elections 2008 and emerged victorious defeating Asif Ali Malik of the PML-N and Chaudhry Waseem Gulzar of PML-Q. Salim Haider believes that if interference of the military in the political affairs of the country continued, the very integrity of the country might be hurt within next 20 years. As part of recreation activities, Sardar Salim Haider likes hunting and watching sports like cricket, hockey, wrestling, boxing, etc. However, he spends much of his time in meeting people of the area and helping them in solution to their different problems. He likes reading books on poetry, literature and current affairs but could not read because of the paucity of time except scanning a couple of newspapers to keep himself abreast with the current affairs. Besides agriculture, currently he is also working as labour contractor with the companies operating Dhurnal and Khaur oilfields. Sardar Salim Haider Khan contested election for a National Assembly seat from NA-59 constituency on PPP ticket and emerged successful. After the PPP formed coalition government, he was inducted in the federal cabinet as minister of state for defence production.



Dr. Rubina Akhtar urges people to seal the parrot to make me successful

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Constituency 148 candidate Dr. Rubina Akhtar has said that on May 19, ladies and gentlemen are requested to come out of their homes and seal the parrot to make me successful, because the victory of the parrot is the victory of Imran Khan by the workers. It will be a gift, he said that 50 crore people saw a glimpse of Imran Khan on the video link She said that the workers' morale has been raised by a glimpse of Imran Khan, which is a proof of his popularity. Imran Khan's tigers will Stamp the parrot on May 19 and ensure the victory of Imran Khan. Various Union Council of NA148 in Bahadurpur, Jahangirabad Basti Addressing a corner meeting and doing door-to-door Election campaign, various communities announced their support on this occasion.

DePaul University Representatives visit Pakistan under the Green Urban Development Programme

PNP

ISLAMABAD: To strengthen international partnerships for exchange of knowledge and promotion of youth-led green initiatives, Institute of Urbanism (IoU) and School of Leadership Foundation (SoLif) with support of the U. S. Embassy Islamabad hosted a delegation in Islamabad from the DePaul University, Chicago, USA under the joint initiative called Green Urban Development (GUD) programme. The delegation from the DePaul University was led by Mr. John Zeigler, Director Urban Education & Community Partnerships, and Ms. Hiba Zakai, a distinguished PhD scholar.

During the 7-day visit, the delegation held several high-level meetings with important stakeholders including Mr. Rana Mashood, Chairperson, Prime Minister's Youth Program (PYMP) and Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairperson, Higher Education Commission (HEC). "Through the Green Urban Development programme, we are forging impactful partnerships with institutions like DePaul University to empower young leaders and foster sustainable solutions for our communities. This collaboration embodies our commitment to nurturing the next generation of change-makers in urban development", remarked Mariyam Irfan, Managing Director, School of

Leadership Foundation. During these meetings, the Green Urban Development School (GUDS) model was recognized as a great initiative which can play a critical role in developing understanding and skills of youth to lead the transition towards a sustainable future. Discussions were also carried out to explore opportunities for creating a synergy between GUDS and the Green Youth Movement (GYM) Clubs which being supported by the government in 136 public sector universities. Dr. Ejaz Ahmad, Senior Program Fellow, IoU said "GUDS serves as an example of how providing the right kind of opportunities to aspiring young

individuals can lead to introduction of innovative solutions that have a multiplier effect in terms of tackling urban environmental challenges." To facilitate long term linkages between universities in Pakistan and the U. S., a series of engagements were organized between the representatives from DePaul University at the GUDS education partners in Pakistan i.e., COMSATS University Islamabad and Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU). Ms. Hiba Zakai, PhD Scholar, DePaul University said "Engaging with participants of the GUDS has been invaluable in our brainstorming sessions. Co-collaboration is the key instrument in achieving sustain-



able goals for society." To generate discourse on green urban development strategies, representatives from the delegation also participated in several TV programs and podcasts.

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Blocking Sims: Netting Fish For Minting Money

The Federal Board of Revenue has convinced the government that the only way to bring in non-tax filers into the tax net, is to block their SIMs. Drawing on my experience of over ten years as Deputy Commissioner Income Tax and knowing its culture very well, this is a very clever move, as they will get many "cows to milk" for personal gains without doing what they were supposed to do to achieve voluntary tax compliance from those with taxable income. Such as focusing on enhancing tax compliance through improving taxpayer services, increasing awareness and education, leveraging technology and data analytics, offering incentives, implementing progressive penalties, and ensuring transparent use of tax revenues to foster a culture of voluntary compliance more effectively.

being corrupt from top to bottom, no matter what they do, not even a single businessman would believe that their intentions are good. They also know that non-filers are not averse to paying taxes, but they are intimidated by the high cost of filing income tax returns. Most retail business persons are uneducated or, if educated, would not be able to fill out the income tax return accurately. This leaves unintended gaps that tax authorities use to charge them with concealment of income, demanding huge sums of money to rectify the mistakes. Once a bargain is settled through tax lawyers, the faulty old return is replaced with a new rectified one. The tax that was evaded then goes proportionally to the tax officials and tax lawyers, without a single rupee going into the government coffers.

proof of withholding taxes while guaranteeing that he will disclose solely that portion of the income that is equal to, or less than the amount of withholding taxes that have already been deducted. Later, he will grab a lot more money for the Income Tax Officer to accept the declared income. Under this scenario, the government and the non filer will gain nothing, but both the lawyer and the income tax officer will amass even greater wealth and prosperity.

the importance of tax compliance and the benefits it brings to society. Offer incentives for Compliance such as tax credits, deductions, or rebates for timely and accurate filing of returns. Deploying advanced data analytics and technology to help identify potential non-compliance issues proactively by cross-check financial transactions, property records, and other data to identify discrepancies and target non-filers more effectively without coercive measures. Instead of blocking, the services impose progressive penalties and interest on overdue taxes by making a clear communication about the consequences of non-compliance to motivate voluntary compliance.

Heritage sites in Pakistan

China has established multi-level exchange relations with Pakistani governments, the archaeological bureau, museums and heritage sites, said Chen Zhigang, associate professor at Shanghai Academy of Fine Arts and director of the Guardians of Gandhara program.

Commenting on the future cooperation plans for the protection of cultural sites and relics of Pakistan, he told Xinhua that both countries need to further focus on tourism infrastructure improvement, basic maintenance, and archaeological excavation of sites.

Besides that, digitization of cultural heritage, joint scientific research projects as well as heritage education and cultural exchanges would be further encouraged in the future, he said.

Pakistan is rich in cultural heritage with a large number of historical cultural sites sprawling across the country. China and Pakistan took an extra mile to preserve the sites, including Takht-i-Bahi, under the Guardians of Gandhara program run by Chinese and Pakistani scholars and volunteers.

Talking to Xinhua, Maaz Ali, a teacher and conservation assistant at the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, KP, said that the main purpose of various educational projects was to make locals living near archaeological sites aware about the heritage sites of Pakistan and rebuild their connection with cultural heritage.

"Especially, young generation is in charge of Guardians of Gandhara as they will take a lead in preserving these important archeological sites of Pakistan in the future," he said.

According to him, Pakistani and Chinese teams have been working together on the restoration of various archeological sites in Pakistan, adding that more sites are being identified for the conservation work.

