



Acting President for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia

Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday called for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. Pakistan and Malaysia, he said, enjoyed cordial cooperation at all international fora, which needed to be further strengthened. (Details on Page 8)



Dar urges Kyrgyz FM to punish perpetrators involved in attacks on Pakistani students

Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday urged his Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubaev to take a swift action against the perpetrators involved in the recent attacks on Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan. Dar, who arrived here for the regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held a meeting with the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Condolences

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Monday to offer condolences to Iranian Ambassador H.E Raza Amiri Mughaddam on the martyrdom of Iranian President Dr. Ibrahim Raisi.



Photo: Online

PM visits Iranian Embassy to condole deaths of President Raisi & FM in tragic incident

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the Embassy of Iran in Islamabad to condole the deaths of President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in a tragic incident on Sunday. "I am deeply shocked and saddened by the tragic news of the martyrdom of my brother, President of Iran, Dr. Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amir Abdollahian and other senior Iranian officials, in a helicopter crash," the prime minister said during his visit.

He expressed his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and the people of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the time of sorrow and grief. "Our sympathies and prayers are with the family members of the martyrs and the people of Iran."

The prime minister said Dr Seyed Ebrahim Raisi was a brilliant scholar and a visionary leader. "Today, Pakistan

has lost a friend like Dr Raisi, a sincere brother with high qualities."

PM Shehbaz said that his services to his own nation as well as to the strengthening of Pakistan-Iran relations and regional cooperation would always be remembered.

He said President Raisi's visit to Pakistan last month helped further strengthen bilateral relations.

May Allah grant the departed souls a high place in paradise, the prime minister prayed.

Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the Pakistani nation for standing with his country during the difficult time.

President Dr Raisi also considered Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif as the best human being and a friend of Iran, he remarked.

He said he respected the sentiments and words of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the late President Raisi.

Martyred while serving nation

President Raisi dies in helicopter crash

IRNA

TEHRAN: Ebrahim Raisi, the eighth president of Iran, has been martyred after a helicopter carrying him and his entourage crashed in Varzaqan region in East Azarbaijan Province, north-west of the country.

Raisi's helicopter, along with two more copters, was en route to Tabriz City on Sunday after he inaugurated Qiz Qalasi Dam at the border with the Azerbaijan Republic earlier in the day.

Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, East Azarbaijan Province's Governor Malek Rahmati, and Mehdi Mousavi, the head of Raisi's bodyguard team were on board the crashed aircraft as well. Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem, the Supreme



Leader's representative in the province also accompanied them.

Local officials present at the crash site have confirmed the martyrdom of Raisi and his accompanying team.

Ebrahim Raisi, 63, was born in the holy city of Mashhad. He was elected president in 2021. Before that, he served as the judiciary chief, the general prosecutor and the vice-chairman of the Assembly of Experts. Raisi was also a member of the Expediency Council.

In September 2023, on the occasion of Government Week in Iran, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei praised the Raisi administration's performance in various sectors including economy and foreign policy.

China to provide all necessary support, assistance for Iran's rescue efforts

Xinhua

BEIJING: China is deeply concerned over the "hard landing" of the helicopter carrying President Ebrahim Raisi and hopes President Raisi and the others aboard are safe and sound, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson said in a statement on Monday. "We are closely

following the situation and will provide all necessary support and assistance for Iran's rescue efforts," according to the statement.

According to media reports, a helicopter carrying Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and other senior officials suffered a "hard landing" in the north-western province of East Azarbaijan on Sunday.

Pakistan flags fly at half mast to mourn Iranian president's death

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan flags flew at half mast on Monday to mourn the death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi and his companions. "Pakistan will observe a

day of mourning and the flag will fly at half mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with Brotherly Iran," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said in a post on X.

People of Russia, Pakistan sympathize with Iranians over tragic accident

IRNA

TEHRAN: People of Russia and Pakistan have expressed sympathy with Iranians over the martyrdom of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, and their companions in the Sunday helicopter crash.

Following the incident, the Iranian Embassy in the Russian Federation raised the flag of the Islamic Republic of Iran at half-mast as a sign of mourning.

Some Russian citizens also presented flowers in front of the Iranian embassy in Moscow as a sign of sympathy for the Iranian people.

Earlier on Monday, Russia's President Vladimir Putin in a message extended his deepest condolences to the Supreme Leader and the Iranian nation over the major tragedy. Putin said President Raisi was a prominent politician who served his country during his lifetime. He was Russia's true friend and made serious efforts to develop the level of strategic cooperation between Moscow and Tehran, he said.

The flag of Pakistan is half-raised in mourning for the martyrdom of Ayatollah Raisi, and Iran's embassy in Islamabad also opened a memorial book for the martyrs of the helicopter accident.

The Pakistani officials emphasized that they are saddened by the martyrdom of Ayatollah Raisi and his colleagues.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has declared a day of mourning in Pakistan as a sign of respect for Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, who has died in a helicopter crash. The wreckage of the helicopter carrying President Raisi and his entourage was found earlier in the day following a massive search and rescue operation overnight in the rugged terrain of the Dizmar forest in East Azerbaijan Province.

FM Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presided over a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSEs) at Finance Division today.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Housing & Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Minister for Economic Affairs Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema, Chairman SECP, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers of the relevant ministries.

The Committee approved the proposal of the Power Division for nomination of independent directors for certain electricity distribution companies for onward submission to the cabinet. The committee didn't approve the proposal presented by the Ministry of Railways to categorize four Railway companies as strategic and essential and directed to submit a transformation plan for these four companies before the CCoSEs.

The proposal of the Ministry of Science and Technology was deferred with the direction to submit a business plan to the committee regarding the reforms planned by the Ministry of Science and Technology for STEDEC. While approving the proposal of Ministry of Information & Broadcasting, the CCoSEs recognized the strategic nature of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) and Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and directed the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MoIB) to present a viable business plan to the committee for efficient management of these enterprises.

Poet abduction case: IHC summons secretary defence and interior, slams intelligence agencies

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) strongly criticized the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the country's top intelligence agency, during a hearing on Monday regarding the disappearance of poet Ahmed Farhad.

According to Farhad's wife, who filed a petition in the IHC seeking her husband's recovery after he went missing a week ago, the ISI claimed to have no information about his whereabouts. Lawyers Iman Mazari and Hadi Ali Chatha represented the petitioner in court. The case has sparked widespread outrage, with many demanding government action to locate Farhad and hold those responsible accountable. Known for his progressive views and vocal criticism of the government and establishment, Farhad is a well-known poet and writer.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, presiding over the case, expressed frustration with the ISI's response, stating that the agency's conduct went beyond a simple matter and accused them of "running the country" instead of upholding the law.

In questioning the ISI's claim of having no knowledge about Farhad's disappearance, Justice Kayani found it hard to believe, highlighting the inconsistency with police records of numerous missing persons. He challenged the agency, asking why they were not taking action despite evidence to the contrary.

The court further emphasized that sector commanders should not be elevated to a position of excessive authority, stating that they were not living on the moon and should not be treated like kings. The judge questioned the rank of a sector commander, suggesting they should be at most an 18-grade officer and not placed on an unattainable pedestal.

