



'Clinic on Wheels' program providing modern health facilities to people: Khawaja Asif

Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the "Clinic on Wheels" programme is providing modern healthcare facilities to people at their doorsteps. (Details on Page 8)



Astana, is a magnet for tourists

The city of Astana is located in the middle of Central Kazakhstan's vast steppes. The Ishim River is the capital's main waterway that divides it into the "old" city on the right bank and the left bank with its modern and futuristic architecture. The climate is sharply continental - cold and long winters and hot, moderately dry summers. Astana encompasses 722 square kilometers; the population is over 1,010,000 people. The city was built in a unique Eurasian style ... (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces Australia General Angus J. Campbell called on Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir.

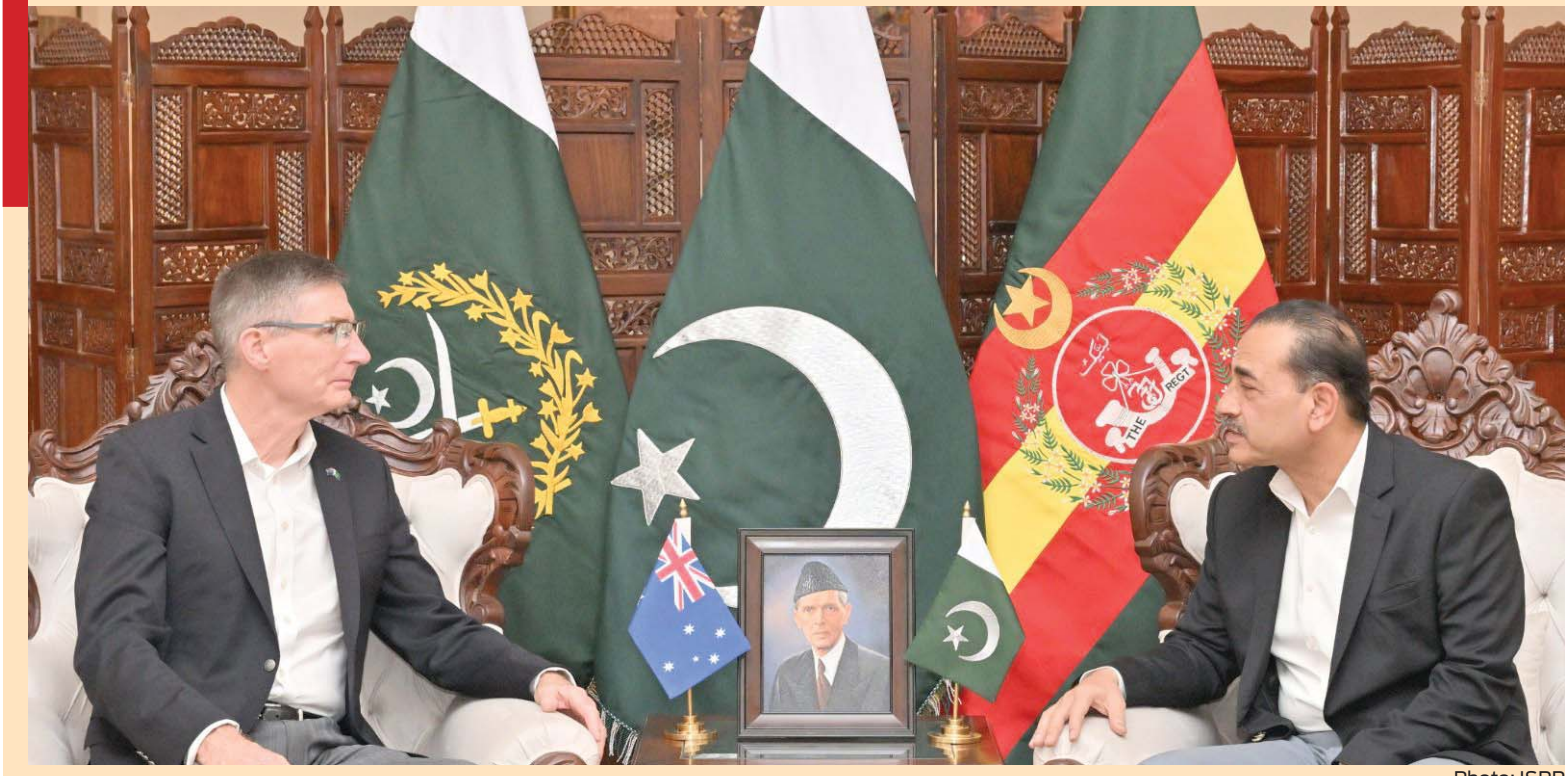


Photo: ISPR

Australian chief of defence forces meets with General Asim Munir COAS

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Angus J. Campbell, Chief of Defence Forces Australia, paid a visit to General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), today. During their meeting, they engaged in discussions on matters of bilateral professional interest, with a particular focus on the global and regional security environment and cooperation between

the two Armed Forces. Both parties expressed a mutual desire to further expand military-to-military cooperation. The Australian Chief of Defence Forces expressed his admiration for the high professional standards maintained by the Pakistan Armed Forces, their notable achievements in the fight against terrorism, and their continued efforts to promote regional peace and stability.

PM for necessary arrangements to bring back students from Kyrgyz Republic



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday contacted Ambassador of Pakistan in the Kyrgyz Republic Hassan Ali Zaigham and directed him for making necessary arrangements for a special flight being sent to Bishkek this evening to bring back Pakistani students. The special aeroplane will bring back 130 students to Pakistan on Sunday night, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. At the instructions of the prime minister, the government of Pakistan will bear all the expenses of the special plane. The prime minister directed for keeping continuous contacts

with all the students and their families, emphasising that the return of injured students should be a priority. He further asked for bringing back those students back whose families were residing with them in Kyrgyzstan on urgent basis. The ambassador of Pakistan Zaigham apprised the prime minister of his meeting with the Kyrgyz deputy foreign minister. According to Kyrgyz authorities, the situation was under control and no new incident of violence took place in the last two days. Security measures had been enhanced and the foreign students including Pakistanis were safe. The prime minister directed that despite return of normalcy in Bishkek, those students should be facilitated who wanted to return to Pakistan. A number of students have already returned from Kyrgyzstan on Sunday via commercial flights.

Crash reported for helicopter carrying President Raisi in Iran's northwest

IRNA

TEHRAN: A helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and senior officials in northwestern Iran has suffered a crash with no information available yet on potential injuries or damage. President Raisi was returning from a ceremony to open a dam on Iran's border with Azerbaijan when his helicopter crashed upon landing in Varzaqan region on Sunday. Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, Governor of East Azarbaijan Province Malek Rahmati, Tabriz Friday prayer leader Hojatoleslam Al Hashem and a number of others were also on board the helicopter. IRNA correspondent says rescue and relief teams have been dispatched to the area and search

operations continue. Foggy weather and the impassability of the area has made the search operations difficult. Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi told Iran's state television that due to the tough weather conditions, it may take time for the search and rescue team to reach the site of the crash. He expressed hope that the team will reach the site soon and convey more information. Minister of Health Bahram Einollahi, who is also present in the area, has said that all the medical equipment, including ambulance buses, specialist doctors and surgeons have been dispatched to the area of the crash to help possible injured people. President of the Iranian Red Crescent Society (IRCS), Pir-Hos-



sein Koulivand, stated that the number of relief teams in the region has doubled from 20 to 40. He mentioned that the teams are facing challenging weather conditions and the area is difficult to access, but the search efforts are ongoing.

Koulivand added that the relief teams utilized drones for search operations, but the weather conditions have made it impossible to conduct aerial searches. He mentioned that the teams are relying on rapid response forces in the region, which is a mountain-

ous area approximately 2 hours away from Tabriz. Babak Yektaparast, the emergency services spokesman, reported that the country dispatched eight ambulances to the area of the incident where the president's helicopter crashed. He noted that due to severe fog, air relief is not possible. In an interview with IRNA, Yektaparast mentioned that emergency relief teams, including technicians and doctors, have been sent to the region since the accident was reported, and they are actively searching for the helicopter. Emergency paramedics are also conducting ground searches for the accident location. Foggy weather and the impassability of the area have made the search operations difficult.

DPM Dar, Saudi FM review preparations for Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman's visit to Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Faisal bin Farhan bin Abdullah on Sunday reviewed preparations for the visit of the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud to Pakistan. Ishaq Dar underlined that the people of Pakistan were eagerly looking forward to the visit of His Royal Highness at a mutually agreed date. During a telephonic conversation, the two leaders also discussed the robust bilateral relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, exploring various avenues for further strengthening cooperation across multiple sectors. This dialogue underscored the profound and enduring partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The ministers also discussed the grave situation in Gaza and other pressing regional and global developments of mutual concern. The two sides reaffirmed their dedication to fostering peace and stability in the region through collaborative efforts and dialogue.



Ex-AJK premier Sardar Tanveer Ilyas arrested

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, has been arrested in a case related to an attack on a company's office. Sources told ARY News that the former AJK premier was arrested in the case registered at Margalla Police Station. According to sources, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas is accused of trying to seize the central offices and important documents of Centaurus Mall. The First Information Report (FIR) was filed by Colonel (ret'd) Tipu Sultan, Deputy Security In-charge of The Centaurus Mall, naming Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Muhammad Ali, Anil Sultan, Rizwan, and other unknown individu-



als as accused. As per the FIR, Sardar Tanveer, accompanied by an armed group of 20 to 25 individuals, entered office 1708 of Centaurus Mall by breaking the lock, with intentions to take control of the premises. However, their attempt was thwarted by the vigilant security guards. Sardar Tanveer allegedly issued threats to kill Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and Sardar Dr Rashid Ilyas Khan, along with their colleagues. The FIR further states that these individuals subjected the security officer to physical assault, and upon receiving information about the incident, law enforcement officials arrived at the scene, where Sardar Tanveer allegedly fired at Colonel (ret'd) Tipu Sultan, narrowly missing him.

UN Chief deplores mob attacks against Pakistani & other foreign students in Bishkek

News Desk

UNITED NATIONS: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Sunday voiced his disapproval of the weekend mob attacks against foreign students, including Pakistanis, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, in which several students were injured. "We are against all xenophobic or anti-immigrant attacks," said Farhan Aziz Haq, UN Deputy spokesperson, when APP correspondent asked for the UN chief's reaction to the developments in that Central Asian Country.

Bishkek situation normal; political party misrepresenting incident: Tarar

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage, and Culture Attaullah Tarar has said that a political party is misrepresenting the Kyrgyzstan incident. He said that the situation in Bishkek has returned to normal, and those spreading fake images of casualties should fear Allah. Addressing a joint press conference along with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Affairs Ameer Muqam here on Sunday, he said that no Pakistani student had died in Bishkek; the incident was misrepresented, and any condemnation was insufficient. The Federal Minister of Information stated that when a clash had occurred between two student groups in Bishkek, Pakistani students got caught up in the conflict, although they were not the target. He mentioned that when the incident had occurred, the Prime Minister's Office and the Foreign Office immediately took action, and the government promptly activated an emergency response



cell at the Foreign Ministry. The Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister have been continuously monitoring the situation moment by moment for the past two days. Currently, six Pakistani students are receiving treatment in three different hospitals, he added. The Federal Minister said that propaganda was launched by a political party, where a photo of a Bangladeshi student was used to depict a Pakistani student. He mentioned that the Prime Minister had spoken to Pakistan's Ambassador to Kyrgyzstan, Hasan Ali Zaigham, who confirmed that no Pakistani student died, or any female student was assaulted. The incident was misrepresented, and parents were misled into believing their daughters were assaulted, and their sons had died, which is highly condemnable, he added.