With restoration work done on several sites, Ali said that the number of tourists, especially Chinese and Japanese, have increased over the past years. "Thousands of tourists have been visiting the historical sites recently, injecting new impetus into the tourism sector of Pakistan and national development." □

As International Museum Day is observed on May 18, Pakistan sought cooperation with China to further strengthen the protection of cultural heritage.

The State Administration of Cultural Heritage of China and the National Heritage and Culture Division of Pakistan have signed a memorandum of understanding to jointly implement archaeology, cultural heritage protection and restoration, exhibition exchanges, and prevent illegal trafficking of relics.

Director of Archaeology and Museums of KP Abdul Samad told Xinhua that China always walks the talk and its commitment towards preserving cultural heritage in Asia is practical, highlighting that China is collaborating with Pakistani archaeologists to preserve and restore the archeological sites using modern technologies.

He said that Pakistan needs to further strengthen cooperation with China to protect heritage sites, maintain academic collaborations between universities and cultural heritage institutions in the two countries, and initiate joint scientific and technological preservation initiatives.

Samad believed that China's cultural heritage cooperation and exchanges programs with various countries including Pakistan are exemplary, adding that China's effective measures for harmonious coexistence of different civilizations set examples for the world.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

FBR while pleading its case, cleverly concealed the consequences of such a drastic measure, which could lead to significant public dissatisfaction and resistance, disrupt their daily lives and lead to widespread anger and potential protests. Blocking SIMs can hinder economic activities, in a country where mobile phones are integral to business operations, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It could also negatively impact sectors like mobile banking and e-commerce. This measure could disproportionately affect lower-income individuals who may not be non-filers due to deliberate tax evasion but because of lack of awareness, literacy, or access to resources needed to comply with tax regulations and above all implementing this policy would require a robust mechanism to identify and accurately target non-filers. There's a risk of errors, where compliant taxpayers might get affected, leading to legal challenges and administrative burdens.

The policymakers at the FBR know very well that given their reputation for

The FBR, being very clever, is trying to trap the government to help it to net new "fish" for personal gains, by portraying indispensability of blocking the SIMs of the five hundred thousand non-filers. Most likely, this will meet the same fate as the documentation of the economy, with disastrous consequences for the government, taxpayers, and the country's economy, which is already under heavy distress due to non-business-friendly monetary and fiscal policies. This measure will likely result in lost opportunities far exceeding the amount of tax raised through this aggressive approach.

Consider the hypothetical situation: the proposal is approved and the SIM cards of non-filers are blocked. Non-filers will attempt to register themselves as taxpayers. They will retain an income tax attorney at hefty retainership fees. The lawyer will gather non-filer's income from all sources, expenditures, invoices, and

purchasing anonymous or prepaid SIM cards, using international SIM cards, mobile hotspots, alternative communication devices like satellite phones, VPNs, social media, email, and VoIP services.

With a little research the government would realize that both scenarios will be counterproductive. Had it been so effective the other countries would already have used this method.

But the fact is that not even a single developed country, including the US or European nations, has ever implemented such a measure. Instead, they employ a variety of strategies to encourage voluntary compliance by making various interventions including making the tax filing process easier and more user-friendly to enhance compliance such as online filing systems, pre-filled tax forms, and mobile apps to reduce the complexity and effort required to file taxes.

Above all the government may set up tax filing services across the country on the pattern of NADRA in the private sector with the sole purpose of helping the business persons to file their tax returns and charge nominal fees. These services should not have administrative or policy connection with FBR, and its performance will only be determined by the number of tax returns filed, not on the basis of how tax was raised. This would enhance tax compliance by providing professional assistance, reducing errors, and making tax filing more accessible for business persons at the same time lower compliance barriers and broaden the tax base.

While the proposal to block SIMs of non-filers may seem like a quick fix, it could be counterproductive and harmful. A more sustainable approach would involve making the tax system more accessible, transparent, and engaging through education, incentives, and technology. This aligns with international best practices and respects the principles of voluntary compliance.

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



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

13th May: Kashmiris' Unity Day

Dr. Shahida Khalique

The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) rights movement is a turning point in our history and marked a major shift in our collective struggle for our rights. While the tangible benefits of affordable electricity and subsidized flour are certainly welcome, the true victory of this movement lies in its ability to unite the people of Kashmir like never before. For decades, our region has been stricken by division based on region, clans and political division based on different ideologies.

But the AJK rights movement has shown us that if we put aside our differences and come together, we can achieve all our rights. The movement brought together people from all walks of life—students, professionals, activists, and ordinary citizens under a common banner of demanding our rights and dignity. We have seen rallies and protests where people from different political and social backgrounds stand side by side, united in the pursuit of justice and equality.

The story of 'An Old Man and His Sons,' traditionally used to teach the moral lesson of 'Unity is strength' to children, should now be replaced

with a story depicting the collective unity of Kashmiris in their unwavering pursuit of rights during the years 2023-2024.

Of course, there is still much work to be done. Our fight for rights is far from over and we must continue to push for meaningful change. But for now, let us be proud that we came together as one nation to pursue a better future for Kashmir. The 13th of May holds profound significance in the context of the AJK Rights movement serving as a symbolic unity day for Kashmiris. To commemorate the unity and determination shown by the people of Kashmir during this movement, May 13 should be celebrated as 'Kashmiris' Unity Day' every year. It serves as a reminder of what can be achieved when individuals come together to pursue a common goal.

Let's build on this momentum and continue striving for a better future where our rights and dignity are respected and protected. We should avoid regionalism, casteism and political division based on different ideologies which may cause serious harm to our unity. Let's not allow anyone to divide us for their own benefit. Let's take a moment to identify those who sow seeds of division among us. They're the ones who tear apart our communities just to climb the ladder of power and authority. They're the

ones who turn a blind eye to our struggles for rights and fairness, instead, suppressing the talents of capable individuals and disregarding merit. They prioritize their own near and dear ones over deserving and talented common youth in jobs, power corridors and everywhere. They also grab development schemes just to financial stabilize and uplift contractors of their respective parties but not the masses. Let's make a collective resolve to discourage such kind of politics and build a society where everyone has an equal chance to succeed based on their abilities, not on their connections. Let's unite behind a mandate that prioritizes justice, equality, and meritocracy.

Now it's the time to stand shoulder to shoulder in the pursuit of justice, freedom and dignity because in our unity we find strength and in that strength we find hope for a better future for all Kashmiris. Together, we can create a Kashmir where all its citizens have access to quality education, health facilities, and economic opportunity. A Kashmir where our culture and identity are celebrated and respected, a Kashmir where our voices are heard and our rights are protected.

Writer Is Assistant Professor In Department Of English, University Of Azad Jammu And Kashmir

Innovation, Insight, Inspiration: 'International Museum Day 2024 Salutes Museums as Drivers of Change'

As the world prepares to celebrate International Museum Day 2024, on May 18, the city of Islamabad joins in commemorating this occasion with free entry to all its renowned museums. From the Pakistan Natural History Museum to the Pakistan Monument Museum, and from the National Book Museum to the Sir Syed Memorial Museum, Islamabad boasts a rich tapestry of cultural institutions that serve as custodians of our collective heritage.

This year's theme, "Museums for Education and Research," resonates deeply with the ethos of Islamabad's vibrant museum community. These institutions, including the Heritage Museum Lok Virsa, have long been at the forefront of promoting education, research, and cultural understanding. Through annual events such as exhibitions, seminars, curator speeches, art activities, and awareness campaigns, they continuously strive to engage and enrich the public. Through immersive exhibits and educational programs, he has helped foster a deeper appreciation for the diverse cultural tapestry that defines the nation.