Iran envoy writes letter to UN, UNSC following martyrdom of President Raisi, FM Amirabdollahian

IRNA

NEW YORK: Iran's Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN in a letter to the Security Council and the Secretary General of the United Nations following the martyrdom of President Ayatollah Raisi and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hossein Amirabdollahian said while the Iranian nation is mourning this tragic loss, the necessary measures by The government is based on the constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran to properly manage the affairs of the country in the absence of the president.

President of Turkmenistan sent condolences to the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedov and National Leader of the Turkmen people, Chairman of the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov sent their condolences to the leadership of the Islamic Republic of Iran in connection with the death of the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran Ebrahim Raisi as a result of a helicopter accident that occurred on May 19 of this year in the East Azerbaijan province of Iran.

AJK president, PM announce one-day of national mourning over Iranian president's death

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry and prime minister Chudhary Anwar ul Haq have expressed their profound grief and sorrow over the tragic death of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, foreign minister and others who lost their lives in a helicopter crash. Terming the demise of Iranian president as a great loss, the duo said that Raisi's death was a huge loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim world. "With his demise, the Muslim Ummah lost a great leader and thinker", they said, adding that the Iranian president would be dear-



ly missed and fondly remembered for his efforts to unite the Muslim Ummah and address the issues confronted by the Islamic world. Expressing their heartfelt condolences to the Iranian people they stated that Kashmiri people mourn the death of a great friend and a true sympathizer. The AJK president and prime minister prayed to Allah the almighty to rest the departed souls in eternal peace and raise their status in Janat-ul-firdous. Meanwhile, the AJK premier, while announcing one-day of national mourning, stated that the AJK flag will fly at half-mast as a mark of respect for President Raisi and his companions and in solidarity with bereaved people of Iran.

Iran's Raisi was great supporter of unity of Muslim Ummah: Sardar Attique

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister and President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has expressed deep shock and sorrow over the death of Iranian President Syed Ibrahim Raisi in a helicopter accident and said that President Ibrahim Raisi was a great supporter of the unity of the Muslim Ummah. Islam has lost a great leader. The Iranian President felt the pain of Muslims worldwide including the Palestinian and Kashmiri people, today the country mourns the loss of a great friend. He said that last month, the Iranian President visited Pakistan. Agha Raisi always gave a special place to Pakistan and its people. President Raisi's death is a great loss not only for Iran but also for the entire Muslim Ummah. He will be remembered in Iran, Pakistan and the Islamic world, may Allah forgive him and grant patience and perseverance to his family and the people of Iran in this hour of irreparable loss he added.



Bilawal congratulates PPP candidate on victory in NA-148 by-election



Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD/MULTAN: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended his heartfelt congratulations to PPP candidate Syed Ali Qasim Gillani on his historic victory in the NA-148 Multan by-election.

According to the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP, in his message, attributed this success to the relentless efforts of the Jiyalas of Multan and the steadfast support of the people for the PPP. "I hope Ali Qasim Gillani will become the voice of the people of Multan in the House," he added.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also extended his congratulations to Chairman of the Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani, as well as to all members of the Gillani family and the people of Multan, acknowledging their significant role in this achievement.

Secretary visits Children's Hospital to review ongoing construction work



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Secretary Health Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Punjab Ali Jan Khan visited Children's Hospital Multan.

Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Punjab Ali Jan Khan along with his technical team made a detailed visit to the Children's Hospital Multan and made a detailed review of the ongoing construction work in the Children's Hospital.

Secretary Ali Jan along with Dean Children Complex Professor Dr. Kashif Chishti and MS Dr. Kamran Asif also reviewed the ongoing construction work in Child Life Children Emergency, Newly constructed Medical Unit, OPD Department, New Thalassemia Unit and Old Block Children Hospital. Lia and gave instructions to the higher authorities of the building department to complete all the works as soon as possible and on time.

The Secretary visited various wards of the Children's Hospital and visited the patients and also inquired from the relatives of the sick children about the medical facilities and availability of medicines provided in the hospital.

CDA Chairman sets deadline for completion of bus depots

Asim Tanveer and Syed Nadeem Kazmi

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Monday directed the Member Engineering to provide a final timeline for the construction of bus depots and ensure that the depots and charging points are fully operational within the given timeline.

While chairing a meeting regarding the Islamabad Bus Service, he instructed that working plans be prepared to provide subsidies to deserving individuals, including students and the senior citizen.

Muhammad Ali Randhawa emphasized the need to establish an appropriate mechanism for subsidizing these groups.

The briefing informed that 30 EV buses have arrived in Pakistan and the remaining 70 buses will be reached soon.

It is informed that the tenders for the depots at I-9, Tramri Chowk, and Zero Point have been completed and the tender will soon be awarded to the lowest bidder.

Muhammad Ali instructed a comparative review with the Punjab Metro Bus Authority (PMA) model.

He also directed that work be done to extend the bus service route to the Diplomatic Enclave and make the Islamabad Bus Service an exemplary project. Muhammad Ali stressed that delays beyond the provided timeline will not be tolerated.



Condolence

KARACHI: A condolence reference held after the martyrdom of Iranian President Ibrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister and others in a helicopter crash in Khana Farahing Iran, children paying tribute on this occasion in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Victory of the Ali Qasim Gillani: Proof of the love and devotion of the people of Multan to Gillani

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Nasheed Arif Gondal, Deputy General Secretary of Pakistan People's Party Multan City distributed sweets Regarding celebration of Syed Ali Qasim Gillani's success in By-Election NA 148. Zawar Hussain Qureshi Advocate, Khalid Zafar Wains Advocate, Maher Iqbal Sargana Advocate, General Secretary of District Bar Arif Shah, Mumtaz Noor Tangra Advocate Advocate, Zakir Naqvi, Iqbal Mehdi Zaidi, Ahad Gondal, Mahar Sjjad Haraj, Rubina Nasir Khan and other lawyers were present, Nasheed Arif Gondal, Mirza Aziz Akbar Baig speaking on the occasion said that the victory of the Ali Qasim Gillani in By-Election NA 148 is proof of the love and devotion of the people of Multan to Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani. From the vision



of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to create a more just and equitable society, asserting Pakistan's autonomy on the global stage and striving for comprehensive national development. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's PPP was built on

Roti, Kapra, Makan. Which underscored his commitment to the basic needs of the people. Shaheed Mohtar-ma Benazir Bhutto initiated various social welfare, healthcare and education schemes. It is the vision of Paki-

stan Peoples Party to serve underprivileged sectors of society. Despite facing numerous challenges Shaheed Mohtar-ma Benazir Bhutto was a champion of democracy and women rights in Pakistan. While democracy was strengthened in the tenure of President Asif Ali Zardari because of his reconciliation policy. It was President Asif Ali Zardari who supported provincial autonomy and decentralization of power.

Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has served the people of South Punjab including Multan selflessly, it is the result of this that the people have blessed him with their love. NA148 By-Election under the supervision of Abdul Qadir Shaheen, Khawaja Rizwan Alam and Mirza Aziz Akbar Baig, Senior Advocate of Pakistan Bar Council, performed Election duty and is ready to make every kind of sacrifice to raise Bhutto's flag in the future.