Complaint filed with NAB seeking probe into wheat scandal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A complaint seeking inquiry into the wheat scandal has been filed with the National Accountability Bureau. Azhar Siddique Advocate has

referred ARY News reports in his complaint to the NAB. According to the complainant former caretaker food security minister in an interview with the ARY News made disclosures about the wheat scandal. Dr. Kausar Abdul-

lah Malik disclosed that the wheat was imported when four million tonnes of the grain was already in stock, the complainant said. Dr Kausar Abdullah said that Captain (ret'd) Mohammad Mehmood was the secretary food

security at the time of the wheat import, the complainant read. "The country suffered Rs. 300 billion losses owing to unnecessary wheat import," according to the complainant to NAB. The complainant has hold

the PASSCO, Food Department Punjab, the ministries of commerce and finance responsible for the loss. The complainant has requested to the accountability bureau for an immediate investigation of the matter.

Education ministry rebuild school in N. Waziristan destroyed by terrorists

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training while giving a powerful response to extremism in North Waziristan, has rebuilt and reopened a girls' school destroyed by bombing.

The official sources from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training have confirmed that, from tomorrow (Monday), we celebrate the resilience of our daughters and the nation's commitment to education.

The ministry sources while sharing the details said that in the latest tragic incident in North Waziristan, a private girls' school fell victim to unidentified militants who mercilessly targeted it, causing destruction and fear in the community.

Despite the attackers' efforts, no lives were lost, but the psychological and educational impact is significant. This is not the first time such violence has struck educational institutions in the region, highlighting a disturbing trend of targeting education, particularly for girls. However, amidst the darkness, there is a glimmer of hope as



the Ministry of Federal Education has rebuilt the school in record one week.

The Ministry sources confirmed that the 120 girls will be back in their classes today (Monday) morning. "This act symbolizes resilience, defiance against extremism, and a firm commitment to

providing education for all, especially for the daughters of the nation. Stay tuned for the inspiring story of rebuilding and national solidarity" it added.

Around 500 girls were enrolled in the two schools — Government Girls Middle School, Noor Jannat and

Government Girls Middle School, Yunus Kot — which were targeted by the attackers around midnight.

Local sources said that it was the only private girls' school in the area and its administration had received multiple threat letters in the past.

Lost and found

ISLAMABAD: Protesters demand release of poet "Ahmad Farhad" during a demonstration in front of National Press Club in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Additional IG Traffic arrives in Nowshera after tragic bus accident

Abdul Majid

FAISLABAD: Additional IG Traffic Mirza Faran Baig reached Nowshera to share the grief of the deceased and injured in the bus accident.

DPO Khushab Tauqeer Muhammad Naem gave all the briefing. In the accident, 14 people including men, women and children died and 12 were seriously injured. Additional IG



Traffic expressed deep sorrow and grief for the deceased and injured in the tragic bus accident. DHQ reached the hospital to visit the injured.

Condolences to the families of the injured. Directed best treatment to DPO and hospital management. Assured justice to the injured and their families.

Going to the accident site and getting to know the facts. We need to improve road

safety, vehicle fitness and driver training to prevent such accidents. All the departments have to work together on a better strategy to save the precious lives. The traffic police is working with a better strategy to prevent accidents across the province. Better traffic police strategy has significantly reduced accidents in cities. Traffic Police is always committed to the safety of citizens.

PPP AJK demand hold Pakistan Stability Day rallies on May 23 across Azad Kashmir

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan People's Party Central Executive Committee Azad Kashmir has strongly demanded for immediate secession from the government of Azad Kashmir and to hold Pakistan Stability Day rallies on May 23 across Azad Kashmir while providing electricity to the people of Azad Kashmir at production cost and flour at subsidy. Pakistan People's Party thanked the state of Pakistan for the bailout package of 23 billion rupees and President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir for adopting a generous approach to the national security institutions. A meeting of the Central Executive Council of Azad Kashmir was held in a local hotel

in Rawalpindi under the chairmanship of President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, in which former President Prime Minister Sardar Haji Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, member Central Executive Committee, former Minister Chaudhry Parvez Ashraf, Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Sardar Javed Ayub Khan Raja, Mian Abdul Waheed, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Ms. Nabila Ayub, besides ticket holders, Chaudhry Officer Shahid, Shaikat Javed Mir, Ashfaq Zafar, Mubashir Munir Awan, Sardar Mubarak Haider, Sardar Mukhtar Abbasi, Sardar Aftab Anjum, Sardar Bashir. Pahlwan, Revolutionary President, Chairman PSF Sardar Fawzeb, Leader of Women's Department, Sidra Latif, Rashid Salam Butt and other speakers while speaking, completely mistrusted the government of Prime Minister Chaudhry

Anwarul Haq and separated the party leadership from the government partnership without delay. While calling the government's one-year performance disappointing, the tension and the deaths of innocent people during the recent public movement were an indication of government mismanagement and negligence, while the ideological views of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. With the aim of strengthening and promoting relations and removing the misunderstandings created by certain elements, on May 23rd, it was announced to take out stability Pakistan rallies in all district tehsil and city locations of Azad Kashmir, led by the party president. Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar Former President Prime Minister Haji Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan Ministers Members of

the Assembly ticket holders will give a briefing to the media on the decisions made in the meeting, while giving a briefing to the media on the decisions taken in the meeting, the party's Central Deputy Secretary Information nominated candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven Shaikat Javed Mir said. That the Central Executive Committee has unanimously handed over the power of decisions to its top leadership on its concerns and the damage caused to the party by being involved in the government and has decided to hold a party convention in all constituencies very soon. Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairperson of Political Affairs Ms. Faryal Talpur expressed full confidence in the leadership of Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin.

One Day Int'l Conference on Post Covid Challenges at Women University Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Department of English, the Women University Multan organized one day international colloquium titled "Post Covid Challenges & Opportunities in Teaching and English Language Literary Studies in 21st Century" at Women University Multan.



The purpose of the colloquium was to reflect on how Covid has affected higher education and what key challenges academicians, students and institutions had to face during Covid and post Covid era as well. This discussion was moderated by Chairperson Department of English Prof. Dr. Mamoon Khan and Prof. Dr. Zia Ahmad. Dr. Mamoon Khan welcomed all the esteemed panel members. Addressing the event, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kalsoom Pracha said that the steps taken by the government to meet the challenges during and post COVID are commendable. During the pandemic situation the Women University Multan played its lead role and arranged online classes and examinations to facilitate the students. Despite having limited resources the university played a commendable role especially IT professionals guided the students and teachers to shift to online education.

Other panelist includes Dr. Muhammad Afzal, Dr. Naveed Chaudhry, Dr. Asif, Dr. Asim, Dr. Adnan, Dr. Tayyab, Dr. Fouzia, Dr. Ahsan, Dr. Shabbir, Dr. Ayesha, Dr. Mansoor, Dr. Abrar, Dr. Mazhar, Dr. Ghulam Murtaza, Dr. Safer and other eminent academic experts.

The participants exchanged different practices and solutions, explored and discussed existing challenges in transition and post-Covid-19 scenario to frame acceptable policies to impart knowledge and skills to students and outcome-based assessment in both cognitive and psycho motive domains based on set principles to adopt and live in a virtual world. Chairperson, Department of English Prof. Dr. Mamoon Khan, highlighted the significance of formation of LitCon society. She said that promoting knowledge of languages, literature, learning about new ideas and modern trends was the pressing need of the hour. She emphasized the pivotal role of academia and research in navigating the complexities of language and literature in 21st century. She briefed the audience about the academic and developmental progress of the University. Dr. Mamoon Khan concluded the session and thanked the literary figures and scholars for their valuable knowledge. She expressed hope that the colloquium would be helpful in understanding aftermaths of covid pandemic on higher education and also explore diverse linguistic and literary perspectives of Pakistan.

Municipal Corporation to survey Muharram procession routes: Officials

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Municipal Corporation Multan's XEN Shehzad Munir has said that in view of the arrival of the month of Muharram, no work will be done apart from



the mourning procession routes from the old and central Imambargahs of Multan City. In this regard, the survey of all the procession routes will be completed soon, the survey will be expressed by members of the Provincial Union of inter-Muslim Committee Punjab and Central President of Imam Hussain Mourning Council, Khawar Shafiq Bhatta, Syed Talib Hussain Faraz, in a meeting with the delegation of the licensees of the old and central Imambargahs of Multan City in his office under the leadership of Mehr Sakhawat Ali Sial.

On this occasion, Central Secretary General Syed Talib Hussain Faraz also gave written requests to Axin Shahzad Munir regarding the patchwork, resoling, iron cross, lighting and other problems of dilapidated streets and roads by the licensees. Besides DO Ijaz Arshad, SE Khizr Khan Musa Pak, Zulfikar Ali Sher Shah Town, Light Inspector Tariq Saleem, Wasim Haider Zaidi, Muhammad Naeem, Muhammad Qudus, Shahzeb Hasan Khan Baloch Mohsin Bhatta, Muhammad Asif Jhumt, Asghar Ali Qureshi, Hashmi, Amir Raza Jafri, Farast Ali, Nasir Baloch, Fayyaz Khan, Syed Ahmed Raza Gardizi, Sikandar Hussain, Mohammad Raheel, Syed Zafar Abbas Zaidi, Fazal Abbas, Haq Nawaz, Shaikat Abbas, Syed Hasan Abbas Rizvi, Asim Abbas Rizvi, Waqar Ali, Hasnain Abbas

Syed Azhar Hussain, Sajjad Hussain Numdar, Jameel Abbas, Ijaz Hussain, Muhammad Raziq, Shahbaz Haider, Allama Zahid Haider, Hasan Fida, Nasir Ali Nunari, Khalifa Kaiser were also present on this occasion. He assured Talib Hussain Faraz and other licensees that the problems of the licensees will be solved before 1st of Muharram and there will be no negligence in the construction works.

Bahawalpur Museum playing an active role in promoting education and research: Zubair Rabbani



Caption: On the occasion of International Museum Day, Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani is addressing a seminar held at the Museum Museum for Education and Research.

Kiran Asim

BAHAWALPUR: Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani said that education, research and museums are like a triangle. The museum is like a big school where the civilization created by our forefathers, the stories of our glorious history and our Narratives of research trips are beautifully presented. Local and international visitors learn about history and promote research here. He expressed these views while addressing a seminar titled "Museums for Education and Research" organized by the museum on the occasion of International Museum Day today. but what he said that like other museums, Bahawalpur Museum is also playing an active role in promoting education and research through digital technology. Addressing the seminar, Deputy Director Rasheed Ahmed Arshad, Educationist Shakeela Baloch, Chemist Sadia Noorin, Public Relations Officer Nadia Noorin, Assistant Librarian Benish Sabah, Rukhsana Shaheen and others said that the antiquities in the museum would be an invitation to research.