In the spirit of this year's theme, let us reaffirm our commitment to supporting museums as vital hubs of learning, research, and cultural exchange. By investing in their continued growth and accessibility, we empower future generations with the knowledge and empathy needed to navigate an ever-changing world. Together, let us celebrate the enduring legacy of museums as guardians of our past, present, and future.

In today's interconnected world, museums serve as vital agents of cultural diplomacy, promoting dialogue, tolerance, and mutual respect across borders. Through international collaborations, exhibitions, and cultural exchanges, museums facilitate cross-cultural dialogue, fostering a deeper appreciation for our shared humanity and diverse heritage. By showcasing the richness and diversity of global cultures, museums promote empathy and understanding, laying the foundation for a more peaceful and harmonious world.

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. *The writer is a Museum Operations and Cultural Expert, and can be approached by email at adnanhameed.connectpakistan@gmail.com 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.*

Analysis



Adnan Hameed

China-funded project helps preserve cultural heritage in Pakistan

Xinhua

ISLAMABAD: Walking up the stone stairs ascending to the archaeological site of an ancient Buddhist monastery Takht-i-Bahi, Muhammad Haasan immersed himself in Buddhist history and culture as the exceptionally well-preserved majestic beauty of ruins bewildered the teenager.

UNESCO World Heritage Site Takht-i-Bahi, one of the most prestigious Buddhist religious establishments in the ancient Gandhara region, is located in the country's northwest Mardan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Pakistan is rich in cultural heritage with a large number of historical cultural sites sprawling across the South Asian country. China and Pakistan took an extra mile to preserve the sites, including Takht-i-Bahi, under the Guardians of Gandhara program run by Chinese and Pakistani scholars and volunteers.

"Every two weeks I come here with at least 50 students to learn about the Buddhist monastery, stupas, kings and their residential facilities. Our teachers have also organized tours to other museums in various cities and teach us about civilizations and historic sites," said the 13-year-old student of the heritage conservation classes launched under the Guardians of Gandhara program.

"With the help of China, we will protect and conserve the heritage sites for future generations as the heritage sites are the connection to our history, community and identity," the student said.

"The stories of ancient kings are



very interesting. This archeological site provides us with important information as to how people about 2,000 years ago used to live, meditate and educate themselves. It's quite fascinating," said another student Tahira.

Talking to Xinhua, Maaz Ali, a teacher and conservation assistant at the Directorate of Archaeology and Museums, KP, said that the main purpose of various educational projects was to make locals living near archeological sites aware about the heritage sites of Pakistan and rebuild their connection with cultural heritage.

"Especially, young generation is in charge of Guardians of Gandhara as they will take a lead in preserving these important archeological sites of Pakistan in the future," he said.

According to him, Pakistani and Chinese teams have been working together on the restoration of various archeological sites in Pakistan, adding that more sites are being identified for

the conservation work.

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Commenting on the future cooperation plans for the protection of cultural sites and relics of Pakistan, he told Xinhua that both countries need to further focus on tourism infrastructure improvement, basic maintenance, and archaeological excavation of sites.

Besides that, digitization of cultural heritage, joint scientific research projects as well as heritage education and cultural exchanges would be further encouraged in the future, he said.

Two Day National Conference on Mevlana Rumi and Sultan Bahoo concludes at Islamabad

PPA

ISLAMABAD: MUSLIM Institute, Yunus Emre Institute and the National Language Promotion Department (National Language Authority) organizes a two-day national conference "Mevlana Rumi and Hadrat Sultan Bahoo: Preachers of Human Friendship, Peace, Love and Harmony". The second day of the National Conference commenced with insightful discussions and reflections on the profound impact of these eminent Sufi scholars on society. Scholars and intellectuals from various fields reiterated the transformative power of Sufism in shaping cultural norms and fostering harmony.

Distinguished speakers include H. E. Khazar Farhadov Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Islamabad, Sahibzada Muhammad Ameer Sultan Member National Assembly of Pakistan, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali Chairman, MUSLIM Institute, Islamabad, Mr Kashif Manzoor Director General, Public Libraries, Punjab, Prof. Dr Mukhtar Ahmed Chairman Higher Education Commission, Islamabad, Prof. Dr Muhammad Saleem Mazhar Director General, National Language Promotion Department, Islamabad.

The speakers at the National Conference emphasized how Sufism, with its core principles of love, empathy, and awareness, resonates universally across cultures. They stressed



the importance of acknowledging the realities of society, advocating for unity through embracing diverse perspectives, and cultivating qualities of selflessness and patience. Sultan Bahoo and Mevlana Rumi's teachings were praised for their ability to instill inner peace and self-awareness, encouraging individuals to embody these teach-

ings for the betterment of humanity and to deepen their spiritual connections.

Moreover, the conference shed light on the cultural bridges built by Sultan Bahoo and Rumi's teachings, illustrating how they transcend borders and bring people together despite differences. By embracing Sufi principles,

the speakers highlighted the potential to overcome societal divisions and pave the way for a harmonious future.

In essence, the conference served as a reminder of Sufism's enduring relevance in fostering peace, love, and understanding in our increasingly complex world, aiming to make these profound teachings accessible to all.

Pakistani trade delegation hails Pakistan Embassy for promotion of trade with France



Spokesman Report

PARIS, FRANCE: Saba William Anselm President Attock Women Chamber of Commerce, Kamran Shah Vice President Kohat Chamber of Commerce and senior member Sialkot Mashhood Zubair Bhatti, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce members Asia Akbar, Hayat Ali, And Shahid Bhatti were also present. Ambassador of Pakistan Asim Iftikhar welcomed the delegation. Mazhar Hussain Thathal Chairman/CEO Global Trade and Expo Center discussed that Pakistan-made business products, textile, leather, surgical, fashion, construction and development and other sectors should

be expanded in European markets and keen to promote business and trade relations between the two countries and appreciated the trade delegation and women representation of Pakistan in France—and the President Women Chamber of Commerce of Pakistan iterated to the Ambassador, that she feels pleasant that women are part of this delegation and women entrepreneur want to export textiles and Jewellery to France. And representing the Kohat Chamber of Commerce, Vice President Kamran Shah, shared to increasing international trade with-in Pakistan & France and Lately thanked Ambassador of Pakistan H. E Asim Iftikhar at Pakistan Embassy in Paris, France.

Empowering Pakistan's Youth to Lead the Climate Change Movement

In a world grappling with the escalating consequences of climate change, the voices of youth are increasingly being recognized as not just valuable, but indispensable. This was vividly illustrated during the Pakistan Climate Youth Leaders Roundtable held in Islamabad on May 11, 2024. The gathering united young leaders from across the nation, providing them with a platform to discuss and devise strategies for combating the pressing environmental crisis that threatens their future.

The urgency for action is clear. Young people, as the most impacted by climate change, have a unique stake in the outcomes of current environmental policies. Their future, quite literally, hangs in the balance. This recognition fueled the passionate discussions at the roundtable, where youth leaders affirmed their commitment to leading climate change diplomacy and pushing for transformative policies at the highest levels.

"At the heart of today's discussions lies the acknowledgment that youth are not just the lead-

ers of tomorrow, but the leaders of today," remarked Mr. Qaiser Nawab, a prominent global climate youth leader who shared his insights at the roundtable. His words underscore a crucial truth: the need for immediate and decisive action cannot be overstated, and the youth must be at the forefront of this movement.