Chairman Drug Court Judge Multan Saleem Ullah Bold Decisions in Cases of Fake and Substandard Medicines

Asim Tanveer and Syed Nadeem Kazmi

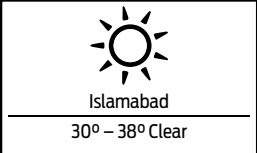
MULTAN: Chairman Drug Court Judge Multan Mohammad Saleem Ullah bold decisions in cases of fake and substandard drugs. In any case, the public cannot be left at the mercy of the mafia with substandard, fake medicines.

FIR 82/2024 against Rao Muhammad Jameel was registered on 07.04.2024 in the complaint of Police Station FIA Multan Circle Drug Inspector Ali Khalil, where an employee Salman and employee Muhammad Adil were arrested on the spot from a



house in Durana Ngana Multan. While the owner of the house, Muhammad Jameel, who was on interim bail, the Drug Court Judge Muhammad Saleem Ullah dismissed the bail application.

While the appeal of the accused involved in the case of non-standard drugs of Hamaz Pharmaceutical located in Multan was dismissed by the Drug Court Multan. It should be remembered that in 2023, Hamaz Pharmaceuticals had given medicines to the Government Mental Hospital Lahore for patients suffering from mental stress, in which some of the medicines were found to be mixed with prohibited medicines



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:26am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 5:00 pm
Maghrib 7:06 pm
Isha 8:44 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

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

Pakistan-Qatar expanded trade ties to benefit people of both countries-Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Qatar His Excellency Ali Mubarak Ali Essa Al-Khater has said that his country accords immense importance to its brotherly relations with Pakistan and the incumbent leadership of his country is keen to further enhance ties with Pakistan. He said that both Pakistan and Qatar should take advantage of each other's experiences in the field of business and economy for the mutual benefits of the people of two the countries.

He said this while talking to a delegation of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry headed by its President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari here on Monday. The Ambassador emphasized that ICCI should come up with its ideas relating to promotion of business between the two coun-

tries which will be shared with Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry for their quick materialization.

He added that Pakistan enjoys all the necessary potential for fast track growth, its people are most caring, smart, hospital and hard-working and the only required component is proper guidance and direction to encapsulate their energies.

On his part Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that Pakistan is proud of its fraternal bilateral relationship with Qatar having the potential to grow even stronger and meaningful, particularly in the areas of economy, trade and investment. He expressed the hope that Ambassador Al-Khater's tenure would further fortify the bonds of friendship and

collaboration between the two countries.

ICCI President added that commencement of direct flights of Qatar Airways from Islamabad to Malaysia and Indonesia will go a long way in promoting the connectivity for the betterment of all the stakeholders.

Group leader ICCI Khalid Iqbal Malik said that it is the proper time to pool Pakistan-Qatar collaborative efforts for the development of B2B ties.

Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that Qatar is a great country and that FIFA World Cup Qatar has further enhanced its global stature. He also praised the role Qatar has been playing for the solution of the Palestine issue.

ICCI executive member Fasihullah Khan was also included in the delegation.



COMSTECH International Workshop on Drug Design and Development Begins

PPA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH International Workshop on "Drug Design and Development: The Art and Science" started at COMSTECH secretariat on May 20.

COMSTECH Distinguished Scholar, Dr. M. Hafizur Rahman, Professor & Chairman, Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology, Dhaka International University, Dhaka, Bangladesh is delivering this workshop. In his introductory address Dr. Rahman said that the drugs are mostly developed in the western world. He pointed out that drugs are developed mostly to cater indigenous needs. He emphasized the need of developing drugs for the OIC member states indigenously.

Professor Dr. Hafizur Rahman has a long association with COMSTECH and ICCBS, University of Karachi. Through a collaboration between BIRDEM (Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetes, Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders) and ICCBS, he established a "Molecular Diabetology Laboratory" at PCMD (Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine & Drug Research). He also established mice islets isolation setup at PCMD for the first time in Pakistan, and identified several novel insulin secretagogues and explored their mechanisms.

The workshop is being attended by national and international scholars from OIC member states both in-person and online.

Suffering

ISLAMABAD: Citizens suffering from suspension of metro service in the Federal Capital owing to the protest at D Chowk. A large number of citizens were left helpless at the Faiz Ahmed Faiz metro station. Passengers jump on the highway fearing stampede.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Aga Khan University's hosts groundbreaking SIMPACT 2024 Conference

PPA

KARACHI: The Aga Khan University Centre for Innovation in Medical Education (CIME) launched its first-ever international conference, SIMPACT 2024, in Karachi, Pakistan, and Nairobi, Kenya. SIMPACT 2024 brings together a diverse array of simulation professionals, including doctors, nurses, educators, researchers, engineers, students, expert and industry leaders, to revolutionize healthcare education for a safer and more skilled future.

The conference, held from May 20 to 21, will serve as a dynamic platform foster-

ing collaboration, innovation and education. With a hybrid format blending in-person events at CIME in Karachi and Nairobi with virtual participation options, SIMPACT 2024 ensures global accessibility and inclusivity, drawing attendees from around the world.

Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, President and Vice-Chancellor of the Aga Khan University, officially opened SIMPACT 2024, praising the efforts of the CIME teams in organizing this groundbreaking event. "SIMPACT embodies the essence of simulation-based education, offering benefits such as enhanced patient safe-

ty, skill acquisition, team training, personalized learning, and fostering research and innovation.

Day one's highlights included the Joint Directors' Session titled "Simulation 360" transcending geographical boundaries with simultaneous sessions from Karachi and Nairobi. Building on the success of the 2023 Healthcare Simulation Week, SIMPACT introduced a highlight titled "Escape from Mars in 2087". Designed by seasoned educators and technical specialists, this challenging environment puts healthcare professionals' skills to the test, encouraging critical thinking,

teamwork, and problem-solving abilities.

Dr Faisal Ismail, Regional Director of CIME South Asia, remarked, "SIMPACT 2024 is not just a conference; it's a celebration of our collective commitment to excellence in simulation.

SIMPACT 2024 is more than just a conference; it's a catalyst for transformation in healthcare simulation. Attendees are poised to make meaningful contributions to patient care and safety, shaping a future where innovation, collaboration and education converge for a safer and more skilled healthcare landscape.

Umro Ayyar' promotional ceremony receives tremendous reception at NUST

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The star-studded promotional ceremony for the highly anticipated Pakistani film 'Umro Ayyar - A New Beginning' enthralled the audience at the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST) on Monday. The event, which took place at the university's main auditorium, witnessed an overwhelming turnout of enthusiastic students, faculty, staff and their families, eager to catch a glimpse of the cast and crew of the VR Chillii Production's film.

The event kicked off with a warm welcome by the chief guest NUST Pro-Rector Planning & Resources, Maj Gen (Retd) Muhammad Arif Malik, HI(M). In his remarks, he expressed his gratitude to the 'Umro Ayyar' team for being at NUST. He termed the production an exquisite blend of the technological and creative prowess of the film industry, and a testament to the richness of our cultural heritage.