Bahawalpur Museum plays an important role in promoting exchange and mutual learning between world civilizations. Earlier, a "Museum Awareness Walk" was also organized under the leadership of Director Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani, while the gallery in-charges gave free admission to the visitors. A guided visit was conducted. Museum for visitors on this occasion a documentary about the galleries was also played. World Museums World Museum Day is celebrated on May 18 across the world. The purpose of this day is to promote learning, acquisition of knowledge and the advancement of culture.

Leading the awareness walk organized on the occasion of International Museum Day

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:27 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	5:00 pm
Maghrib	7:05 pm
Isha	8:43 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Indigenous Scholarship for postgraduate students to be disbursed by Sindh HEC

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The cheque distribution ceremony of Sindh HEC Indigenous Scholarship for Post Graduate Students was held at the Syndicate Hall of Vice Chancellor Secretariat, Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur dated 15th May 2024.

The acting Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ghulam Mustafa Mashori presided over the event. The formal proceedings of the event started with the recitation of Holy Quran by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Masihullah Jatoi.

Prof. Dr. Naveed Ahmed Shaikh, Director Post Graduate Studies briefed the audience on the importance of scholarship and the whole process of nomination. Dr. Shaikh said that it was laborious task to make nominations. Overall more than 450 students are enrolled in 2021 batch in postgraduate programs.

Prof. Dr. Ghulam Mustafa Mashori congratulated the nominated students. Prof. Mashori further said that we are thankful to Sindh HEC for providing financial support to the deserving and talented students to complete their academic journey.

While sharing their view, the students said that we are thankful to Sindh HEC, Shah Abdul Latif University and Directorate of Post Graduate Studies for this financial support.

USSEC's Pitch2Fork Spotlights Startups Leading in Protein Innovation

Spokesman Report

DUBAI/KARACHI: Right to Protein powered by the U. S. Soybean Export Council (USSEC) hosted its second Pitch2Fork program in Dubai, UAE. With a focus on innovations in the protein industry, this platform provided a unique opportunity for entrepreneurs across Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan to pitch their rising businesses to a panel of investors.

Shortlisted companies that leveraged this unique opportunity included Gladful, Hello Tempayy, Pouлта, and WeGro. While South Asia ranks as the fastest-growing region in the world, it is challenged with meeting the rapidly growing demand for protein. Reflecting on the potential impact of Pitch2Fork, Kevin Roepke, Regional Director of South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa (SAASA), USSEC, commented "Pitch2Fork is strategically positioned to facilitate the networking needed between startups and investors, accelerating innovation. By embracing disruption, proactively investing in the future, and addressing protein challenges, we create a path towards a more nutrition-secure tomorrow."

Hello Tempayy, an innovative Indian start-up reshaping tempeh production was awarded the Pitch2Fork 2024 trophy for 'Protein Start-up of the Year.' With their user-friendly and flavorful offerings, Hello Tempayy is expanding the array of soy-based protein options available to consumers in India. On seeing the value of winning the title, Hello Tempayy's Cofounder and Nutritionist, Malavika Siddharth, from India added, "As a nutritionist, I witness the effects of protein deficiencies on an individual's health on a regular basis. That's why we founded Hello Tempayy - to bridge this gap. Platforms like Pitch2fork present an invaluable opportunity to amplify our mission to raise awareness and offer nutritious and delicious high-quality protein options."

Providing insight on their experience as a nominee in Pitch2Fork from Pakistan's poultry segment, Khushbakht Ashraf, GM of Global Sales and Marketing, at Pouлта added "Presenting Pouлта's innovative solutions for traceability, vertical integration, and data-driven decision-making in front of such a great audience was an immensely valuable experience. We are committed to farm-to-fork traceability while maximizing the production



of protein and this perfectly resonates with USSEC and its mission. It has been a pleasure to network and connect and discuss future collaborations and partnerships for increasing awareness of protein." Md Mahmudur Rahman, Founder of WeGro, another nominee from Bangladesh's Agri-tech sector added, "At WeGro, we empower farmers by providing access

to finance, inputs, and markets. We acknowledge Pitch2Fork as an excellent platform that celebrates innovative solutions addressing the protein gap for a more sustainable future." Attendees were inspired by the triumph of Agrosift, an agritech start-up from Bangladesh and the Winner of Pitch2Fork 2022. Agrosift operates as

an omnichannel agri-supply chain platform that helps farmers sell their goods to businesses and consumers enabling fair pricing and better market access with increased affordability, quality, and convenience to buyers through its micro-fulfillment distribution network.

Pitch2Fork's renowned speaker lineup included Janna Fritz, Vice Chair, USSEC; Henry Gordon-Smith, Founder and CEO at Agritecture; Roma Roy Choudhury, Founder & COO at Evolved Foods; Deeba Giannoulis, Regional Head of U. S. Soy Sustainability and Marketing at USSEC-SAASSA; and Roberto Vit6n, Founder and Managing Director from Valoral Advisors.

S. Soy has been at the forefront of innovation and sustainability—continuously improving to deliver solutions to its customers across the globe. With a commitment to nourishing the world sustainably, U. S. soybean farmers support platforms like Pitch2Fork and deliver solutions like the Soy Value Oil Calculator, Specialty U. S. Soy Database, In-Pond Raceway Systems (IPRS), the International Aquaculture Feed Formulation Database (IAFDD) and the Soy Excellence Centers to name a few.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Families enjoying on holiday at Shahdara picnic point in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AJK Muslim Conference hails ex-PM for his two-day visit to Muzaffarabad

Abdul Majeed Tahri

MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan paid a two-day visit to Muzaffarabad. During the visit, he spent the busiest day visiting the homes of those who died at various places and expressed his condolences to the families and recited Fatiha. The senior workers and officials of the Muslim Conference met him at the MLA Hostel and discussed various issues including the arrangements for the Pakistan rally to be held on May 25. Congratulating him for their participation and strong representation in meeting of Rabita Alam-e-Islami in Saudi Arabia. Last day, President Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, former candidate for Assem-



bly, and Chairperson of Central Muslim Conference Women's Wing, Samia Sajid Raja, President Muslim Conference Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Khawaja Dilawar Wani met him. Pakistan Discussions were held regarding the problems of Kashmiris living in President Muslim Conference congratulated the Muslim Conference for raising their voice by representing the Kashmiris in the meeting of the Supreme Council of Rabat Alam Islam. Welfare is the first responsibility of the state.

The refugees are part of our body, the Muslim Conference has always played a role in solving their problems, according to its framework, it will continue to struggle to solve their problems, in the coming financial year, the refugees in Jammu. Identify the problems of Kashmir and plan for their solution. Kashmiri people are fighting for the completeness of Pakistan. Kashmiris kept their movement alive despite the difficult conditions and problems. Expressed appreciation to the President Muslim Conference for the interpretation in blunt words. Dilawar Wani and Samia Sajid invited the President Muslim Conference to visit Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Later, the President Muslim Conference left for Ghaziabad for two days.

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

PNP



ISLAMABAD: 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.

Health Secretary directs early start of mother, child hospital in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Punjab Secretary health Ali Jan Khan emphasized the need for timely completion of state of the art mother and child care hospital which would be completed at a cost of over Rs 5 million project on 75 kanals of land in Attock. He expressed these views after presiding over a meeting which reviewed the infrastructure development of the project after reviewing the construction work of mother and child care hospital at Attock on Saturday. Officials of district administration, health department, finance and public works department as well as Infrastructure Development Authority of the Punjab (IDAP) were also present on this occasion. Mr Jan directed concerned authorities to expedite the pace of construction work on mother and child hospital which is on snail pace from last one year due to different administrative and technical reasons. He said that the present government is determined to provide quality healthcare to mother and child, and it has started work on the establishment of state-of-the-art mother and child hospitals. The 365 bedded hospital will be well-equipped, with state-of-the-art facilities, Mr Jan said, adding: "The Mother and Child Hospital will transform the health landscape of the district." He said that the purpose and objective of this hospital was to improve access of marginalized communities to quality and immediate medical and surgical services to mothers and their children. He said that this will strengthen preventive services like immunization, nutrition to children and their mothers of the Attock district.

Kyrgyz mob targets Indians, Pakistanis in Bishkek after TikTok video

Mahnour Fatima

On Friday night, Local Kyrgyz mob in the capital city attacked the nationals of the nearby southern neighboring countries - the Indians and Pakistanis. Fortunately, soon after the violence, the government announced that the situation had been taken under control. These were mostly students, pursuing medical courses in the host country as it provides affordable and quality medical education. Although 90% of the host country's population practice Islam, but due to long term influence of socialist ideas in the region, most of the population is secular and can be called the "Weak Muslims". In fact, banning niqab and bushy beards was put to question and debated, over security reasons in the Kyrgyzstan assembly in 2023. Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan have historically been concerned about the surge in terrorism, especially the Taliban's entrance into their borders from Afghanistan. Even the Pakistani tourists face xenophobia due to similar Afghan outfits and appearance. A week earlier, a videotape on TikTok went viral displaying clashes that broke out between Egyptians and the locals, leading to several casualties. Soon after, the locals spread hate messages on TikTok and other social media platforms for revenge. As Pakistanis and Indians have a similar skin tone as those of Egyptians, therefore, they became the victims of others' bloody clashes. An alarming fact here is, the injuries of female Pakistani students who were also not spared. Many were injured and the mob even broke out into the residence of Pakistanis - hostels in majority. Meanwhile, the Egyptian students were having popcorn and enjoying the brutal scenes. The prime victims of these clashes were Pakistanis and it illustrated how deadly "misinformation" can be. However, the task for our government is to build its soft image, assert its influence in the international arena and to provide affordable quality educational institutes.

Writer is Student of International Relations, National Defence University Islamabad

Why packets of snacks like nimko, chips, and Lays are filled with air?

PPA

MULTAN: Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, member of the National Development Export Board for Agro and Food Processed and group chairman of SM Food Industries, talked to the media for public awareness. He explained why packets of snacks like nimko, chips, and Lays are filled with air?



The answer is based on scientific principles. Snacks are packed with gas through a process called "Modified Atmosphere Packaging." This process changes the environment inside the packet so that the snacks stay fresh for longer. It helps keep the snacks' nutrition and taste intact and makes them safe to eat. Carbon dioxide is also used in these snacks to prevent the growth

of bacteria and fungi. Some special snacks have a small amount of oxygen added to maintain their color. Processed foods, or those with arti-

ficially extended shelf life, use preservatives. These can be natural or artificial, with artificial chemicals more commonly used in the food industry. Packets are filled with nitrogen gas, which is non-reactive and prevents the food inside from spoiling. This gas also maintains the food's sensory qualities. If a packet leaks, the nitrogen escapes, oxygen enters, and the food's taste and quality deteriorate. Additionally, packets are one-third empty to allow the nitrogen gas to mix with all the food inside. If the packet were completely filled with snacks, there would be no room for the gas, defeating the purpose of filling it with nitrogen. This technique is also used in carbonated bottles and jars to keep processed food fresh for a long time.

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Nawaz Sharif demands accountability...

Nawaz Sharif's much-anticipated address to the PML(N) Central Working Committee was filled with expressions of past grievances and complaints against the judiciary, naming specific judges, and against the establishment, though without naming individuals, regarding the removal of his government three times: first in 1993, second in 1999, and third in 2017. He continues to wonder and seek answers about his unceremonious removal from power, which he believes was part of conspiracies against him, his government, and the country as a whole.