The roundtable served as more than just a forum for dialogue; it was a catalyst for action. The young leaders who convened in Islamabad did so with a shared aspiration to engage directly with the COP-29 presidency. These individuals represent the vanguard of a new era of climate activism, characterized by knowledge, resilience, and a steadfast dedication to creating real change for themselves and future generations. They are informed, smart, and, above all, united in their commitment to safeguarding the planet.

"Youth have historically been manipulated by various stakeholders for their own interests, but today's youth are different," emphasized a participant at the roundtable. "We are informed, we are smart, and above all, we are

united in our commitment to safeguarding our planet for generations to come," Mr. Nawab reiterated. This sentiment captures the spirit of a generation determined to overcome past exploitations and drive forward with a clear, independent vision for a sustainable future.

Yet, amid these discussions, a crucial dimension emerged: the intersection of climate change and social justice. Ms. Zarka, President of "THE" Society International (Together for Health and Education), highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate-induced disasters on marginalized communities, particularly women and children. "We cannot ignore the stark reality that women and children bear a disproportionate burden of the climate crisis," she stated. "From the heightened risks during childbirth to the exacerbation of malnutrition among children due to floods, the toll is devastating."

Ms. Fizza Hameed, a climate researcher and policy analyst, added another layer to this discussion by emphasizing the need for youth to advocate for the capacity building of local and Provincial governments. "Youth need to engage with their respective local

This call to action emphasizes that climate policy cannot be viewed in isolation. It must incorporate a robust social justice framework that ensures the voices of all affected groups are heard and considered. The roundtable participants echoed Ms. Zarka's sentiment, advocating for an inclusive approach that amplifies the voices of women, children, transgender individuals, animal activists, and all other marginalized groups. The message is clear: decisions about our future should not be made behind closed doors by a select few. Instead, they should reflect the diverse perspectives and experiences of all segments of society.

Ms. Fizza Hameed, a climate researcher and policy analyst, added another layer to this discussion by emphasizing the need for youth to advocate for the capacity building of local and Provincial governments. "Youth need to engage with their respective local

and Provincial governments to drive sustainable climate action and strive for sustainable development in Pakistan," she urged. This is particularly pertinent given the 18th Amendment, which devolved the subject of Youth and Climate Change to Provincial governments. Strengthening these local institutions is essential for effective and localized climate action.

The presence of these youth leaders in Islamabad marks a pivotal moment in the fight against climate change. Their collective voice, imbued with hope and determination, advocates for bold and transformative action on the global stage. As they prepare to engage with the COP-29 presidency, their message is one of solidarity and a call for urgent action.

But what does this mean in practical terms? For one, it requires a paradigm shift in how we approach climate policy. Youth leaders are calling for a move away from top-down decision-making processes dominated by a few older, often disconnected, policymakers. Instead, they advocate for a participatory approach that values the insights and experiences

of young people and other marginalized groups.

This shift also necessitates substantial investments in education and capacity building. Young people need the tools and knowledge to understand the complexities of climate science and policy. They also need platforms and opportunities to engage with policymakers at all levels. This includes not just national and international forums, but also local and provincial government structures, where many of the most impactful decisions are made.

Moreover, the integration of social justice into climate policy is not just a moral imperative; it is a practical necessity. Climate change does not affect everyone equally. Marginalized communities, particularly women and children, are often the hardest hit. Any effective climate policy must address these disparities and work towards equitable solutions that uplift all members of society.

The Pakistan Climate Youth Leaders Roundtable has set a powerful precedent. It has shown that young people are not only ready to lead the fight against

climate change, but they are also equipped with the knowledge, passion, and resilience needed to drive meaningful change. As the world looks ahead to COP-29, the voices of these youth leaders will serve as a beacon of hope and determination, advocating for a more sustainable and equitable future.

The youth of Pakistan, and indeed the world, are stepping up to claim their rightful place in the fight against climate change. They are calling for inclusive, just, and sustainable policies that reflect the realities of all affected communities. Their message is clear: Say no to decisions made behind closed doors by a select few. Say yes to the voices of youth, women, children, and all marginalized groups. Together, we can build a future that is not only sustainable but also just and equitable for all.

Author Bio:
Qaiser Nawab, a dynamic Global Climate Youth Leader, played an active role in the proceedings of COP-26, 27 and 28. For further contact, he can be reached at qaisernawab098@gmail.com.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
75,342.34	74,930.69
Day's High	Day's Low
75,401.11	74,947.71
Index Value	Change
10,794,119,011	+411.65
Percentage	Time
+0.55%	17 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,420.26	-18.39
Percentage	Time
-0.22%	17 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,938.29	+68.91
Percentage	Time
+0.17%	17 May, 1:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,787.38	-132.88
Percentage	Time
-0.34%	17 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181	183
Bahrain Dinar	747.77	755.77
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.49	38.89
Danish Krone	40.25	40.65
Euro	297	299.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.96	36.31
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	913.28	922.28
Malaysian Ringgit	58.69	59.29
New Zealand \$	169.45	171.45
Norwegians Krone	25.67	25.97
Omani Riyal	730.59	738.59
Qatari Riyal	76.41	77.11
Saudi Riyal	73.5	74.25
Singapore Dollar	203	205
Swedish Korona	25.67	25.97
Swiss Franc	309.01	311.51
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.25	76
UK Pound Sterling	348.5	352
US Dollar	277.5	280.2

Aurangzeb's decision to tax tribal area industries laudable: Dr Shahid Butt

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr Shahid Rasheed Butt on Saturday welcomed the decision of the Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb to bring erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA) into the tax net.

The move will increase revenue, reduce distortions in the tax system, and ensure equitable conditions for industries across the country, which is a long-standing demand by the troubled industrial sector of the settled areas.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that many people have established industrial units producing iron, ghee, cooking oil, textiles, plastic and other items in

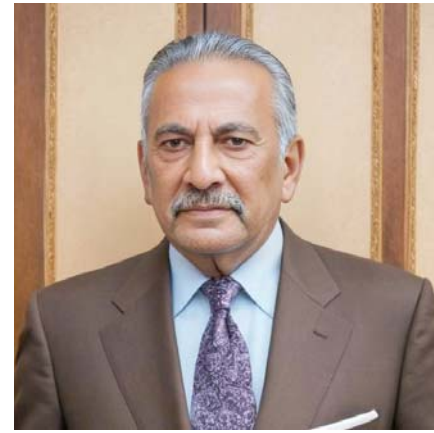
erstwhile FATA and PATA.

They have been given tax exemptions so the local population can get cheaper goods. However, many industrialists produce more than the local demand and smuggle their production to Afghanistan and into the settled areas of Pakistan.

This practice ensures good profit to the FATA and PATA industrialists but creates problems for the industries in the settled areas, as they cannot reduce their business costs to match those of the industries established in tribal areas.

The business leader said that unnecessary tax concessions on political grounds had not helped the local population or the government but crooked industrialists to make billions.

Industries in FATA and PATA also enjoy tax relaxations when importing raw materials. Still,



many sell their imported material in Karachi, which causes the government to lose billions

of rupees in revenue. This practice must be stopped immediately, he demanded.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that ever since the industries in erstwhile FATA and PATA were given tax concessions, the industries in other areas have been demanding equal treatment.

Now, the finance minister is taking a bold step in the right direction, which has been needed for a long time. Ensuring a level playing field for the industrial sector will solve a big problem.