Following the welcome address, the film's director, Azfar Jafferi, shared insights into the making of 'Umro Ayyar'.

The highlight of the ceremony was the appearance of the film's lead actors, who received thunderous applause as they took the stage. They included Usman Mukhtar, Sana Fakhar, and Faran Tahir to name a few.

Stakeholders call for comprehensive regulation of trans-fatty acids in foods

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Transform Pakistan campaign managed by civil society organizations, Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA), Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), Heartfile, UNICEF, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHA1) and many others urged Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) to take decisive steps towards regulating industrially produced trans-fatty acids (iTFA) to less than 2 per cent in all type of foods in Pakistan, without any further delay.

Areebah Shahid, Executive Director at PYCA, emphasized the importance of this comprehensive approach, stating, "The health of our nation is at stake, and it is imperative that we take decisive action to protect the well-being of our citizens.

Mukhtar Ahmed, Executive Director of CPDI, echoed these sentiments, highlighting the need for government intervention, "Regulating trans-fatty acids is a public health imperative.

Dr. Saba Amjad, CEO of Heartfile, emphasized the urgency of the matter, stating, "Trans-fatty acids pose a serious risk to cardiovascular health and contribute to a range of non-communicable diseases.

The TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign has been calling upon the government to ensure compliance with WHO best practices policy by setting iTFA limits of no more than 2 percent of total fats in all foods. By doing so, Pakistan can take a significant stride towards improving public health and creating a healthier future for all its citizens.

Drinking plenty of water can save eyes from dryness: Dr. Wajid Ali Khan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: As the temperatures rise and heat waves become more frequent, Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, known for its expert eye care services, has issued a warning to the public regarding the risks posed by heat waves to eyesight, emphasizing the importance of protecting their eyes during these challenging times.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC) have forecasted that Pakistan will face three heat wave spells in May and June, it said.

The third spell is anticipated to be particularly intense, lasting anywhere from 3 to 5 days. These prolonged periods of extreme heat can lead to various eye-related issues, making proactive eye care essential, said Dr. Wajid Ali Khan, Chief of Medical Services at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital.

Talking to media men, he said that these heat waves will bring with them many problems, including adverse effects on the eyes of the public.

He said that one of the most common eye problems during the summer is eye dryness, especially in environments with low humidity. Air conditioners and the use of contact lenses can both exacerbate this condition. Symptoms often include eye redness, a feeling of heaviness, a gritty feeling in the eyes, or even sensitivity to light, he added.

Furthermore, individuals who spend extended periods outdoors without adequate sun protection may be at risk of developing pterygium. Protecting one's eyes from the sun's harmful rays is crucial to averting this eye condition.

He said that eye infections become more common, especially when the eyes come into contact with water. There are a large number of pathogens in water, such as that are major causes of eye emergencies. This infection can result in permanent visual impairment or blindness.

Those who use contact lenses are especially vulnerable and should, under no circumstances, bathe wearing these lenses.



Pakistan Crescent debuts groundbreaking animated film 'The Glassworker' at Cannes

PPA

KARACHI: The Pakistan Crescent Collective inaugurated its presence at the Cannes Film Festival by hosting a groundbreaking panel discussion featuring the esteemed team from Mano Animation Studios, creators of Pakistan's first hand-drawn animated feature film, "The Glassworker." This momentous event provided attendees with an exclusive behind-the-scenes glimpse into the highly anticipated project ahead of its forthcoming Annecy World Premiere.

The panel discussion, moderated by celebrated filmmaker Mohammed Ali Naqvi, Chairman of the Pakistani Academy Selection Committee, delved into the innovative aspects and challenges encountered during the creation of "The Glassworker." Director Usman Riaz and Producer Khizer Riaz shared their insights, offering a



captivating narrative of their journey in bringing this landmark film to life.

"The Glassworker" presents a captivating tale set against the backdrop of a country inspired by Pakistan, focus-

ing on the compelling relationship between a father and son who run a glass workshop. Amidst the turmoil of an impending war, their lives are further complicated by the arrival of

an army colonel and his musically gifted daughter, Alliz. The film boasts a stellar voice cast including Art Malik, Sacha Dhawan, Anjali Mohindra, and Tony Jayawardena.

Usman Riaz expressed his gratitude, stating, "It is an honor to be presenting our journey at Cannes. For our first film 'The Glassworker' to receive so much love and wonderful support from our peers is truly special."

Khizer Riaz, Producer of "The Glassworker" and Mano Animation Studios founder, echoed this sentiment, expressing his gratitude to the Pakistan Crescent Collective for their support. "To be acknowledged and supported by the international film industry at the world's most prestigious film festival is truly a dream come true," he remarked.

"The Glassworker," a labor of love and dedication, will be released on July 26 in Pakistan.

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Why is the US Responsible for Raisi's death?

After an arduous search and rescue operation involving 42 ground teams, reconnaissance drones, and Turkish high-tech drones, the charred wreckage of the helicopter was finally located early today in blizzard conditions in an area called Tawal, near the Azerbaijan border. All passengers and crew, including President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian (60), the governor of Iran's East Azerbaijan province, officials, and bodyguards, were killed in the crash. May Allah bless their souls and grant them the highest place in Jannah. This indeed is one of the biggest tragedies to strike the Iranian nation in recent history.

This tragedy perhaps had not occurred had there been no sanctions imposed by the USA and the West. The Iranian air fleet, especially those flying machines having any sort of military and defense connotation were obsolete and needed upgradation or replacement which was not possible due to sanctions. It was therefore that the helicopter carrying the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi was 45 years old. It has earlier been used for commercial flights and later was earmarked for the presidential errands. Due to the sanction imposed on Iran since 1979, the sale of new helicopters, and provision of spare parts or upgradation of the helicopter could not be made, resultantly the helicopter was equipped with old age tracking and communication devices faced significant limitations.

The helicopter was equipped with outdated Emergency Locator Transmitters (ELTs), which often failed to activate during crashes and had high false alarm rates, complicating the location of downed aircraft. Radar tracking was limited by range and terrain, creating blind spots in mountainous or remote areas. Manual position reporting by

pilots was prone to human error and communication blackouts, lacking the precision needed for pinpointing crash locations. While Flight Data Recorders (FDRs) and Cockpit Voice Recorders (CVRs) are valuable for post-crash investigation, they did not aid in the immediate location of the aircraft.

Sanctions prevented the replacement or upgrading of the helicopter with modern tracking devices. Advanced GPS, ADS-B, and satellite communication technologies, like the Kannad Integra and Artex 345 ELTs, which use integrated GPS and dual-frequency transmitters for precise location tracking, were not available. Devices such as the Garmin GDL 52, offering comprehensive tracking and SOS functionalities, could have ensured effective rescue operations even in remote areas.

Additionally, due to sanctions, the weather forecast system was outdated and failed to provide accurate weather conditions. An accurate forecast might have led to postponing the flight until safer conditions prevailed.