He questioned why, in the morning, he was a prime minister and by evening, he was labeled a hijacker. He questioned how a three-person bench, unelected and sitting in the Supreme Court, could declare an elected Prime Minister unfit for office.

He asserted that he would continue to seek answers to these questions for the rest of his life, vowing not to rest until all those involved in conspiracies against him, his government, his party, and his country are brought to justice.

While indicating the masterminds behind the conspiracies, he pointed to former Chief Justice Saqib Nisar, who, in an audio leak, purportedly stated the intention to keep Nawaz Sharif and Maryam in prison while bringing Mr. Imran Khan to power. Nisar allegedly instructed an accountability judge to decide the case within six months and appointed Ejaz ul Hassan as a monitoring judge.

He then referred to another conspiracy involving Mr. Imran Khan, who was summoned to London by former ISI Chief Zaheer Ul Islam. Pervez Elahi and Tahir ul Qadri were also present, collectively hatch-

ing the conspiracy to remove his government through long marches and dharnas in 2013. Although the plan fizzled out, it resulted in significant costs for the nation, including delays in the visit of the Chinese President and the launch of CPEC.

"Interestingly, all the answers to the questions he posed seem to rest with him, and perhaps no one can answer these questions better than him.

His first question was: How could three unelected judges of the Supreme Court remove an elected prime minister from power? According to him, such an occurrence had never happened anywhere else in the world."

He has been the prime minister for three terms, he should have brought a constitutional amendment to give immunity to the prime minister from being removed by judges but he did not do so. There are many countries which have granted immunity to the Prime Ministers and the presidents. France's Constitution grants the President immunity from prosecution during their term, while Italy's Parliament once passed a law granting Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi immunity. In Kenya, the President is provided immunity from criminal proceedings during their tenure, and the Philippines' Constitution offers similar protections to its President.

The claim that "nowhere in the world judges remove elected prime ministers" is not accurate. Courts have played a crucial role in removing elected officials in various countries. In Pakistan, Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani was disqualified by the Supreme Court in 2012 for contempt of court, Thailand's Constitutional Court

removed Prime Ministers Samak Sundaravej in 2008 for a constitutional violation and Yingluck Shinawatra in 2014 for abuse of power. Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi faced multiple legal challenges, leading to his resignation in 2011. In South Korea, the Constitutional Court upheld the impeachment of President Park Geun-hye in 2017 amid a corruption scandal.

His second question was why his government was removed three times during his political career.

"The answer to this question also rests with him. All the parties and leaders of the country have been utilizing the establishment to achieve political objectives. The establishment has become so powerful and has wielded these powers for so long that it now assumes the role of kingmaker and is reluctant to relinquish this influence. PML(N), under his leadership, allegedly benefited the most from the establishment's role as kingmaker. Analysis, opinion-makers, political scientists, and election watchdog organizations are largely of the opinion that without the establishment's outright support, PML(N) would not have been able to form governments at the center and in Punjab. If he had learned a lesson, he would have refused the establishment's help for his return to the country, absolving himself of all cases and playing a decisive role in winning his seat. He should have agreed to PTT's demand that the election result should have been based on Form 45 and not on Form 47, which is derived from Form 45 and was allegedly manipulated. If he and PML(N) do not learn to refrain

from seeking the establishment's help, then what happened to Nawaz Sharif and what is currently happening to Imran Khan will continue unabated."

His third question was that when the politicians have been subject to lethal accountability processes both by the courts and the establishment, why the judges and the establishment are out of the purview of the accountability. The answer to this question also rests with him.

While Nawaz Sharif's three terms as Prime Minister saw significant political events, his failure to implement necessary reforms for ensuring the accountability of judges and the military remains a critical oversight. To address this, several constitutional reforms could be introduced: establishing an independent accountability commission to oversee all branches of government, implementing a robust judicial accountability process through an independent judicial council, subjecting military officials to civilian judicial review, strengthening parliamentary oversight committees, protecting whistleblowers who expose misconduct, mandating regular asset declarations for judges and military officials, and reinforcing civilian control over the military. Examples from countries like the United States, India, and South Korea demonstrate that these measures can promote transparency and accountability, ensuring balanced governance and reducing corruption in all branches of government.

"Now that PML(N) is once again in power, he should introduce constitutional reforms to end his quest for seeking answers."

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Attack on Pakistani & others students Hostel In Kyrgyzstan

The incident prompted the Indian and Pakistani embassies to issue advisories for its nationals staying in Bishkek.

Kyrgyzstan's capital, Bishkek, has been witnessing massive mob violence for the last few days, with foreign students, including those from India and Pakistan, facing threats from locals. According to media reports, at least 29 people were injured in the violence.

The incident prompted the Indian and Pakistani embassies to issue advisories for its nationals staying in Bishkek. Meanwhile, the ministry of foreign affairs of Kyrgyzstan assured that the situation in Bishkek is under control.

According to local reports, the violence in Bishkek erupted following a brawl at a hostel between locals and foreign students, including Pakistanis and Egyptians. Videos of the brawl, which reportedly took place on May 13, went viral on social media—following which tensions heightened in the country.

Reportedly, the locals perceived the brawl as a clear breach of the hospitality extended to the foreign students. Following this, the locals protested on May 17, accusing the Kyrgyz officials of showing "lenient treatment" towards the foreigners involved in the violence.

Several demonstrators also blocked traffic and vandalised buildings during the violence.

The Pakistani embassy in Bishkek also issued an advisory for its students, asking them to stay indoors. According to the embassy's statement, there have been reports of minor injuries to Pakistani students. However, there are no confirmed reports of deaths or rapes.

Meanwhile, Pakistani prime minister Shehbaz Sharif has sent his deputy and foreign minister Ishaq Dar and federal minister Amir Muqam to Bishkek on Sunday to ensure assistance and support to the Pakistani students stranded amid the unrest, reported ANI. Along with this, a special flight carrying 180 Pakistani students landed at Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport on Saturday from Bishkek.

The Kyrgyz foreign ministry on Saturday said that the situation in the city of Bishkek is calm and under full control, adding that the "destructive forces" are deliberately disseminating untrue and false information about the situation.

The Kyrgyz Government asks the representatives of mass media, blogger community, as well as foreign colleagues to be guided only by the official and confirmed information of the competent bodies."

Syrian refugees ...



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

Protests in AJK Don't Reflect Hate for Pakistan and Pak Army - I

Nestled amidst the breathtaking Himalayas and Karakoram ranges, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) stands as a serene haven of natural splendor and cultural diversity. Despite its challenging geopolitical circumstances, the people of AJK exemplify remarkable resilience, embracing peace as a guiding principle and nurturing harmony among diverse communities.

AJK is an autonomous administrative region within Pakistan, boasting its own elected government and legislative assembly. Sharing borders with the Indian-occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir to the east, and the Pakistani provinces of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the west, AJK occupies a strategically significant position within the contested region of Kashmir. Despite its proximity to conflict zones and ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir dispute, AJK has managed to maintain relative tranquility and stability.

The inhabitants of AJK, representing a rich mosaic of ethnicities, languages, and cultures, have long embraced values of tolerance, coexistence, and mutual respect. A key factor contributing to the peaceful cohabitation in AJK is the strong sense of community and solidarity among its residents. Despite variances in ethnicity, religion, and language, the people of AJK are united by shared history, traditions, and aspirations for a brighter tomorrow. This sense of unity has enabled them to surmount challenges and collaborate toward common objectives, nurturing a culture of peace and collaboration. Moreover, the government of AJK has prioritized policies aimed at fostering social cohesion, stimulating economic development, and promoting inclu-

sive governance. Investments directed towards education, healthcare, and infrastructure have markedly enhanced the standard of living for residents of AJK, offering avenues for socio-economic progress. By tackling the underlying causes of poverty, inequality, and marginalization, the government has established a framework for a more stable and prosperous society. Complementary governmental efforts, civil society organizations and community leaders play a pivotal role in fostering peace and cohesion in AJK. Through grassroots initiatives, dialogue forums, and peacebuilding endeavors, they strive to address intercommunal tensions, mediate disputes, and forge connections of understanding among diverse groups. By nurturing a culture of dialogue and reconciliation, these endeavors bolster the resilience of AJK's social fabric and mitigate the potential for conflict escalation.

Moreover, AJK's natural splendor and rich cultural heritage serve as wellsprings of inspiration and pride for its inhabitants, instilling a profound reverence for the land and its riches. From the beautiful valleys of Neelum and Jhelum to the majestic summits of Nanga Parbat and Trarkhel, the awe-inspiring landscapes of AJK offer sanctuaries for contemplation, leisure, and spiritual rejuvenation. Similarly, its vibrant cultural legacy, encompassing traditions of music, art, and cuisine, mirrors the diversity and dynamism of its populace, venerating the shared humanity that transcends geographical borders and demarcations.

From a strategic perspective, AJK holds significant importance for Pakistan. Positioned at the nexus of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, AJK acts as a conduit for Pakistan to engage with these regions. Its adjacency to the Line of

Control (LoC), demarcating AJK from the Indian Occupied Kashmir, underscores its strategic relevance in the context of the longstanding Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India. Moreover, AJK boasts considerable water resources, including the rivers forming the Indus Basin. The waters originating from AJK are indispensable for Pakistan's agricultural productivity, economic vitality, and overall water security. Thus, AJK's geographical location and natural endowments bolster Pakistan's strategic and economic interests.

Beyond strategic considerations, the cultural and historical affinities between AJK and Pakistan run deep. The denizens of AJK share linguistic, ethnic, and cultural bonds with various regions of Pakistan, fostering a sense of camaraderie and unity. The cultural interchange between AJK and Pakistan enriches the societal tapestry of both entities, championing diversity and solidarity. Additionally, AJK occupies a significant place in Pakistan's collective consciousness, embodying the struggle for self-determination and the quest for liberty. The sacrifices endured by the people of AJK in their pursuit of independence resonate profoundly with Pakistanis, reinforcing the bonds of fraternity and shared destiny.

Economically, AJK and Pakistan are mutually reliant. Pakistan extends vital economic support to AJK through financial aid, infrastructure enhancement, and trade avenues. Conversely, AJK contributes to Pakistan's economy through its natural resources, potential for tourism, and human capital. The advancement of infrastructure ventures such as roads, dams, and energy initiatives in AJK not only benefits the local populace but also augments connectivity and economic integration between AJK and the broader Pakistani landscape. Furthermore, the promotion of tourism in AJK not only invigorates its economy but also showcases its natural allure and cultural heritage to a global audience.

To be continued

'Hasbara and Israel's Justification of Palestinian Killings' - I

Rania Ishtiaq

The Israel-Palestine dispute is one of the most persistent and divisive topics in the field of international affairs. The use of public diplomacy by both sides to sway public opinion and win support for their own narratives is fundamental to this lengthy battle. A complicated tapestry of adoration, doubt, and downright hate weaves together to form the image of Israel. Though it is held in high regard as a model of democracy and technological advancement, it also faces unfavorable opinions because to its protracted conflict with Palestine and charges of violating human rights.

It will be difficult for the Israeli government to change opinions around the world, especially in light of the constant media attention and extensive disinformation campaigns. Furthermore, efforts to secure universal support for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are complicated by its controversial nature.