He noted that most of the industries established in the former tribal areas have become a powerful mafia against which action has become necessary.

He said factories have been set up in different country cities, including Islamabad. Still, they are acting as illegal sale points for illegal goods produced in former FATA and PATA, against which action is necessary.

Wheat scandal who is responsible

ISLAMABAD: A long queue of wheat loaded vehicles outside Margalla Railway Station in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

President calls for addressing problems of educational institutions of Islamabad



PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the educational institutions in the capital city are facing multiple problems which need to be addressed on priority basis for the advancement of literacy rate in the country. He has also drawn the attention of the Federal Education Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui towards the dilapidated condition of the Islamabad Model College

for Girls G-13 by saying that the College is in short of all the basics like teaching staff, security staff, furniture, Laboratory, playground, buses, clean drinking water etc. ICCI President said this during his visit to the College during which he was apprised of the problems the College is facing.

On getting the acquaintance of the problems, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari announced the provision of five computers, installation of a water filtration plant and a full-fledged First Aid

Box for the College from his own pocket. He also demanded appointment of permanent teaching staff in the college and announced to cover the cost of the computer teacher by himself.

Elders of the areas praised Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for his bigheartedness to boost the education and prayed for his long life and success in every field of life.

ICCI members Khalid Chaudhry, Nasir Chaudhry, Nisar Mirza, Waseem Chaudhry and Faizan Shahzad were also accompanying the President.

Privatization: PIA, Pakistan Post, Pakistan Railways all in deficit

Privatization is currently a highly debated topic in the media, including social media. Opinions are divided: some view it positively, while others criticize the current regime, seeing it as a conspiracy against Pakistan's institutions. Ultimately, it is up to the people to form their opinions. Many benefits of privatization exist, but the debate continues.

Many of Pakistan's institutions have become financially corrupt. To meet their requirements, it is necessary to outsource these institutions. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif proclaimed that all institutions, except strategic ones, would be privatized. This announcement ignited a social media campaign against the policy.

I will provide examples of several institutions running deficits due to low revenue and high expenses. According to a recent report, Pakistan Railways earned 68.750 billion rupees, the highest ever, but still could not cover its expenses of 87.3 billion rupees. Another institution, Pakistan Post, earned 14,433 million rupees, but its expenses were 17,098.171 million rupees, resulting in a deficit of 2,655 million rupees. This is not a new issue; every financial year ends with similar deficits. Last year, PIA earned 183 billion rupees but suffered a loss of 11 billion rupees.

This pattern extends over the entire history of these institutions, leading to enormous debts that affect their efficiency. As a result, institutions have to minimize manpower and compromise on many priorities due to a lack of resources. For example, Pakistan Steel Mills earns 7 billion rupees annually but cannot meet its investment and expense requirements.

When the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM) came to power, privatization became a key focus of the government. I watched an interview with Khawaja Saad Rafique discussing the privatiza-

tion policy. He mentioned both short-term and long-term strategies. One approach involves outsourcing institutions for a specific period in exchange for a lump sum or monthly payments. Another option is the complete sale of institutions. While some people started criticizing the policy, my personal opinion is in favor of privatization if we want to see our institutions flourish.

Privatization is a widely accepted concept used worldwide. However, it is crucial to ensure that privatized institutions are handed over to deserving entities rather than individuals with political connections. If not managed properly, this can create monopolies and lead to resource scarcity in society.

In conclusion, privatization is a contentious issue in Pakistan, with significant debate in the media. While

many see the potential benefits, others are skeptical, viewing it as a threat to national institutions. The examples of Pakistan Railways, Pakistan Post, PIA, and Pakistan Steel Mills illustrate the financial struggles and inefficiencies within these organizations. Privatization offers a potential solution, but it must be implemented carefully to avoid creating monopolies and ensuring that deserving entities manage these institutions. The government's focus on privatization under the PDM, as discussed by Khawaja Saad Rafique, highlights both short-term and long-term strategies. Ultimately, successful privatization could lead to improved efficiency and sustainability of Pakistan's institutions, but it requires careful management and oversight to achieve these goals.

building the capacity and raising awareness regarding forced labor for the mine owners and members of the APMMA. Dr. Faisal Iqbal, National Project Coordinator International Labour Organization (ILO), facilitated in this session and explained about the project, emphasizing on the purpose to raise awareness and build capacity of the mine owner and associated with the All-Pakistan Mines & Minerals Association. Syed Abdul Ahad, Vice President of the Quetta Chamber of Commerce & Industry (QCCI) appreciated the efforts of the EFP and the ILO in promoting responsible business practices and social dialogue amongst the stakeholders. Agha Gul Khilji, Quetta, Senior Vice President Quetta Chamber of Commerce and Industry (QCCI), underscored the discrepancy in portraying the mining sector's accomplishments in Quetta and pledged full support for the EFP and APMMA to foster employers' dedication in enhancing the conditions of bonded labor within the mining industry.

Capacity Building Session for the All-Pakistan Mines, Minerals Association

PPA

KARACHI: Fateh Shah Arif, General Secretary All Pakistan Mines and Mineral Association (APMMA) welcomed the participants and said that the mining sector in Balochistan has the potential to develop itself but due to various reasons like no social justice, lack of education and no support from the government, its potential could never be realized. At the opening session of the capacity building program for the All-Pakistan Mines and Minerals Association (APMMA), hosted by the Employers Federation of Pakistan (EFP) in support with the International Labour Organization (ILO) at the Quetta Chamber of Commerce & Industry (QCCI), he vividly talked about the promotion and creation of awareness on the rising issue of forced and child labor in the mining sector.

Syed Nazar Ali, Secretary General Employers Federation of Pakistan explained the background of the program and acknowledged the support of the ILO towards

building the capacity and raising awareness regarding forced labor for the mine owners and members of the APMMA.

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CCP time-scale: PTCL Acquisition of Telenor

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) is currently conducting a Phase II review of the proposed acquisition of Telenor Pakistan by Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL). This crucial review will determine whether the merger is approved and what conditions may be imposed to ensure competitive fairness in the market.

PTCL filed pre-merger application on 6th March 2024. CCP had 30 days to review the application and issue a Phase I order, according to its law. Phase I order was announced on 3rd May 2024 within the timescale specified in the competition law. Phase-I order analysed that there may be some potential impact on competition in telecom sector therefore, pre-merger application will be considered in Phase II review. CCP has 90 days to complete this detailed review and issue

its order.

A Phase II review involves an in-depth investigation into the merger's potential impact on market competition. This stage is initiated when preliminary findings suggest that the merger could restrict competition in the telecom sector.

Currently, CCP is conducting extensive analysis, collecting detailed data, market participant responses through comprehensive questionnaires, and comments from Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). CCP will also evaluate efficiencies claimed by the merging entities, which must be beneficial to consumers.

The possible outcome of a Phase II review is often "conditional" approval. Historically, CCP has approved mergers with some structural and behavioural modification with some conditions attached to mitigate anti-competitive effects and to protect consumers from abuse of dominant position.



M Azam Tariq

Three time Super League Winner Islamabad United and Iconic Artist Imran Qureshi unveil 'Game Changer'

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad United, the most decorated team in Pakistan Super League history with three championships, proudly unveil 'Game Changer', a unique artwork by internationally acclaimed artist Imran Qureshi. This piece embodies the electric energy of cricket and celebrates the unwavering spirit of Islamabad United.