This is not the only tragedy faced by Iranian nations due to the sanctions which had made air travel extremely dangerous and perilous, and have so far resulted in the loss of 2000 precious lives due to the accidents which could have been avoided if the flying objects were upgraded, refurbished or replaced with new ones.

Iranian media very professionally kept on changing the semantic of the incident from hard landing to accident and from accident to crash. The key differences lie in the severity of impact, extent of damage, likelihood of injuries, and the recoverability of the aircraft, with hard

landings being less severe than crashes, which typically involve complete destruction and severe consequences, thus has prepared the Iranian people for the worst case scenario.

There have also been conspiracy theories circulating not only in the social media but as well as traditional media saying that somehow Israel was involved in this crash and killing of President Raisi (Late) to avenge the Iranian attack on Israel with drones, rockets and cruise missiles a few days ago.

If this theory holds ground now or at any time in future the entire region will be plunged into total chaos. Iran would likely react with outrage, accusing Israel of an act of war, which could lead to military mobilization and retaliatory threats. The Iranian proxies in the middle east like Hamas, Hezbollah, Iraq Brigade, Houthis and in Syria who will do whatever in their power to avenge the death of second most important leaders who was known as ultra hardliner, highly religious and pro revolutionary was most likely the heir apparent of the religious head of Iran Ayatollah Khomeini who is 83 and facing health situations.

The regional implications would be significant, with potential destabilization across the Middle East. Globally, the United States, as a key ally of Israel, would be drawn into the conflict, facing pressure to support Israel while trying to prevent a full-scale war. US-Iran relations would likely deteriorate further, impacting diplomatic efforts and nuclear deal negotiations. Internationally, powers like Russia, China, and the European Union would call for restraint and engage in intense diplomatic efforts to de-escalate the situation.

The global oil markets would likely see a spike in prices due to fears of supply disruptions, affecting economies worldwide. Long-term effects could include accelerated nuclear proliferation in the Middle East and shifts in geopolitical alliances as countries reassess their security and foreign policy strategies.

This is highly unfortunate that Iran had lost its cherished leader as the Middle East remains unsettled by the Israel-Hamas war, during which Raisi under Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei launched an unprecedented drone-and-missile attack on Israel, pursued Iran's uranium enrichment dream to weapons-grade levels and supplied bomb-carrying drones to Russia for its war in Ukraine and armed militia groups across the region has heightened tension with the West.

The entire Iranian nation is in a state of shock and mourning, both within Iran and among its proxies around the world. An official mourning period has been declared, with public displays of grief and statements of condolences pouring in from Iran's allies and proxies.

This tragic event could lead to a period of significant uncertainty and potential power struggles within Iran, impacting both its domestic politics and foreign relations. The loss of such key figures may affect Iran's regional strategies and stability, with potential repercussions for its foreign policy and relations with neighboring countries. The international community will closely watch how Iran navigates this crisis, as the implications could extend far beyond its borders, affecting the broader geopolitical landscape.

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



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

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

Amongst the picturesque valleys and lush hills of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, a profound bond of affection and allegiance permeates the atmosphere—a testament to the enduring devotion that the denizens of AJK harbor for their motherland, Pakistan. Despite the intricate geographical and political dynamics of the region, the bond between Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan is marked by a profound connection forged through shared history, identity, and aspirations for a brighter future. AJK holds a distinctive position within the broader Kashmir conflict, representing the segment of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir under Pakistan's administration. Adjacent to the Indian-occupied territories of Jammu and Kashmir, AJK stands as a symbol of unity and resilience amid ongoing tensions and disputes. The enduring affection of AJK's people for Pakistan is rooted in a shared identity and destiny, steeped in the historical struggle self-determination. Since the partition of British India in 1947, the region of Jammu and Kashmir has been at the center of a contentious territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, resulting in decades of strife and instability. In AJK, the memories of this struggle persist in the collective consciousness, driving a steadfast dedication to the principles of freedom, sovereignty, and national solidarity. For the residents of AJK, Pakistan embodies more than just a homeland; it stands as a beacon of hope and solidarity in times of adversity. During natural disasters like earthquakes and floods, Pakistan's vital assistance to AJK showcases a steadfast commitment to the well-being and prosperity of its people. Likewise, Pakistan's steadfast advocacy for Kashmiri rights on the global stage earns admiration and gratitude from AJK's residents, who view Pakistan as a staunch ally and defender of their pursuit of justice and self-determination.

Furthermore, the deep cultural and economic ties between AJK and Pakistan foster a sense of belonging and kinship, enriching both societies. Whether through shared traditions in music, art, and cuisine or collaborative efforts in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, the relationship between AJK and Pakistan is marked by mutual respect, cooperation, and reciprocity. Across generations, AJK's residents embrace the values of inclusivity, diversity, and unity that define Pakistan's spirit, strengthening the bonds of brotherhood and solidarity.

Despite present challenges, AJK's unwavering love for Pakistan remains unshakable, serving as a wellspring of resilience and inspiration. As the region navigates the complexities of the Kashmir conflict, the enduring bond between AJK and Pakistan offers hope for a brighter future grounded in the principles of freedom, justice, and self-determination. Echoing the words of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan, who emphasized the importance of unity and discipline in preserving freedom, AJK continues to embody this spirit, igniting patriotism and reinforcing the ties that unite its people with Pakistan in the pursuit of a shared destiny.

Additionally, to the people of AJK, the Pakistan Army symbolizes not just a formidable defense force but also a source of national pride, sacrifice, and steadfast support in times of need. Whether offering crucial aid during natural calamities or safeguarding the region's borders against external threats, the Pakistan Army earns admiration and gratitude from AJK's populace for its selfless dedication and tireless service. Moreover, the Army's contributions to socio-economic development and infrastructure projects in AJK deepen the bond of trust and camaraderie between soldiers and civilians alike. Through initiatives spanning education, healthcare, and community development, the Pakistan Army has seamlessly woven itself into the social fabric of AJK, empowering local

communities and bolstering their resilience in the face of adversity. The strong bond between AJK's residents and the Pakistan Army is deeply ingrained in a shared ethos of sacrifice, bravery, and national cohesion. In many households across AJK, a proud legacy of military service persists, with successive generations heeding the call to defend their homeland and uphold the values of patriotism and bravery.

The sacrifices of the courageous men and women of the Pakistan Army resonate profoundly with the people of AJK, serving as a wellspring of inspiration and solidarity in their ongoing quest for freedom and dignity. Despite the intricacies of the Kashmir conflict and the challenges of maintaining security in a volatile region, the Pakistan Army's steadfast dedication to the welfare and prosperity of AJK's populace remains resolute. Whether through humanitarian aid, counterterrorism endeavors, or peacekeeping missions, the Pakistan Army continues to play a pivotal role in preserving the stability of the region and nurturing an environment of peace and progress for all. In navigating the complexities of the Kashmir conflict toward a peaceful resolution, AJK receives steadfast support from the Pakistan Army, committed to securing the region's future prosperity.