The Israeli government has been using propaganda, or "hasbara," to influence public opinion and defend its acts, including the killing of Palestinians, in the ongoing war between Israel and Palestine. Israel's state strategy includes the deliberate falsification of information and the distortion of facts in order to dominate the narrative surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to shape public opinion. In this piece, we examine the ethical ramifications of Israel's use of hasbara to justify its acts of violence against Palestinians.

Understanding Hasbara

Hasbara, referring to "explanation" or "propaganda" in Hebrew, describes Israel's information-gathering and policy-promoting activities, especially with regard to the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict. It includes a variety of strategies, such as public relations operations, media campaigns, and diplomatic activities, with the goal of influencing international opinions to favor Israel.

Justification of Palestinian Killings Framing as Self-Defense

Framing the killings of Palestinians as acts of self-defense is one of the primary methods that Israel uses hasbara to explain the killings. The Israeli government presents its military operations as essential steps to safeguard national security and shield Israeli citizens from terrorists. This storyline frequently highlights the threat that Palestinian militant groups offer as well as the necessity of taking preventative action before an assault occurs.

For example, The extent to which Israel has gone to defend its conduct is exemplified by the disclosure that an Israeli military official claimed to have discovered a list of Hamas operatives; however, it turned out to be a straightforward calendar with the days of the week printed in Arabic. In a similar vein, the events surrounding the murders of journalist Shireen Abu Akle and Muhammad Al-Dura show how Israel has employed hasbara to sidestep accountability and deflect criticism.

Minimizing Civilian Casualties

In order to lessen the effect of civilian deaths brought on by its military actions, Israel also uses hasbara. The government highlights the deployment of warning systems and precision targeting to reduce collateral damage as examples of its efforts to prevent harm to civilians. Furthermore, Israel frequently holds Hamas and other Palestinian organizations accountable for putting civilians in danger by employing them as human shields or conducting operations in heavily populated areas.

To be continued

Chinese youngsters embrace more diversified tourism options

Xinhua

BEIJING: As neo-Chinese style tourism, county tourism, and cultural and immersive experiences have become new keywords of holiday travel for Chinese tourists, tourist destinations are striving to develop diverse tourism products and improve their services.

Fueled by young people's passion for traditional culture, tourism activities like Hanfu photography and immersive cultural performances have surged in popularity. It's also been trendy for Chinese tourists to head to lesser-known counties to get a short break from the hustle and bustle of urban life.

China's tourism market is upgrading and becoming a strong source of economic growth. During the five-day May Day holiday this year, domestic tourist expenditures in China amounted to 166.89 billion yuan (about 23.5 billion U.S. dollars), up 12.7 percent from the same period in 2023. In 2024, Chinese tourists are estimated to make more than 6 billion trips across the country.

In east China's Jiangsu Province, the Pingjiang Road historical and cultural block in Suzhou bustles with visitors even in the off season.

Many people's top-to-do lists include tasting a cup of tea while watching a Suzhou Pingtan musical performance in the local dialect or taking pictures in traditional Chinese Hanfu clothing.

In a traditional clothing store on Pingjiang Road, a group of young ladies are busy selecting neo-Chinese-style clothes. The sales volume of Cheongsam, waistcoats, and horse-face skirts has seen a dramatic rise this year, which shows the integration of traditional culture and clothing into Chinese people's daily lives, said Zhou Liyan, owner of the store.

A growing number of young Chinese are trying to enjoy their travel journey while pursuing traditional culture. "Neo-Chinese style tourism" has ushered in a boom in this May Day holiday, characterized by new cultural travel experiences such as ancient town tours, intangible cultural heritage exploration, museum exhibition trips, etc.



Data from Tongcheng Travel shows that the booking of tourist spots like museums and ancient towns saw a four-times increase year on year during the five-day holiday.

Experts hold that there is no explicit definition of "neo-Chinese style tourism," which should integrate traditional Chinese elements with modern tourism. However, many believe that the youngsters' zeal for traditional Chinese culture will give new development impetus to more tourism market segments.

To The Counties

During this May Day holiday, Liu Shibin and his family from northeast China's Jilin Province traveled to the neighboring Liaoning Province only for an "idle" vacation in Changhai County of Dalian City. They enjoyed clam digging, fishing, and cozy breezes from the ocean there.

"We wanted to temporarily escape the fast-paced urban life and spend the five days on the island at leisure," said Liu. Changhai County, which consists of five main islets, received some 25,000

island visitors during the May Day holiday, up 43.8 percent from the same period in 2019.

Since the beginning of this year, China's domestic tourism market has been steadily recovering. Some third- and fourth-tier cities and counties with unique cultures and natural landscapes have been well-received, as they are often highly cost-effective in terms of tourist spending compared with traditional popular sites in big cities.

County tourism has become the new darling of Chinese tourists, particularly young ones.

Data from China's leading travel platform, Ctrip, shows that during this May Day holiday, the year-on-year growth rate of travel orders in county-level markets surpassed that of third- and fourth-tier cities, while the latter's growth rates were higher than those of first- and second-tier cities.

Qin Jing, vice president of Ctrip Group, attributed the county tourism fever to the public's shift towards more rational tourism expenditures and an increasing focus on their pursuit of comfort-

able experiences.

During the May Day holiday, Anji County in east China's Zhejiang Province, known for its picturesque rivers and mountains, experienced a surge in tourism, with an influx of over 1.67 million visitors. A local coffee shop in Anji County served more than 7,940 cups of coffee in a mere day.

"Small counties offer a slow pace of life, allowing visitors to deeply experience the local customs and culture," said Yang Tianming, a tourist from south China's Guangzhou.

Yang added that nowadays, many of his friends are no longer solely interested in household names when picking their holiday destinations. "Instead, they prioritize the enjoyable experiences when traveling."

China's increasingly improved traffic network, including high-speed railways, aviation, highways, and other infrastructure, ensures the accessibility of once-sleepy counties and is a key booster for the holiday tourism boom.

Currently, China's railway services cover 81 percent of the country's counties, and its bullet

trains can reach 93 percent of the cities, each with a population of more than 500,000.

"The popularity of county tourism is on the rise as the local infrastructure continues to improve. This satisfies the travelers' desire for a leisurely vacation, while also offering unique experiencing activities that blend with the local cultures," Liu Yang, chief commercial officer of Tujia, a Chinese homestay booking platform.

The counties are embracing new forms of tourism, from enhancing the quality of tourism infrastructure such as scenic spots and hotels, to offering diversified characteristic activities such as camping and music festivals.

Since December 2023, a total of 127 4A-level scenic spots have been added in 10 provincial-level regions across China, 65 percent of which are distributed in counties and county-level cities. Since the beginning of this year, Ctrip alone has added approximately 1,000 scenic spots in the counties.

Immersive Experience

As the aroma of wheat spreads across fields on the outskirts of Zhengzhou, the capital of central

China's Henan Province, Zhu Yaru begins her sightseeing at "Unique Henan: Land of Dramas," a gigantic immersive theater complex in Zhongmu County. The site comprises 21 theaters, performing various shows themed on Henan's history and the Yellow River's culture.

"While watching the plays about Su Shi, an influential poet in Chinese history, I felt like I was not watching some actors but talking to Su Shi and experiencing his life. That's amazing," Zhu said.

During this year's May Day holiday, this place has become a big hit in the tourism market. "A total of over 500,000 tourists came to enjoy the performances at the Land of Dramas, and the overall comprehensive income increased by 40 percent year on year," said Liu Kaipeng, head of the brand department of Henan Jianye Cultural and Tourism Marketing Center, adding that in 2023 alone, the Land of Dramas received more than 12 million visitors including foreigners from over 40 countries around the globe.

Nowadays, immersive experience has become a buzzword

in China's cultural and tourism industry, captivating travelers nationwide and worldwide.

In Xi'an, northwest China's Shaanxi Province, the "Twelve Hours of Chang'an" theme block vividly reproduces the urban life of the Tang Dynasty (618-907). In Kaifeng City of Henan Province, people can travel back to the Song Dynasty (960-1279) in the Millennium City Park. Also, in Lijiang City, southwest China's Yunnan Province, the large-scale live drama "Impression Lijiang" leads the audience to truly dedicate themselves to the lives of various ethnic minorities during the cultural show.

"With the continuous upgrading of tourism consumption demand in China, tourists are no longer satisfied with a mere viewing mode. They long for deep participation and emotional connections with scenic spots," said Xiao Jianyong, deputy head of Henan Cultural Tourism Research Institute, adding that the immersive experience has also enhanced the sense of participation of tourists by incorporating more cultural elements.

Astana, is a magnet for tourists

Naveed Ahmad Khan

The city of Astana is located in the middle of Central Kazakhstan's vast steppes. The Ishim River is the capital's main waterway that divides it into the "old" city on the right bank and the left bank with its modern and futuristic architecture. The climate is sharply continental - cold and long winters and hot, moderately dry summers.

Astana encompasses 722 square kilometers; the population is over 1,010,000 people. The city was built in a unique Eurasian style fusing the cultural traditions of the East and West. The city's master plan was designed by Japanese architect Kisho Kurokawa. The capital consists of three districts - Almaty, Saryarka, and Esil.

Astana is a city of new opportunities and a center of attraction for active, talented, and motivated youth. The capital is the country's main educational and scientific center that seeks to become a regional hub of knowledge, science, and innovation.

Astana got the status of the capital in 1997 and for 22 years the city became the largest modern metropolis with developed infrastructure, transport network, and social life.

The city was founded in 1830 under the Russian Empire and was called Akmolinskii prikaz, and served as a defensive fortification for the Siberian Cossacks. Then after the century, it was renamed Tselinograd, as the center of the



Soviet "Virgin Lands Campaign", aimed to develop the agricultural movement in the region. After gaining independence, the city returned to the original name of Akmola and in 1998 it became "Astana" which means "capital city" translated from Kazakh. The name once again changed to

Nur-Sultan, by unanimous parliamentary voting in 2019, in honor of the long-ruling Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev. In September 2022, President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev announced that the city would revert to the former name Astana. On 17 September, he signed a law that

amended the constitution to restore the name Astana.

It is located on the Yesil River, which divides the capital into the Right and Left banks, made of different architectural styles. The historical right bank takes you into the Soviet era, which reflects the past of the country, whereas the

left bank of Yesil is the reflection of a modern and futuristic view on architecture and the lifestyle of Kazakhstani people.

Kazakhstan is the largest landlocked country in the world, but for Nur-Sultan it is not an issue: Khan Shatyr - the shopping center, designed by well-known

Norman Foster as the biggest marquee in the world has its own beach. Additionally, there is a piece of boundless ocean in the heart of the arid steppe zone - Oceanarium "Ailand" ("Duman").

If you want to experience an extreme continental climate, Nur-Sultan is ideal for you.

The weather is very diverse and depends on the season: in summer temperature can rise to 30°C, whereas during winter, it can go 40°C below zero, which makes it the second coldest capital in the world after the Ulaanbaatar in Mongolia.

Nur-Sultan became the face of the state and entered the list of 30 best cities in the world. Today it is the center of the Eurasian space, accepting various forums, congresses, and other events of international importance.