"Game Changer" incorporates both the energy of cricket and the vocabulary of internationally acclaimed visual artist Imran Qureshi, said Amna Naqvi, Co-Owner of Islamabad United. "The figure is wielding a bat almost like a sword and it is composed of cricket balls which are covered with Qureshi's floral like motifs which are inspired by the landscapes of Indian Mughal court paintings. The stance of the batsman is as powerful as the team it symbolizes! Qureshi is master of action painting and here instead of a brush he throws six balls at the canvas to complete the 'over'. The bounces and trends that the ball create in this over across canvas, reveals the perineal contest between a batsman and a bowler. The batsman is present on the



canvas while the bowler thought absent is very much 'present' in the form of his powerful throws."

"Game Changer" captures the dynamism of cricket through the lens of Imran Qureshi. The piece transcends mere representation. It embodies Islamabad United's commitment to innovation and excellence, both on and off the field. The artwork celebrates not just the team's victories, but also the unwavering passion of its fans and the captivating beauty of cricket itself.

Artist Imran Qureshi said, "Creating artwork with new challenges and risks

is always exciting for me. This was the second wonderful opportunity to work with Islamabad United. Exploring digital and painting mediums in the completely new context of sports, its energy, and power, was the true beauty of the experience. Through 'Game Changer', I aimed to capture the raw emotions and energy of the game, while also introducing art to a wider audience."

Indeed, this project marks the continuation of the groundbreaking AANide-asLAB #IQxIU collaboration between Islamabad United and Imran Qureshi. Launched in 2022, this initiative repre-

sents a historic first, forging a bridge between the worlds of cricket and art. The first collaboration in 2022 saw Qureshi's creative journey intertwined with Islamabad United players, for a multi-week visual art project. The resulting artistic output transcended the canvas, finding its way onto the team's official kits and other ventures.

This innovative collaboration further solidifies Islamabad United's position as a thought leader in the game and its various facets, as the three-time Pakistan Super League champions continue to redefine the experience of cricket.

Lahore Sikandars edge Peshawar Lions to win Pakistan Champions League

Sports Desk

FAISALABAD: Sajid Khan's all-round exploits outshined Gohar Afridi's magnificent century as Lahore Sikandars edged Peshawar Lions by one run in the gripping final to clinch the second Pakistan Champions League title here on Saturday.

Set to chase a daunting 219-run target, Peshawar Lions fell agonizingly short, finishing with 217/6, despite Gohar Afridi's marathon 132-run knock.

Battling first, defending champions Lahore Sikandars racked up a massive total of 218/6 in the allotted overs at the back of a blistering knock by Sajid Khan.

Sajid dominated the Lions bowlers and returned unbeaten on 86 off just 43 deliveries. Mohammad Faiz was the other notable run-getter for the holders with a brilliant 47, while Razaqat Hussain



chipped in with 27.

For the Lions, skipper Zulfikar Swati,

Mishal Khan, Gohar Afridi, and Qayyum Rajpoot took one wicket apiece.

In response, Peshawar Lions came up short despite an astonishing knock by Gohar Afridi. Besides him, Mishal Khan (30) and Azmat Shah (24) made important contributions in the run chase.

Zawar Khan led the bowling attack for Lahore Sikandars with two wickets while Mohammad Faiz, Sajid Khan, and Ahsan made one scalp each.

For his all-round exploits in the enthralling final, Lahore Sikandars' Sajid Khan was adjudged the Player of the Match.

Whereas, Peshawar Lions' Misshal Khan finished the Pakistan Champions League 2024 as the highest run-scorer while Lahore Sikandars' Mohammad Faiz and Zawar Khan finished as the joint leading wicket-takers of the tournament.

Virat Kohli plays down hype around Pakistan-India T20 World Cup clash

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: Right-handed batter Virat Kohli played down the hype of the highly-anticipated ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 clash between arch-rivals Pakistan and India.

Two of the most fierce competitors in the game of cricket — Pakistan and India — will lock horns at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on June 9.

The anticipation and excitement of cricket fans around the globe have soared to the top but Virat Kohli asserted that the frenzy is way more than what happens on the field.

"The frenzy around and outside the game is way more than what happens on the field. An instinctive person always remains in the present. So, forget June 9, I can just do what I have to do now after



one hour," stated Kohli.

Virat Kohli then went on to express his

hunger to excel in the tournament while also claiming that India will do well in

the T20 World Cup 2024.

"I can say I'm as hungry as ever. Once there is no hunger, you won't see my in any tournament. If I don't have that mindset, I can't play. There is an energy in such tournaments and once there's a good atmosphere within the team, it's a beautiful journey. We had one in the last World Cup. We really enjoyed the World Cup. I'm sure we'll have a really good tournament this time as well," Kohli said.

Kohli boasts a dominant record against arch-rivals Pakistan in T20Is, the highlight of which was his unbeaten 82-run knock in the blockbuster ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2022 bout at Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG).

He is currently enjoying a purple patch with the bat, currently leading the run charts in the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL).

Trials of the Sindh Women team for the Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship will be held on 24th May, Dr. Farhan Essa

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Sindh Softball Association President, Prof. Dr. Farhan Essa Abdullah has said that the trials of the Sindh Women Softball team for the Inter-Provincial Women's softball championship to be played in Karachi from May 30 to June 1; the trials for the event will be held on Friday, May 24 at 4 p.m. in the afternoon in Karachi Port Trust (KPT) Football Stadium near Aga Khan Jamaat Khana in Kharadar.



In this regard, the selection committee headed by Chairperson of women's wing of the Sindh Softball Association, Dr. Huma Bukhari, consisting Tehmina Asif, Mohammad Nasir, Shahid Aftab and Faraz Ijaz, has been formed which will announce the names of the selected players for the championship after the final trials and training camp.

SSA President, Dr. Farhan Essa said that the hosting of the Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship on behalf of the Softball Federation of Pakistan in Sindh is an expression of confidence in us.

"We will try to organize the said event in a dignified manner so that it is a memorable and exemplary championship."

Dr. Farhan Essa further said that all possible steps should be taken to provide accommodation, food, transport and other facilities to the teams participating in the event. Cash awards will be rewarded to the players who will show the best performance from Sindh in the Championship, he concluded.

Pakistan captain Nida Dar becomes leading wicket-taker in Women's T20Is

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan women's cricket team captain Nida Dar has become the leading wicket-taker in the history of Women's T20 International cricket.

She achieved this milestone by claiming her 137th wicket during the second match against England in Northampton.

Dar's record-breaking performance saw her surpass the previous record holder, Australia's Megan Schutt, who has 136 wickets to her name.

The Pakistani skipper reached this impressive tally in her 141st T20I innings, where she picked up two more wickets to cement her status as the premier wicket-taking bowler in women's T20 international cricket.

Beside Dar another Pakistani player featured in the list of the 20 all-time top wicket-takers is former Pakistan captain Sana Mir, occupying the 19th position on the list with 89 wickets taken in 105 innings.

Nida Dar (137, Pakistan) has surpassed Megan Schutt (136, Australia), Ellyse Perry (126, Australia), Anisa Mohammed (125, West Indies), and Shabnim Ismail (123, South Africa) to become the leading wicket-taker in women's T20 International cricket.

Harbhajan Singh warns India of "tricky" Pakistan challenge

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: Former Indian cricketer Harbhajan Singh termed Pakistan a tricky challenge for India ahead of their much-anticipated ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 clash.