Recently, the people of Pakistan and AJK witnessed a prolonged protest led by the Awami Action Committee, culminating in both positive and negative outcomes. Tragically, there were casualties, yet amidst this, unity among the people of AJK and acknowledgment of their fundamental demands emerged. Misinterpretations arose, wrongly portraying these protests as anti-Pakistan or anti-Pak Army, which is erroneous. In the serene landscapes and vibrant cities of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), the voice of dissent and the quest for justice echoed as the Awami Action Committee (AAC) peacefully demonstrated, renewing the call for reform and accountability. Against a backdrop of ongoing challenges, the protest highlighted AJK's resilience and resolve to assert their rights and amplify their concerns in governance.

To be continued

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

Rania Ishtiaq

De-legitimizing Palestinian Resistance

Delegitimizing Palestinian resistance to Israel's occupation and policies is another facet of the country's hasbara approach. In order to justify strong measures against dissent and uphold control, the Israeli government characterizes Palestinian rallies, marches, and armed resistance as acts of terrorism or incitement. With this framing, Israel's use of force is intended to be justified while undermining global support for the Palestinian cause.

Use of Social Media

A deliberate attempt at controlling the narrative and suppress criticism is evident in the widespread use of social media and online platforms for the dissemination of propaganda and the whitening of Israel's image. The extent of Israel's hasbara approach is further demonstrated by the participation of Israeli superstars, like Gal Gadot, in the promotion of propaganda films.

Ethical Implications

Manipulation of Information
 Israel's use of hasbara, according to its critics, is selectively presenting facts and manipulating information to support its policies. Israel conceals the fundamental inequities of the occupation and the breaches of Palestinians' human rights by manip-

ulating the narrative through media outlets and public relations initiatives.

Dehumanization of Palestinians

Hasbara's tactics, which portray Palestinians as innately violent or frightening, frequently lead to the dehumanization of Palestinians. This dehumanization feeds the cycle of violence and discrimination against Palestinians and justifies the excessive use of force against them.

Erosion of International Law

International law and guidelines governing the use of force and the protection of civilian populations in war zones are undermined when hasbara is used as a justification for the killing of Palestinians. Israel creates a risky precedent by evading responsibility and scrutiny, undermining attempts to reach a fair and peaceful settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Conclusion: Reevaluating Hasbara's Role

In conclusion, Israel's use of hasbara to justify the murder of Palestinians creates serious moral issues and feeds the injustice and bloodshed in the area. Sincere attempts at rapprochement and peacemaking must place a higher priority on communication, observance of human rights, and a dedication to tackling the underlying causes of the conflict than on disinformation strategies.

The writer is student of Fatima Jinnah Women's University

73 **Seventy-Three Years:**

A Timeless Bond of Pakistan-China Diplomatic Relations

In the limelight of international relations, there exists a thread woven with the deepest hues of solidarity and trust. Pakistan and China, bound by an unbreakable bond, stand as testament to the enduring power of friendship amidst the tumult of global politics. From the towering peaks of the Himalayas to the bustling streets of Islamabad and Beijing, their diplomatic embrace echoes with the whispers of shared history and common aspirations.

Pakistan and China's diplomatic journey, which commenced on the 21st of May 1951, has transcended time, evolving into a formidable alliance with each passing day and year. This cherished relationship, rooted in mutual recognition and respect, has blossomed into an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, epitomizing the unwavering commitment of both nations' leadership to propel it forward. Pakistan, among the first nations to embrace the People's Republic of China, holds China dear as its Iron Brother, while China, in turn, cherishes Pakistan as one of its closest friends and partners. This deep-seated camaraderie is underpinned by feelings of mutual trust, respect, and goodwill, fostering a regular exchange of high-level visits and strategic consultations between the two neighbors.

Economically, China's stature as Pakistan's largest trading partner and a major investor, particularly in infrastructure and energy sectors, amplifies the bilateral synergy. The official launch of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project under President Xi Jinping's "One Road, One Belt" initiative, marks a significant milestone, elevating the bilateral relationship to unprecedented heights. CPEC, envisioned to enhance connectivity and infrastructure,

has catalyzed monumental developments, fostering socio-economic prosperity and job creation across Pakistan. This transformative journey, facilitated by a robust mechanism of Joint Cooperation Committees and Working Groups, underscores the depth of commitment towards mutual progress and shared prosperity. As Pakistan and China continue to script a narrative of unparalleled friendship and cooperation, their enduring partnership serves as a beacon of hope, inspiring a more harmonious global community.

Pakistan's diplomatic ties with China have stood the test of time, evolving into a robust alliance with multifaceted dimensions. Pakistan was one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China, their relationship has grown from strength to strength. Throughout the years, their partnership has become a cornerstone of regional stability and economic growth.

In the early years, the two nations established their camaraderie on the foundation of countering common threats and challenges. As the geopolitical landscape evolved, their alliance served as a strategic counterbalance to the influence of neighboring India. Moreover, China's substantial investments in Pakistan's infrastructure, including the transformative CPEC, have not only fueled Pakistan's economic growth but have also deepened the bond between the two nations.

Over time, their collaboration expanded beyond economic ventures to encompass defense and security cooperation. With a shared commitment to combatting terrorism and ensuring

regional security, China and Pakistan have engaged in intelligence sharing and military exchanges. Pakistan's pivotal role in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) further solidifies their partnership, with CPEC emerging as a flagship project under this ambitious endeavor.

Their friendship extends beyond bilateral interests, manifesting in unwavering diplomatic support in international forums. Through thick and thin, China and Pakistan have stood by each other, forging a bond based on trust, respect, and mutual benefit. As they continue to navigate the complexities of global politics, the China-Pakistan relationship remains a beacon of stability and cooperation in an ever-changing world.

- 1949: The People's Republic of China was established.

- 1950: Pakistan becomes one of the first countries to recognize the People's Republic of China.

- 1951: Diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China are formally established.

- 1962: The Sino-Indian War strengthens Pakistan's ties with China as Pakistan supported China during the conflict.

- 1963: The Sino-Pakistani Agreement is signed, transferring territory from Pakistan-administered Kashmir to China.

- 1971: During the Bangladesh Liberation War, China supports Pakistan, leading to further strengthening of bilateral relations.

- 1978: China's reform and opening-up policies begin, leading to increased economic cooperation between China and Pakistan.

- 2013: China announces the CPEC project, enhancing

economic collaboration between the two countries.

- 2024: China and Pakistan celebrate the 73rd anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, highlighting the strong and enduring friendship between the two nations.

These milestones highlight the close and strategic partnership that has developed between Pakistan and China over the years. Further developments in Pakistan-China relations include ongoing military cooperation, cultural exchanges, and economic collaborations.

The CPEC has emerged as a flagship project, aiming to enhance connectivity and promote economic development in Pakistan. Both countries continue to support each other on various international platforms, maintaining a strong strategic partnership. People-to-people exchanges, educational cooperation, and mutual support on regional and global issues further cement the bond between Pakistan and China. The bilateral relationship between the two countries remains vital for regional stability and economic development in the broader context of South Asia and beyond.