The Congresses of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions, the Astana Economic Forum, and other internationally significant events are held on a regular basis. The historic OSCE Summit was held, the jubilee summits of SCO and OIC were held. The capital of the republic hosted participants and guests of the VII Winter Asian Games. In 2017, Nur-Sultan hosted the international exhibition EXPO-2017, the 27th Congress of the World Association of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgeons, and many other events.

In 1999, at the initiative of UNESCO, the capital of Kazakhstan was awarded the title of City of Peace. A convenient location in the center of the Eurasian continent makes Astana an economically advantageous transport, communication and logistics center, a kind of Transit Bridge between Europe and Asia.

Kazakhstan welcomed 834,900 foreign tourists from January to September 2023, a 37% increase compared to the same period last year, according to the Kazakh Bureau of National Statistics.

"Thanks to Kazakhstan's tourism potential and traditional hospitality, the country is becoming one of the most popular global tourist destinations," said Nurtas Karipbayev, the Acting Chairman of the Tourism Industry Committee of the ministry. "Currently, citizens from 81 countries enjoy visa-free entry to Kazakhstan, with plans to expand this to 100. International air routes now connect Kazakhstan with more than 28 countries across 120 routes".



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

Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue updated on Banking Sector's Strategic Initiatives in Priority Sectors

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) held a meeting with the Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb. The meeting focused on enhancing support by the banks for the three key sectors of Agriculture, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and Digital & Technology in Pakistan. The discussion underlined the banking sector's commitment to fostering financial inclusion in the Country.

Federal Minister mentioned at the outset that the idea of this exercise shall be to encourage the entire sector to contribute towards these priority sectors as per their size and unique offerings & strengths. While there will be no "directed lending"; however, there shall be voluntary targets to be set between the banks and the regulator to share the responsibility to contribute towards these critical sectors. He expects the banks to step up and continue to work with the Government in the revival and the growth of the economy.

During the session, Chairman PBA, Zafar Masud, along with the Steering Committee members on these initiatives, including Vice Chairman PBA, Ahmed Bozai, CEO & SG PBA, Muneer Kamal, Executive Director (Financial Inclusion Group) State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Syed Irfan Ali, and President



& CEO Meezan Bank, Irfan Siddiqui, presented a comprehensive set of recommendations aimed at promoting growth and sustainability in these vital sectors. The proposals were developed in close consultation with SBP to ensure they effectively address the unique challenges and highlight the opportunities within each sector.

Similarly, it was resolved in the meeting that banks get actively involved in providing financial and management support to entities such as the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) and National Credit

Guarantee Company Limited (NCGCL). The Minister was apprised that PBA and SBP are actively engaged to revising SME Prudential Regulations, enhancing clean financing limits, and reviewing regulatory retail portfolio limits to facilitate SME financing.

The Minister was informed that PBA is contemplating to establish "SME and Agriculture Index" to target the customers currently outside the documented economy while also enhancing credit risk management.

On the Digital & Technology front, PBA recommended facilitating retail foreign invest-

ment through digital micro sukuks/infra bonds and integrating freelancers into payment gateways. It was also proposed to enhance foreign remittance flows via specially developed online portals for overseas Pakistanis. It was emphasized that the banks be allowed to offer products and services in technology space, currently only used for their own operations, to the outside world to harness export flows. The recommendations related to documentation of the economy through the use of technology were also discussed, and outlined the role that the banks will play in furthering Government's efforts in this respect.

The Minister commended PBA's Steering Committee, and the respective Task Forces for the three identified priority sector, for their thorough analysis and valuable recommendations. He highlighted the crucial role of the banking community in driving economic growth. He stressed upon the banks to enhance their efforts in supporting these priority sectors to foster economic development and prosperity.

"PBA and its members are fully committed to working closely with the Ministry of Finance and the SBP to implement these recommendations and ensuring effective contribution of the banking sector to Pakistan's economic prosperity." Commented Zafar Masud, Chairman - PBA at the end of the meeting.

ICCI organizes Freelancing & Digital Media Training Session

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry under its Rising Generation Empowerment Committee organized a Freelancing and Digital Media Training Session attended by Islamabad Youth Assembly and students of different Universities of Islamabad. Fahad Malik, IT specialist and recipient of Nishan-e-Imtiaz attended the session as Chief Guest. He guided the attendees about the development of the IT skills as well as the techniques to earn money through online careers.

During the interactive session he gave answers of student's questions about digital media freelancing and underlined the need for getting complete command over the skills for online jobs.

In his address former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said the ICCI organizes various training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops for enhancing skills in different fields and sectors. It promotes entrepreneurship culture and takes initiatives for youth entrepreneurship development and women's economic empowerment adding that the youth must be aware of the fact that hard work and piety are prerequisites for their success.

Clinical Psychologist and Convener Rising Generation Empowerment Committee ICCI Fatima Hassan emphasized that digital skills are the need of the hour not only for an individual's prosperity but for a country's development. She went on to say that ICCI from its platform is doing its best to impart necessary training and awareness to youth to make them successful entrepreneurs and job providers. Secretary General Islamabad Youth Assembly Aneeqa Hassan commended ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for taking the initiatives for youth empowerment which is a service to the nation in true manners.



Saleem Deewan, Ceo Diwan International pvt Ltd, Kashif Bashir VC, IEEE Lahore Section, Sheikh Shiraz Saleem, Ceo American Solar, and Na-deem, Bahun Associate during the Dinner hosted by Diwan International at Nishat Hotel, Lahore.

Hardworking people

KARACHI: A Labourer busy in boring a well in Liaquatabad, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Various markets, trade bodies announce support for PIAF in LCCI polls

PPA

LAHORE: The delegation of various traders and industrial associations, especially the paper market and Shah Alam Market, Young Traders Association, Beden Road and other markets visited the PIAF office to show their solidarity with the PIAF in the upcoming Lahore Chambers elections. The delegation from Paper Market Ganpat Road was led by APMA former chairman Khamis Saeed Butt while the delegation from Young Traders Association of Shah Alam Market was led by Shehzad Aslam and the delegation from Baden Road was led by Tahir Hafeez.

Patron-in-Chief PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar and Chairman PIAF Fahimur Rahman Saigol while talking to a delegations led by former Senior Vice Chairman

PIAF Khamis Saeed Butt and Executive Committee Member PIAF Bau Muhammad Bashir pointed out this. On the occasion of the visit to the central office of the PIAF hundreds of businessmen and industrialists from Urdu Bazar, Ganpat Road, Abakari Road, Anarkali and adjacent markets participated in the delegation. Ahad Amin Malik will enter the field as a PIAF candidate in the Lahore Chamber elections. All members expressed their support for him in the meeting.

Senior Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Vice Chairman PIAF Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, Former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian, Senior Vice President Zafar Chaudhry, Vice President Adnan Khalid Butt and others were present in the APMA delegation.

Automobile industry still fails to export, raising concerns amid the economic crisis: PIDE VC

PPA

LAHORE: Pakistan Institute of Development Economics hosted a One Day Conference titled 'Revitalizing Pakistan's Automobile Industry: Moving towards Consumer Welfare, Global Integration & Sustainable Mobility' here in Lahore. Representatives of Automobile Companies in Pakistan, Automobile parts manufacturers, policymakers and academicians participated in the conference sharing their experience and knowledge regarding the issues and the future outlook of automobile industry in Pakistan. The conference was well attended by a large number of students from the local universities as well.

The discussion in the conference was focused on three sub-themes, Localization Obsession and Supply

Chain Constraints, Policy, Reforms and Industry Development, and Electrification and the Future of Mobility. Extensive and in-depth analysis and views were shared on all the themes by the experts, while students also actively participated in the discussion sessions as well.

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) in his opening address to the conference expressed that the primary agenda of this conference is to explore why Pakistan's automobile industry is not progressing and to discuss strategies for its revitalization. The aim of our institution is the economic prosperity of Pakistan, and this conference is a step towards achieving that by focusing on the automobile sector. The key issues to address include the reasons behind the lack of exports from the automobile industry,



the delayed introduction of hybrids and EVs, and the future of the industry in terms of research and development. Despite 50 to 70 years of protection, the sector has failed to export, which is a significant concern given the country's economic crisis.

Later, the PIDE team presented

the findings of their ongoing research on the state of automobile industry in Pakistan and the future outlook. A second presentation focusing specifically on the potential of Electric Vehicles in Pakistan, as well as the challenges in its adoption were also presented by the PIDE team at the conference.

The participants lauded the work done by PIDE and also the organization's efforts to bring together all stakeholders for developing and promoting a unified reform plan for the revitalization of automobile industry in Pakistan.

The message from the conference was clear that Pakistan needs a policy shift if it wants to develop its automobile industry. The focus must shift from absolute localization of the industry to instead focusing on becoming part of the global value chain.

Dr. Usman Qadir, Senior Research Economist at PIDE in his closing remarks expressed gratitude to all the attendees for their participation and feedback on this pressing matter. He also expressed the desire to further such deliberations and collaboration with industry experts and other members of the academia as well.

Coca-Cola Foundation and charity: water Partner to Bring Clean and Safe Water to Communities in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: charity: water, a non-profit organization bringing clean and safe water to people around the world, has received support from The Coca-Cola Foundation to launch a transformative clean water project in the Balochistan province in Pakistan. The project aims to support 372 new and rehabilitated community water points to ensure access to clean and safe water for more than 3,500 people. Balochistan is Pakistan's most arid and water-starved province with challenges mounting after the catastrophic floods in 2022.

The Coca-Cola Foundation, known for its commitment to economic

empowerment and environmental sustainability, is proud to support this project alongside charity: water. "We believe in the power of partnerships to connect local expertise with global sustainable best practices, so every drop of water goes farther, especially in regions where vulnerable communities have experienced climate-related water stress and are far removed from municipal services," said Saadia Madsbjerg, President of The Coca-Cola Foundation.

Working with local partner Muslim Aid, charity: water and The Coca-Cola Foundation are committed to improving sustainable water access and sanitation in underserved communities in Balochistan, an arid province in

Pakistan at risk of water scarcity. The project will not only bring clean water closer to home for thousands of people but also contribute to community development and improved public health. "We are excited to launch this partnership with The Coca-Cola Foundation," said Scott Harrison, founder and CEO of charity: water. "Together, we will make a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of people in Pakistan by ensuring they have reliable access to one of life's most essential resources—clean water."

Local partner Muslim Aid will play a crucial role in rehabilitating and implementing community and government water systems and building the capacity of relevant stakehold-

ers to manage the systems, ensuring they are sustainable and meet the needs of the communities they serve. Bibi, a woman from a community that will benefit from this project said, "We face severe water shortages in our village forcing us to travel 1.5 kilometers, taking 30-40 minutes, twice daily, to fetch water."

The project is part of charity: water's ongoing commitment to providing clean and safe water to people in need around the world. With the support of partners like The Coca-Cola Foundation and its network of local partner organizations, charity: water continues to make strides toward achieving its mission.



PCB reacts to former chairman Khalid Mahmood's comments on Pakistan cricket team

Asim Tanveer

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has expressed its disappointment regarding comments made by former PCB Chairman Mr Khalid Mahmood about the national cricket team in a recent interview with the Private News Television Channel.

These remarks come at a crucial time when the national side prepares to face T20 world champions England, leading into the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

At a time when the entire nation is rallying behind the national men's team, Mr Khalid Mahmood, who served as PCB Chairman 25 years ago, has made irresponsible comments aimed at seeking attention. His remarks are disheartening, disrespectful and demotivating, clearly lacking in cricketing insight and knowledge.