Two of the most fierce competitors in the game of cricket — Pakistan and India — will lock horns at Nassau County International Cricket Stadium in New York on June 9.

Meanwhile, former spinner Harbhajan, while talking to a local news channel, asserted that the seizure of the bilateral series between the two cricketing nations will make the encounter a tricky one.

"At the end of the day, playing against Pakistan is always (tricky) as both countries do not play much against each other. We do not know much about their strong and weak zones but the Indian management keeps track of every player and their strong and weak zones," Harbhajan said.

Harbhajan Singh also acknowledged Pakistan's bowling department's mental and physical strength but insisted that the Indian team will counter them.

"In the bowling department too, Pakistan bowlers keep themselves mentally and physically strong. These aspects will be taken care of by the Indian team. These things will come into play when both sides will battle it out on the field," he said.

Earlier, Harbhajan Singh slammed at the idea of drop-in pitches for the blockbuster clash of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, raising concerns about the unpredictability of the surface.

"Pitches there [Nassau Cricket Stadium] are known to none to be honest. Even the pitch curators might not know how many times will this pitch last. How much heat would be there how much water has been put in? How much bounce would it offer?," Harbhajan said during a press conference.

Manchester City eye Premier League history as Arsenal dare to dream

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Manchester City stand on the brink of a historic fourth successive Premier League title, but Arsenal lie in wait hoping for a last-gasp slip from the leaders on Sunday.

Pep Guardiola's all-conquering team go into the final day of the season with a two-point lead over second-placed Arsenal thanks to an eight-game winning streak.

City, who host West Ham knowing a win will seal the title, are hot favourites to set a new standard for dominance in English football.

Arsenal, at home to Everton in their final game, have been near flawless themselves in 2024, with 15 wins and one draw, away

to Manchester City, in 17 league matches.

However, the Gunners' costly 2-0 defeat against Aston Villa last month looks set to be decisive in a thrilling title race that also involved Liverpool until their recent stumbles.

Not for the first time, Manchester City have been at their relentless best in the intense heat of the run-in.

Guardiola's men have dropped just six points since mid-December, in draws against Chelsea, Liverpool and Arsenal.

As Manchester City close in on a sixth title in seven seasons under Guardiola, the competitiveness of the Premier League has been questioned.

But the Catalan coach has hit

back at suggestions the Premier League has become boring and that City's dominance is thanks purely to the financial muscle of their Abu Dhabi-based owners.

"It's not boring, it's difficult," Guardiola said, adding that based on spending levels, Manchester United, Chelsea and Arsenal should be matching City.

"They spent as much money in the last five years as us. They should be there. They are not there."

David Moyes will take charge of West Ham for the final time at the Etihad Stadium.

And the Scot did not offer much encouragement to Arsenal fans when he claimed this week it would be difficult to stop Man City's "under-14s winning the

title" let alone the champions in full flow.

Arsenal, who finished second last year, must beat Everton and hope Manchester City fail to win if they are to end their 20-year wait for the title.

Mikel Arteta's men have set a club record by winning 27 Premier League games this season, but that still might not be enough to dethrone City.

"We have to give ourselves the opportunity to live a beautiful day on Sunday, where the dream is still alive and is possible," Arteta said.

"It's football and once we are there we just have to live the moment."

There will be an emotional farewell for Liverpool boss Jurgen Klopp at the end of his memora-



ble nine-year reign, but the Reds will finish third regardless of their result against Wolves at Anfield.

"I spoke before about how hard it will be to say goodbye," Klopp said.

"I love absolutely everything

about this place, I do. I take memories with me, fantastic memories, I take relationships with me forever."

Manchester United are at risk of missing out on European football altogether after a miserable

season.

Erik ten Hag's men sit eighth and must better Newcastle's result at Brentford when they visit Brighton to avoid finishing outside the top seven for the first time since 1990.

Protest

JAKARTA: Indonesian women take part in a fundraising event in Jakarta to support Palestinians in the wake of Israeli attacks on Gaza.



Photo: AFP

PM Shehbaz announces returning party presidency to Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has announced the return of the PML-N party presidency to Nawaz Sharif, promising to steer the country out of current difficulties under his leadership.

Addressing a meeting of the PML-N Central Working Committee at the party's central secretariat in Model Town here on Saturday, Shehbaz Sharif emphasised the unwavering support for Nawaz Sharif within the party despite challenges faced over the years.

"Today is a satisfying day for me," the PM stated, expressing gratitude for the strength and support from the PML-N lead-

ers. "There is no greater satisfaction and peace of mind for me than to return this trust to my elder brother, the leader of PML-N," he added.

Recalling the trials faced by Nawaz Sharif, including the treatment in 2018 and his arrest in 1999, he highlighted the resilience and leadership demonstrated by the former prime minister and the late Khusroo Nawaz during those challenging times. He commended the PML-N leaders for their steadfast loyalty and courage.

Shehbaz Sharif praised Nawaz Sharif's contributions, noting his efforts in transforming the party and the country. "Whether it was the valleys of



Mehran, the rugged mountains of Balochistan, the plains of Punjab, or the snow-covered mountains of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the PML-N leader worked tirelessly and revived the party," he said. He lauded Nawaz Sharif's developmen-

tal politics, citing his initiatives from 1985, including land reforms and infrastructural development.

The prime minister also recounted Nawaz Sharif's historic decisions, such as conducting nuclear tests in

1998, and his role in establishing peace and eradicating terrorism in collaboration with the Pakistan Army. Shehbaz Sharif stressed Nawaz Sharif's efforts in overcoming electricity shortages, bringing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to fruition, and securing substantial foreign investment.

Reflecting on the economic challenges faced by the country today, Shehbaz Sharif urged other political parties to unite under Nawaz Sharif's leadership to address issues like debt, unemployment, and inflation. "There could not be a better opportunity to bring this distressed nation together and lead it forward," he asserted.

IT exports surges to stunning \$310 million in April

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The ICT services export remittances surged to US\$ 310 million in the month of April, 2024, an astounding increase of 62.3% in comparison to US\$ 191 million in April 2023.

Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that it is for the first time in the history of Pakistan that IT exports saw this outstanding increase just in one month.

ICT export remittanc-



es have surged to US\$ 2.593 billion during July 2023 to April 2024 of FY2023-24 in comparison to US\$ 2.135

billion reported for the same period last year.

Shaza Fatima said that the government has first prior-

ity to increase IT exports of the country, adding that this record increase in IT exports is due to relentless efforts of the Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Shaza Fatima said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif prevented the country from default in last PDM government and stabilised the economy and its positive outcomes are now coming.

She said that steps are underway for increasing IT exports.

With the robust support from Special Investment

Facilitation Council (SIFC), Ministry of IT and Pakistan Software Export Board are actively working to boost IT exports, she said.

In comparison to previous month of March 2024, ICT services export remittances have increased by US\$ 4 million (1.31% growth) in April 2024.

ICT sector exports of US\$ 2.593 billion are the highest among all Services (40.25% of total export of services) with 'Other Business Services' trailing at US\$ 1.308 billion.

UAE will grant 10-Year Blue Residency to environmental advocates

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has announced the introduction of a long-term "Blue Residency" program for people who contribute to the environmental field, Khaleej Times reported.

This 10-year visa will be granted to individuals who have made exceptional contributions and efforts in protecting the environment, both within the UAE and internationally. The goal of this program is to recognize and incentivize sustainability initiatives and environmental advocacy.