Worth mentioning that Pakistan and China's diplomatic relations have evolved into a multifaceted partnership with several key aspects driving their enduring bond. Firstly, their strategic partnership stands as a pillar of regional stability, with both nations collaborating closely on security, defense, and counterterrorism efforts. Secondly, economic cooperation forms a cornerstone of their relationship, with China emerging as a major investor in Pakistan's infrastructure projects, notably through the CPEC. Additionally, military cooperation between the two countries is robust, encompassing joint exercises, technology transfer, and defense collab-



Analysis

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

oration. Diplomatically, China consistently extends support to Pakistan on various international platforms, while Pakistan aligns itself with China on matters of mutual interest. Finally, people-to-people ties foster cultural exchanges, educational collaborations, and tourism, strengthening the bond between the peoples of both nations beyond official channels. As Pakistan and China celebrate the 73rd anniversary of their diplomatic relations, these five aspects underscore the depth and resilience of their friendship, which continues to shape the geopolitical landscape of the region. This relationship goes beyond mere strategic cooperation; it embodies a deep-rooted friendship that has weathered the tests of time and emerged stronger. Their partnership is characterized by a shared commitment to fostering peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. The bond also extends beyond bilateral interests, manifesting in a robust diplomatic support system in various international forums. Whether it's advocating for each other's positions on critical issues or standing shoulder to shoulder in times of global chal-

lenges, the two countries exemplify the true essence of solidarity and collaboration. At its core, the friendship between Pakistan and China is built on a foundation of trust, respect, and mutual benefit. This symbiotic relationship allows both nations to leverage their respective strengths and resources for collective advancement. From infrastructure development projects like BRI & CPEC to joint military exercises, their collaboration spans across diverse sectors of mutual interest. In an ever-evolving geopolitical landscape, the enduring friendship between China and Pakistan serves as a beacon of stability and cooperation. As both countries navigate complex global challenges and opportunities, their shared commitment to each other highlights the importance of fostering genuine relationships in the realm of international politics. By continuing to stand by each other through thick and thin, China and Pakistan set a commendable example for the world on how genuine friendship can transcend borders and contribute to a more harmonious global community. As we reflect on the remarkable journey of Pakistan-China diplo-

matic relations, spanning over seven decades, it becomes evident that the bond between these two nations is not merely defined by geography or shared interests, but by the enduring spirit of friendship and cooperation. With a border stretching over 5000 kilometers, their relationship stands taller than the mighty Himalayas, symbolizing the strength and resilience that characterize their partnership. Like the sweetness of honey, their relations are imbued with warmth and sincerity, transcending borders and cultural differences. As the old saying goes, "Iron brothers" indeed, their bond is unbreakable, and their commitment to each other unwavering. Through thick and thin, Pakistan and China have stood by each other, and their friendship will last forever, ever, a testament to the power of genuine camaraderie in shaping a brighter future for generations to come.

(The writer is a foreign affairs commentator and Secretary General of the Pakistan China Friendship Association's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chapter. He can be reached at syed.gilani@gmail.com.)

Vietnamese Embassy honors late President Ho Chi Minh on 134th birth anniversary

Spokesman Report

On the occasion of the 134th birth anniversary of President Ho Chi Minh (May 19, 1890–May 19, 2024), the Embassy of Vietnam in Pakistan solemnly organized a ceremony to offer incense in commemoration of Uncle Ho's birthday.

In a solemn and emotional atmosphere, the Vietnamese Ambassador to Pakistan, Nguyen Tien Phong, expressed his deepest gratitude for the great contributions of President Ho Chi Minh to the revolutionary cause of the Vietnamese nation as well as to the oppressed peoples around the world.

The Ambassador affirmed that it has been 55 years since Uncle Ho left, but Uncle Ho's career, thoughts, and his great and shining moral example still live forever in the revolutionary cause



of the nation, lasting over time, forever shining in the journey of development of our people and progress of humanity. Generations of descendants will pledge



to study, cultivate, and follow the example of President Ho Chi Minh, striving to build a strong and prosperous Vietnam that can stand proudly as equals to major powers across all five continents as he wished.

Call for a National Pool Fund to Tackle Spinal Muscular Atrophy Challenges

Eric John

Spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) is a genetic (inherited) neuromuscular disease that causes muscles to become weak and waste away. People with SMA lose a specific type of nerve cell in the spinal cord (called motor neurons) that control muscle movement. Without these motor neurons, muscles don't receive nerve signals that make muscles move. The word atrophy is a medical term that means smaller. With SMA, certain muscles become smaller and weaker due to lack of use.

Pakistan being the 6th populous country in the world, lacks basic healthcare facilities to accommodate the patients. Currently, there are certain Non-Profit Organizations working towards the cause for rare diseases, but this matter is not taken into notice by government. However, diagnostic services are provided at certain non-governmental testing centres which cost

an arm and leg. Some healthcare facilities in urban areas offer diagnostic services for SMA, including genetic testing and clinical evaluations, although access to these services may be limited in rural and remote areas. Primarily, prenatal diagnosis is an overlooked aspect in this regard. Not only this, access to specialized treatments for SMA may be limited, but some patients in Pakistan may also have access to supportive therapies such as physiotherapy, occupational therapy, and respiratory support to manage symptoms and improve quality of life. In addition to this, the medications required are not affordable for even an average income bearer. Even if they have access to one dosage, there is a struggle to meet ends and buy the consequent doses.

Various organizations, including healthcare providers, patient advocacy groups, and NGOs, conduct awareness campaigns and educational programs to increase awareness of SMA among the public and healthcare

professionals. However, the reach and impact of these efforts may vary. For instance, the majority audience which may be suspect of such rare disease are not even aware about it and do not have any means to do so. The majority is unable to fulfill their necessities so testing for genetic disease is not even their priority.

A current incident which can play a pivotal role to promote facilitation services is the government intervention in the case of minor girl for her rare disease, SMA.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, along with the Sindh government, sanctioned funds for the medication of five-month-old Haya, who suffers from Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA). Anchor-person Syed Shafaat Ali brought attention to Haya's medical needs on social media, prompting a swift response from the Sindh government. He highlighted that the minor girl, Haya, requires an amount of PKR 51 crores (approx. 51 million dollars) worth of medi-

cine for her treatment. Within five minutes, the government committed to Haya's well-being and approved necessary funds, which will be disbursed to the concerned company soon. This quick action was commended by Shafaat Ali, who expressed gratitude to Bilawal Bhutto and the Sindh government for their efforts. The swift response of the Sindh government to allocate resources for the medication of five-month-old Haya, highlights the potential impact of increased awareness about rare diseases like SMA. Anchor-person Syed Shafaat Ali's social media post not only brought attention to Haya's medical needs but also shed light on the challenges faced by SMA patients and their families in accessing treatment. This incident sets a precedent for future cases, potentially encouraging other provinces to take similar action in supporting SMA patients and escalate government advancements towards intervention in rare disease. Not only this, it also creates an oppor-



tunity to provide further assistance in this regard. Gene therapy is only limited to a certain age group (under 2 years); hence the government has an opportunity to further invest by providing medications for the patients of older age group. Those medications are cheaper and can help more patients on a vast scale. Moreover, it underscores the need for established medical assistance programs for rare diseases like SMA, ensuring timely access to treatment for all affected indi-

viduals. The success in securing funds for Haya's treatment may also spur advocacy efforts by NGOs and patient groups, lobbying for better healthcare services and support for SMA patients nationwide.