By outrightly predicting that the national side has no chances in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 without any cricketing basis, Mr Khalid Mahmood



has overlooked the significant progress and preparation made by our players and coaching staff, as well as the potential for new talents to emerge and make a substantial impact.

Such comments from a former PCB Chairman are discouraging for our players and disrespectful to those who have faith in their capabilities and are prepared to support them throughout this journey.

As a former PCB Chairman, the PCB expected Mr Khalid Mahmood to be more supportive and encouraging towards the Pakistan men's cricket team, rather than making comments that are factually incorrect, ill-informed and potentially aimed at creating a feeling of doom and gloom.

Karachi takes its first stride on the global running stage with the historic ONE RUN Half Marathon

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Karachi made history by hosting the world's largest half marathon, ONE RUN, for the first time, thanks to a landmark partnership with the Hero League that propelled Pakistani sports onto the global stage, drawing an impressive 1200+ runners to the starting line! In the vibrant city of Karachi, a thrilling running event took place, as enthusiasts embarked on the picturesque Emaar Route. Nestled serenely by the seaside, the starting point at the Emaar Sales unfolded like a canvas of wonder, boasting stunning vistas, immaculately maintained streets, and ample space to unfurl their stride. The route guaranteed a memorable experience for everyone involved. Participants had the opportunity to overcome one of four distances: 1, 5, 10, or 21.1 kilometers.

We are thrilled to announce the winners of the 21 KM category:

Female Category:
- First Position: Mumtaz Naimat (Time: 01:17:17)
- Second Position: Sehrish (Time: 02:01:49)
- Third Position: Qandeel (Time: 02:06:07)
Male Category:
- First Position: Israr Khattak (Time: 01:17:17)



- Second Position: M Sajjad (Time: 01:19:12)

- Third Position: Adnan (Time: 01:21:21)
Sports in Pakistan and the Hero League congratulate the winners and all participants for their remarkable achievements and sportsmanship. "We were thrilled to partner with «One Run» to put Pakistan on the global sports map," said Shoaib Nizami, CEO, of Sports in Pakistan.

"This event not only promoted our sports talent but also showcased our country's beauty and warm hospitality to the world, setting a benchmark for future events on an international platform."

Sports in Pakistan had the privilege of bringing pride to Pakistan by being among 15 other countries to participate in the historic half marathon, alongside Kyrgyzstan, Russia, China, Brazil, Egypt, Serbia, Belarus, Bahrain, Qatar, UAE,

Cameroon, Nepal, Armenia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. This global event drew an impressive turnout of over 180,000 people worldwide, and we are honored to have played a role in putting Pakistan on the international sports map.

The One Run International Half Marathon in Karachi was an unforgettable experience, uniting runners, and sports enthusiasts from around the globe. We celebrated a historic moment for sports in Pakistan.

Govt Degree Girls College Al Noor Block 19 Hosts Successful Chess Workshop and Sports Certificate Ceremony

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Government Girls Degree College Al Noor Block 19, in collaboration with the Sindh Chess Association, and Mastermind FIDE Chess Academy of Pakistan jointly organized one-day Chess workshop and sports certificate ceremony for its students. The event, held under the supervision of Principal Dr. Rizwana Zahid aimed to promote sportsmanship and excellence among students.

Additional Director Finance, Ehsan Ahmed Sheikh, graced the occasion as the chief guest, while Imtiaz Sheikh Manager Atlas Honda, was the honorable guest. Madam Zeno-bia, National Women Chess Master and National Champi-



on, inspired the students with her presence, and Mr. Aftab, Secretary Karachi Chess Association, and Mr. Rizwan, Chess Arbiter, also attended. Wasif

Nisar, International Arbiter FIDE delivered a lecture and taught students about chess strategies. Karachi University title holders Chess-Girls

Ms. Uraiba Hassan and Ms. Aisha motivated the students with their achievements. Abid Naem, Secretary Dodge Ball Association, also attended the

workshop and Ceremony as guests of honour.

Appreciations certificates and medals was also distributed to the students who participated and achieve victories in the 6th Sindh College Games.

The event concluded by Director Physical Education Batool Kazim and the sports committee congratulating the students on their hard work and victories in sports. The chief guest and other dignitaries appreciated the efforts of the Principal, DPE, and staff in creating opportunities for students to excel.

The college administration expressed gratitude to the guests and organizers for making the event a success, enjoyed by both students and teachers alike."

Uniting Nations through Sports: Pakistan's Sporting Diplomacy Beyond Borders

Saba Bibi

In today's complex geopolitical landscape, traditional diplomacy often encounters significant challenges. However, sports have emerged as a unique and powerful tool for fostering international goodwill and understanding. Pakistan, a country with a rich sporting heritage, has effectively used cricket and other sports to build bridges with countries around the globe. Through sports diplomacy, Pakistan has showcased its commitment to promoting peace, friendship, and cooperation on the international stage. **Cricket: A Symbol of Unity**

Cricket is more than just a game in Pakistan; it's a deeply ingrained part of the country's culture and history. This sport serves as a unifying force that transcends borders and brings people together. The passion for cricket in Pakistan resonates with fans worldwide, creating a shared bond that goes beyond political differences. Iconic matches between Pakistan and rival nations like India not only captivate audiences but also provide opportunities for diplomatic engagement and cultural exchange. For instance, the historic cricket matches between Pakistan and India have often served as informal diplomatic channels, allowing for moments of camaraderie amidst political tensions. When Pakistani and

Indian teams meet on the cricket field, it's not just a game but a spectacle that captures global attention and fosters a spirit of sportsmanship and mutual respect.

Beyond Cricket: Diversifying Diplomatic Outreach

While cricket remains the cornerstone of Pakistan's sports diplomacy, the country has also embraced other sports to broaden its diplomatic reach. Sports like hockey, squash, and football have provided additional avenues for Pakistan to engage with nations beyond the cricketing sphere. Participation in international competitions, hosting sporting events, and promoting sports exchange programs have all demonstrat-

ed Pakistan's commitment to leveraging sports for fostering global connections. For example, Pakistan's rich history in field hockey, where it has won multiple Olympic medals and World Cups, has opened doors for diplomatic interactions with countries where hockey is popular. Similarly, Pakistan's legendary squash players have helped build bridges with nations that follow the sport keenly, creating opportunities for cultural exchange and mutual respect.

Innovative Approaches to Sports Diplomacy

To further enhance its sports diplomacy efforts, Pakistan can explore innovative approaches to engaging with the international community. Cultural

sports exchanges, where athletes from different countries share their skills and experiences, can foster deeper understanding and friendship. Joint training programs can build solidarity and camaraderie among athletes from various nations. Organizing sports diplomacy summits can bring together sports diplomats, athletes, and policymakers to discuss ways to leverage sports for peace and cooperation. Moreover, leveraging the popularity of sports icons can amplify Pakistan's diplomatic messages. Sports festivals celebrating diversity and inclusivity can highlight Pakistan's commitment to global unity. Such initiatives not only showcase Pakistan's hospitality

Timber Wolves bag Ramadan Cup Basketball Club title

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Timber Wolves Islamabad defeated YMCA Lahore in a decisive battle to win the club category final of the All Pakistan 3x3 Ramadan Cup Basketball Tournament here at Pakistan Sports Complex on Sunday. In the final of the club category of the six-day tournament organized by the Federal Basketball Association, YMCA Lahore dominated in the final till mid of the match with 10-6 points but Ali Hamza Kazmi showed some impressive performances in the last two minutes to help six consecutive points for Timber Wolves team and changed the game in their favour by won the final with 18 points against 14.



Ali Hamza Kazmi scored 14 points and Sher Shehzad scored four points for the winning side while Khalid Saadi scored seven points and Muhammad Salman scored five points for YMCA. President Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF), Brigadier (Rtd) Muhammad Iftikhar Mansoor who was the chief guest of the closing ceremony appreciated the efforts of the tournament organizing secretary Uj E Zahoor and all other members for providing the best arrangements for this tournament and said that Pakistan Basketball Federation will continue their efforts to promote basketball in the country especially to organize such events in the future as well so that the youth get an opportunity to show the essence of their abilities. Deputy Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Muhammad Saeed Akhtar, Pakistan Basketball Federation Associate Secretary and Organizing Committee Secretary Uj E Zahoor, President Federal basketball Association Ejaz Rafi Butt, PBBF Chairman Selection Committee Col. (R) Shujaat Ali Rana, National Coach Malik Muhammad Riaz, Muhammad Azam Dar and other dignitaries were also attended the closing ceremony. Earlier in the semifinals of the club tournament, Timber Wolves thrashed Bulls A by 18-11 points and YMCA beat Reapers Red by 20-12 points.

Shahid Afridi welcomes Virat Kohli's statement about visiting Pakistan

A Sports

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi on Saturday unequivocally praised Indian batting maestro Virat Kohli for his expressed willingness to visit Pakistan.

Afridi, at a tape-ball event in Karachi, confidently remarked that he was not surprised by Kohli's gesture.

"I expected such a statement from Virat. I welcome Virat, whether he comes to the PSL or with the Indian team," Afridi said.

For the unversed, Virat Kohli revealed his desire to visit Pakistan during a video call with Pakistani mountaineer Shehroze Kashif in 2022.

"Give my regards to your family and all your friends. Hopefully, we will visit Pakistan soon; everyone's started visiting now," Kohli said while talking to Kashif.

Meanwhile, Shahid Afridi also expressed support for young opening batter Saim Ayub and expressed confidence in his talent.

"Saim has a lot of talent. I hope he performs well. Pakistan need a batter who can play well in the first six overs," Afridi said. Ayub is currently in England with the Pakistan squad, where they are scheduled to play a four-match T20I series against the host nation, starting on May 22.

The national men's cricket team reached here on Wednesday, following their 2-1 series victory over Ireland in the three-match series.

After the conclusion of the England series, the Pakistan team will depart for the United States of America (USA) to participate in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The 2009 champions will start their campaign against co-host USA on June 4 before taking on arch-rivals India on June 9.

Pakistan squad
Babar Azam (c), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Usman Khan.

England win toss, elect to bat against Pakistan in third T20I

A Sports

LEEDS: England women have won the toss and elected to bat first against Pakistan in the third T20I of the three-match series held at Headingley on Sunday.

PLAYING XI'S

England: Maia Bouchier, Danielle Wyatt, Alice Capsey, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Heather Knight (capt), Amy Jones (wk), Danielle Gibson, Sophie Ecclestone, Charlie Dean, Sarah Glenn, Lauren Bell

Pakistan: Sidra Ameen, Ayesha Zafar, Sadaf Shamas, Muneeba Ali (wk), Gull Feroza, Nida Dar (capt), Aliya Riaz, Fatima Sana, Diana Baig, Waheeda Akhtar, Sadia Iqbal.

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches 16, England 15, Pakistan 1



and organizational capabilities but also reinforce its message of peace and cooperation through the universal language of sports.

Pakistan's sporting diplomacy, anchored by cricket and diversified through other sports, holds immense potential for building international ties and promoting harmony among nations. By embracing the universal language of sports, Pakistan can continue to strengthen its diplomatic relations, foster goodwill,

and contribute to a more interconnected and peaceful world. Through innovative and inclusive sports diplomacy initiatives, Pakistan can enhance its global standing and build lasting bridges of friendship and understanding.