The UAE has introduced a new "Blue Residency" program that will grant 10-year visas to individuals who have made exceptional contributions to protecting the environment.

This includes members of international environmental organizations, global award winners, and distinguished environmental activists and researchers.

Eligible individuals can apply directly or be nominated by relevant authorities for this long-term residency.

"The sustainability of our economy has become linked to the sustainability of our environment," Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum said in a Cabinet meeting on Wednesday. This new program is part of a broader set of initiatives that the UAE has launched to mark 2024 as the "Year of Sustainability".

This sustainability push builds on momentum from the previous year when the country invited residents to participate in collective efforts to adopt more environmentally friendly practices. In 2019, the country announced a special 10-year "Golden Visa" residency scheme. This extended-term visa was made available to investors, entrepreneurs, scientists, outstanding students and graduates, as well as humanitarian pioneers.

Ex-PM Khan likely to face another Toshakhana case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan is unlikely to untangle his legal battles soon as an inquiry report has revealed that another Toshakhana case – involving the sale of state gifts – was registered against him.

In the new case, he is accused of illegally acquiring and selling at least seven luxury watches, retaining and selling 10 valuable gifts, diamond and gold sets, in violation of the rules.

According to the report, the gifts were "routinely sold" without properly declaring them as per the law. The expensive Graff watch set was also allegedly sold without "retention".

The report alleged collusion between a private property valuation person and the buyer of the Graff watch as the former drastically underpriced it by Rs30 million, causing a loss to the national exchequer. The Graff watch was valued at more than Rs100 million,

but only Rs20 million was deposited with the government – just 20% of the actual value.

The report emphasised that all gifts must be properly declared and deposited with Toshakhana first, as per the rules. Gifts worth up to Rs30,000 can be retained, but anything above that has to be deposited.

The National Accountability Bureau is investigating the new Toshakhana case against the former prime minister.

The Toshakhana is a department under the Cabinet Division that stores gifts given to rulers and government officials by heads of other governments and foreign dignitaries. According to Toshakhana rules, gifts/presents and other such materials received by persons to whom these rules apply shall be reported to the Cabinet Division.

The country's top electoral authority's order had said Imran stood disqualified under Article 63(1)(p) of the Constitution.

Asian activists call out Western feminists over 'selective empathy' on Gaza

Spokesman Report

JAKARTA: When Western actresses and female politicians cut their hair to protest the death of Mahsa Amini or rallied against the Taliban ban on girls' education, they stood up to defend women's rights. However, the zeal went missing when it came to Palestine, non-Western feminists say, denouncing their peers' silence on Israel's killing of women in Gaza.

Mass protests and displays of solidarity in Europe and the US broke out in 2022 and carried on into 2023 following the death in Iranian police custody of the 22-year-old Amini, who was charged with breaching hijab rules. In the same years, when the Taliban barred Afghan girls from school, women united in outcry and called for international pressure against them.

But more than seven months into Israel's indiscriminate killing, wounding, and maiming of Palestinian civilians, the West's mainstream feminist movement has been largely silent.

At least 35,800 people in Gaza have been killed and 80,000 wound-

ed by Israeli airstrikes and ground offensive that have destroyed most of the enclave's infrastructure and rendered it uninhabitable.

The majority of the dead are women and children. Many have lost their lives as most of the hospitals have been flattened by Israeli troops and no medical assistance could reach them.

The International Rescue Committee estimated last month that 37 mothers had been killed in Gaza each day and 60,000 pregnant women had no access to midwives or doctors, while tens of thousands struggled with breastfeeding as they were so malnourished due to Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid.

In the face of the widely documented atrocities, Haein Shim, Korean activist and spokesperson of Haeil, a Seoul-based feminist group, told Arab News that Western feminists were exhibiting "selective empathy" and "double standards" with regard to Israel's onslaught, the criticism of which has regularly been labeled as "antisemitism" – not only by Israeli authorities but by Western leaders as well.

NADRA introduces 'all-in-one' digital identity kit

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) has introduced an 'All-in-One' digital identity kit, integrating cutting-edge biometric authentication features into a single device.

According to a statement, the achievement – spearheaded by experts from NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) and NADRA Technology Research (NTR) – represents a significant advancement in digital identity management.

The new digital kit, set to be showcased at the prestigious 'ID for Africa Conference' in Cape Town, boasts an array of advanced features, including a high-resolution camera, iris, fingerprint, and face recognition capabilities.

Additionally, the digital identity kit is equipped with essential functionalities such as a battery, GPS, mobile, and Wi-Fi connectivity, enhancing its versatility and usability.

According to software experts at NADRA, the 'All-in-One' kit holds immense potential for national identification programs and voter registration initiatives. Law enforcement agencies are also poised to benefit greatly from its comprehensive capabilities.

Designed for mobility and durability, the kit's rugged case allows for easy transportation and operation across various climates.

The Android 11 operating system provides a stable and secure platform for all operations, making this device a robust solution for national ID programs, voter registration,

border control, law enforcement, financial services, and mobile time and attendance systems.

Governor presents shields to Uzbek textile professionals



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, along with APTMA Patron-in-Chief Dr Gohar Ejaz, presented shields to the Uzbek participants in a knowledge-based exchange/training programme here on Saturday.

Addressing the ceremony, the governor appreciated the APTMA (All Pakistan Textile Mills Association) leadership for providing training to Uzbek textile professionals including engineers, stakeholders, and industrialists with an aim to enhance their expertise and operational scope. He termed it a significant initiative to foster international industrial collaboration by the APTMA.

Dr. Gohar Ejaz told the governor that the week-long training, conducted by APTMA in collaboration with the National Textile University (NTU) in Faisalabad, focused on empowering professionals from Uzbekistan's textile industry.

APTMA (North) Chairman Kamran Arshad said the programme, tailored for Uzbek textile professionals to improve their expertise and operational scope.

Held from May 15 to 18, 2024, he added, the training covered critical aspects of textile products, processes, marketing strategies, GSP Plus compliance obligations, and more.

The APTMA Senior Executive members, including S. M. Tanveer, Syed Ali Ahsan, Ahsan Bashir, Asad Shafi, Ahmed Shafi, Mian Ahsan, Shahid Sattar and Mohammad Raza Baqir were also present.

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agencies. The safety of citizens and public order were ensured.

There are no seriously injured people among the participants of the incident. About 15 citizens applied to medical institutions for medical check-up.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic has not received any reports on the injured foreign citizens.

At the same time, the Ministry urges representatives of the mass media and foreign diplomatic missions not to disseminate unreliable and unverified information.

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measures to ensure the safety and security of Pakistani students and citizens residing in the Kyrgyz Republic," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

"The Government of Pakistan takes the matter of the safety and security of its national around the world very seriously and would take all necessary measures to ensure their well-being," it was asserted.

The Kyrgyz authorities have expressed regret over the incidents of violence against foreign nationals including Pakistanis in Bishkek last night and also pledged to hold an

inquiry and punish the perpetrators. The Government of Pakistan was in contact with the Kyrgyz Government to ensure the safety and security of its nationals at risk in view of the mob riots of last night in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The Embassy of Pakistan has opened an emergency helpline and responding to queries of students and their families. Ambassador to the Kyrgyz Republic Hassan Ali Zaigham has been in close contact with senior Kyrgyz authorities.

According to the Kyrgyz Health Ministry, four Pakistanis were provided first aid and discharged while one was under treatment for jaw injury.