I am Saba Bibi, currently pursuing Bachelor's in Defence and Diplomatic Studies from Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi
Contact email: sababibi521@gmail.com

Alhamdulillah

LAHORE: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi welcomes Pakistani students returning from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan at the Lahore Airport.



Photo: PID

Two more flights carrying students from Bishkek reach Pakistan

Bureau Report

LAHORE/ ISLAMABAD: Two more special flights carrying students from Kyrgyzstan successfully reach Pakistan.

According to the details, the two special flights KA-4575 and KA-6571 carrying approximately 360 Pakistani students from Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan, landed at Islamabad and Lahore International Airport, respectively.

The student's families and relatives are present at the airport to receive their loved ones who arrived in Lahore and Islamabad.

Meanwhile, separate counters have been set up in the international arrival lounge for the passengers of the flight.

Additionally, the FIA has issued orders to hasten the immigration process for students arriving from Bishkek.

Students arrived in Islamabad from Kyrgyzstan have expressed their frustration and disappointment over the lack of assistance from the Pakistan Embassy in Bishkek.

They revealed that a large number of their peers are still trapped in hostels in Kyrgyzstan, with no help

forthcoming from the Pakistani government.

"We were completely on our own," said one of the students. "The Pakistan Embassy in Bishkek did not help us, the way they have to. We had to resist ourselves and buy our own tickets worth Rs 95,000 to return home."

The students described the dire situation in Kyrgyzstan, emphasizing that their lives were in danger.

"The situation was not under control. It was chaotic and we were constantly worried for our safety," another student added.

The lack of governmental support has left many students feeling abandoned. "The government of Pakistan has not taken any steps to assist us," they highlighted. "A lot of our friends are still stuck there, and their lives are at risk too."

Earlier in the day, more than 10,000 Pakistani students are currently stuck in Bishkek city of Kyrgyzstan amid a tense situation, sources quoted the report of a government agency.

The government agency released the preliminary report of the situation in Bishkek, revealing that more than 150,000 international

students are currently studying in Kyrgyzstan.

Sources quoting the government agency revealed that around 10,000 Pakistani students are currently in Kyrgyzstan, alongside approximately 15,000 Indian students.

Sources recalled the initiation of the riots in Bishkek stated that, four days ago, local and Egyptian students engaged in a discussion regarding Gaza, which later escalated into a dispute.

On the night of May 17 and 18, more than 300 local students reportedly attacked hostels.

President directs Pakistani embassy in Bishkek to ensure students' security

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the instructions of President Asif Ali Zardari, the President House Sunday contacted the Pakistani ambassador in Kyrgyzstan expressing concern over the violent situation in the country.

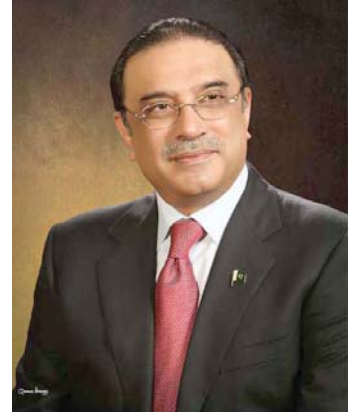
The President House stressed the need to take immediate measures to protect Pakistani students in Bishkek besides providing a conducive environment for Pakistani students to continue their education.

The president's directives came after reports of unrest and violence in Kyrgyzstan, which has put the safety of Pakistani students at risk.

The Pakistani ambassador in Bishkek told the President House that the security situation of the Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan was improving.

He said the embassy was in close contact with the Kyrgyz authorities and was taking measures to ensure the security of the students.

He said the Kyrgyz government



and universities would arrange online classes for the students who were returning to Pakistan.

Violent clashes have erupted between student groups in Kyrgyzstan's Bishkek, with reports of attackers using batons. The attackers forcefully entered the hostel rooms and wounded several international students including Pakistanis.

China invested in Pakistan in difficult times: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has said that China invested in Pakistan under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project when the country was passing through difficult times, which helped to turnaround the local economy and put it on the sustainable growth and development trajectory. "When China decided to invest \$25 billion in Pakistan, this is [in] 2013, when we had 18 hours of power shortages and frequent suicide bombings at that time they decided to come to Pakistan and support Pakistan," he stated in an interview with VOA.

This shows they have trust and confidence in Pakistan, he said adding that recent bullish performance of the country's stock exchange showed that the local investors had full confidence in the direction the government was following. "I think it is the same sense of confidence

that Chinese investors and Chinese government has in this government," he said adding that "China considers Pakistan as a strategic friend and has confidence in Pakistan." Regarding the security of the Chinese nationals, the minister reaffirmed the government's commitment for ensuring security of Chinese nationals and said that a special security unit as well as local law enforcement were tasked with ensuring their safety. To another question regarding issues of security threats, the minister maintained that when you were fighting terrorism, the terrorists always tried to find a way somewhere. Ahsan Iqbal said that the Chinese government had made it very clear that such cowardly incidents would not deter them from pursuing CPEC. The minister further informed that Pakistan was not opposed to Afghanistan's inclusion in a Chinese-funded mega-development project, but would like Beijing to persuade Kabul to crack down on terrorist groups operating on its soil.

'Clinic on Wheels' program providing modern health facilities to people: Khawaja Asif

Bureau Report

SIALKOT: Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that the "Clinic on Wheels" programme is providing modern healthcare facilities to people at their doorsteps.

He said this while addressing the inaugural ceremony of the Chief Minister Punjab Initiative "Clinic on Wheels" project in Sialkot here today.

The ceremony was attended by Member Provincial Assemblies (MPAs)



Muhammad Manshau- lah Butt, Chaudhary Faisal Ikram, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain,

Chief Officer (CO) Health Dr. Rehan Azhar, Program In-charge "Clinic on Wheels" Sialkot District Dr. Muhammad Adnan besides local officials of the health department and field staff.

He said that the condition of the District Headquarters (DHQ) hospital is a matter of concern.

"On the instructions of the Chief Minister, I will visit the DHQ hospital tomorrow and steps will be taken to improve its condition.

Maryam Nawaz is taking initiatives by following in the

footsteps of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Nawaz Sharif. Apart from dental, eye facilities, mammography facilities will also be available at the clinic," he said.

"Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz will bring a pleasant change in the life of the common man through the clinic in South Punjab.

Maryam Nawaz has laid the foundation of politics of service in three months. The focus of the Punjab government is on educational institutions, hospitals and roads.

Attock Campus of PIMS University to be launched soon: governor

Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Chancellor and Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan presided over an important meeting about Attock Campus of Pir Meher Ali Shah Aird Agriculture University Rawalpindi at Governor House Lahore. He reviewed the progress on the project. He directed to complete the Attock campus as soon as possible and activate the campus and launch the classes. He said that higher education plays a key role in the development of the country. It is very important to provide higher education facilities in remote areas. In the meeting, National Assembly member from Attock Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Pro Vice Chancellor Pir Meher Ali Shah Aird Agriculture University Rawalpindi Dr. Mohammad Naem, Special Secretary Agriculture Department Dr. Shahenshah Faisal Azim, Additional Secretary Agriculture Captain Waqas, Governor Secretariat to Principal Secretary to Governor Captain (R) Saqib Zafar, Special Secretary Academics Abdul Rehman Shah, Additional Secretary Universities Tariq Mehmood and other officers were present.

Deadly Israeli attacks have forced nearly half of Rafah's population to flee: UN

UNRWA

UNITED NATIONS, MAY 19 (APP): Roughly 800,000 people have been forced to flee Rafah since Israel launched a military offensive on 6 May, the head of the UN Palestine Refugee Agency (UNRWA) said Saturday in a renewed appeal for greater protection of civilians in besieged Gaza, safe humanitarian access and, ultimately, a ceasefire. Once again, nearly half of the population of Rafah or 800,000 people are on the road, UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini wrote in his post on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter. He said that following evacuation orders demanding people to flee to so-called safe zones, people mainly went to the middle areas in Gaza and Khan Younis, including destroyed buildings.

When people move, they are exposed, without safe passage or protection, he said. Every time, they have to start from scratch, all over again. Lazzarini said the areas that people have escaped to do not have safe

water supplies or sanitation facilities.

He cited the example of Al-Mawassi, describing it as a sandy 14 square kilometre agricultural land, where people are left out in the open with little to no buildings or roads. The town, located on Gaza's southern coast, lacks the minimal conditions to provide emergency humanitarian assistance in a safe and dignified manner, he stated. The UNRWA chief said that more than 400,000 lived in Al-Mawassi before the recent escalation, but now it is crammed and cannot absorb more people which is also the same in Deir al Balah. The claim that people in Gaza can move to safe or humanitarian zones is false. Each time, it puts the lives of civilians at serious risk, Lazzarini stated. Gaza does not have any safe zones, Lazzarini said adding, "No place is safe. No one is safe." The situation is again being made far worse by the lack of aid and basic humanitarian supplies, he continued, noting that humanitarians do not have any more supplies to give out, including food and other basic items. Meanwhile, key crossings into Gaza remain closed or

are unsafe to access as they are located near or in combat zones. Lazzarini also highlighted the critical need for fuel, which is essential for aid distribution. He said only 33 aid trucks had made it to southern Gaza since 6 May - a small trickle amid the growing humanitarian needs and mass displacement. "While we welcome reports on first shipments arriving at the new floating dock, land routes remain the most viable, effective, efficient and safest aid delivery method", he said. Earlier on Saturday, the UN Spokesperson's Office said the World Food Programme (WFP) confirmed that 10 truckloads of food had been transported to its warehouse the previous day via the floating dock, which was installed by the United States military. Some of the shipments included high-energy biscuits for WFP to distribute, but there were also commodities for other humanitarian partners to distribute, which included rice, pasta, and lentils, the note said. Lazzarini emphasised that the land crossings into Gaza must re-open and be safe to access.

We Pray for the Safety of Iranian President and His Colleagues: CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "The people of Punjab are praying for the safety of Iranian President Syed Ibrahim Al-Raisi and his associates," said Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She added, "They are with the people of Iran in this hour of difficulty and trouble."



Punjab, Japan discuss boosting trade, investment relations: chief minister

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "Punjab is emerging as a major consumer market. There are good investment opportunities for Japanese companies in Punjab," said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in a meeting with Japanese Ambassador H. E. Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro, in which all possible opportunities for strengthening trade, business and investment relations were discussed. She added, "Skilled young manpower of Punjab can perform unprecedentedly in Japanese institutions."

Exchange of cultural and educational delegations between Punjab and Japan were also discussed in the meeting. Madam Chief Minister said, "People-to-people interaction between Punjab and Japan is indispensable for the development of bilateral relations." Moreover, the promo-



tion of student-faculty programs between Punjab and Japan was also agreed in principle in the meeting.

Ambassador Wada Mitsuhiro said, "Japan attaches great importance to its relations with Pakistan." He added, "We are determined to collaborate with Punjab government for the development of technology."

H. E. Mr. Wada Mitsuhiro apprised Madam Chief Minister, "Eleven Pakistani students are studying in Japan on MEXT scholarships for Masters/ PhD degrees." He added, "A number of Japanese projects are ongoing for public welfare in Pakistan."