Advocating for the establishment of a dedicated National Pool Fund, alongside proposing public-private partnerships, legislation, and policy support, as well as tax incentives and donations, offers a comprehensive approach to addressing the

financial challenges associated with treating rare diseases like Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) in Pakistan. Establishing a national pool fund administered by a specialized committee, ensures targeted financial support for SMA patients, while public-private partnerships enhance funding sustainability through collaboration with pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers. Legislation mandating funds allocation within the national healthcare budget prioritizes SMA treatment, while tax incentives incentivize private donations, fostering a broader base of financial support. Collectively, these measures aim to create a robust and sustainable funding mechanism, ensuring equitable access to treatment and research resources for SMA patients across Pakistan.

An initiative by SPEAK Trust committed to address public health inequities with a special focus on rare disease affected patients in Pakistan

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
75,084.00	75,342.34
Day's High	Day's Low
75,618.49	74,734.24
Index Value	Change
9,175,205,334	-258.34
Percentage	Time
-0.34%	20 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,424.20	+3.94
Percentage	Time
+0.047%	20 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,968.10	-35.49
Percentage	Time
0.089%	20 May, 12:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,069.68	+282.30
Percentage	Time
+0.73%	20 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	184.8
Bahrain Dinar	739.8	747.8
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.51	38.91
Danish Krone	40.53	40.93
Euro	298	301
Hong Kong Dollar	35.65	36
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.3	912.3
Malaysian Ringgit	59.34	59.94
New Zealand \$	170.64	172.64
Norwegians Krone	25.92	26.22
Omani Riyal	722.53	730.53
Qatari Riyal	76.42	77.12
Saudi Riyal	73.5	74.25
Singapore Dollar	203	205
Swedish Korona	25.98	26.28
Swiss Franc	305.6	308.1
Thai Bhat	7.67	7.82
U.A.E Dirham	75.25	76
UK Pound Sterling	350.5	354
US Dollar	277.6	280.2

After A JK, protests in other provinces may begin: Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, on Monday said that the policy of continuous increases in the price of electricity is creating distance between the government and the people.

Instead of giving relief to the people who are worried about inflation, the government continues to overburden them, which is seriously undermining their confidence, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that after Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, protests against the policies of the government may start in other parts of the country.

Speaking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that neither the public had entered into contracts with the

IPP nor were they responsible for the incompetence and corruption in the power sector.

He said that it is not the job of the masses to collect electricity bills, which the government cannot recover and continuously put its burden on the masses.

Instead of reducing losses, bill-paying consumers are made to pay for authorities' incompetence, which is increasing public frustration.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that inflation has broken the backs of the people, and those who were considered middle class until a few years ago have now become miserable. Those who have not had to sell their jewellery and assets consider themselves fortunate.

The business leader stated that the middle class and the poor have grown weary of taking loans, and now they no longer have this option. We should support our political leadership in their efforts to address the worst economic crisis in the country's history.



The government should take strict action against various mafias, which will boost the

morale of the people, and they will support the government with new enthusiasm.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that Nepra has also become a tool for power sector profiteers who are not concerned about people's interests.

He asked, "What is the point of spending millions of rupees on an organization that can't even do its job?"

Every other day, some big scandals come to light, which shows that mafias are trying to subvert the government.

Mian Zahid Hussain added that the people are waiting for the government's announcements and promises to be implemented.

The government has accepted the demands of the protestors in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir, which is proof of its good intentions.

The power sector can provide facilities to the public by eliminating power theft, bill collection, reducing line losses, and privatization, he said.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Mr. Henrik Persson called on Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Monday.



Photo: Online

PPDA threatens a nationwide strike to paralyze the country

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) on Monday stated that the sale of smuggled Iranian oil has increased to an alarming level due to the administration's connivance in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It added that an action against protesting dealers will result in a strike at filling stations across the country, paralyzing the entire system.

PPDA Central Executive Committee member Hasan Shah, while addressing an emergency meeting of petroleum dealers, said that PPDA district presidents across the country are waiting for our call to start a strike.

He stated that a strike against the expanding illegal filling points, which pose a serious security hazard, began in the Peshawar Division yesterday.

After the strike, the administration is trying to threaten the petroleum dealers with raids, arrests, and fines instead of closing down the illegal filling points, which we strongly condemn.

He warned that if the members or leaders of the PPDA Peshawar Division, including Najibullah Khan and Gul Nawaz Afridi, were arrested, a nationwide strike would be started immediately.

If the provincial government does not resolve the problems, the country's entire system will become crippled by the closure of petrol pumps nationwide.

According to Hassan Shah, a large mafia is smuggling



substandard Iranian oil, which is being sold publicly across the country, with Peshawar being the most prominent.

Small shops and stalls across the country are selling this substandard and adulterated fuel without adhering to any quality or safety standards, leading to frequent fire incidents that claim precious lives and property, he observed.

On this occasion, Khawaja Atif Ahmed, Humayun Khan, Nadeem Aziz Jan, and Nauman Butt said that this illegal business cannot go on without the connivance of the district administration, police, and other relevant institutions.

Government officials are playing with the country's future and people's lives for their personal interests, and there is no one to stop them, they added.

Smuggled oil is costing the government billions of rupees in revenue, destroying the businesses of refineries, oil marketing companies, and dealers, and eliminating the possibility of new investment in this important sector, they observed.

The dealers said that petroleum dealers would not tolerate the sale of Iranian oil in Pakistan.

Penta-H celebrated its 5th Anniversary

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The convention comprised of 4 sessions. The first session was an awareness session for PentaH employees. The chief executive officer Dr Zahir Javed Paracha presented the company vision and mission to the company employees. Dr Syed Afaq Husain chief operating officer of PentaH apprised his team of the future plans and organisational restructuring with the growth of the company in Islamabad and Faisalabad in addition to Lahore and Multan. Hafiz operations manager, briefed the staff about the journey of development at Penta H. Engr. Akbar Regional Manager, Multan explained the team about his experiences and lessons learnt. The second session comprised of trainings of Penta H staff on process, policies and implementation plans by regional managers. The third session was a continuous professional development workshop that was chaired by chairman institute of Engineers Pakistan Engineer Masood Aslam. Dr. Zahir Paracha gave an overview of the advances in solar technology. Dr Afaq gave a presentation on IoT and AI technologies used in Solar systems along with some case studies. Engr Akbar presented mechanical and



civil design considerations. Engr Talha described electrical design parameters for solar systems. Engr Waleed Gillani GM electrical Bahria town lahore gave his views

on Bahria town solar systems policy on green meters. The last event was a feedback session with Penta H clients. The event ended with a vote of thanks by the CEO.

Systems Limited signs agreement to license and develop Temenos country model banks for 5 countries in APAC

PPA

LAHORE: Systems Limited, an award-winning partner of Temenos and global technology leader, has signed an agreement to license and further develop Temenos Country Model Banks for financial institutions in five countries in the Asia-Pacific (APAC) region. This initiative aims to empower financial institutions in Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Brunei with enhanced functionality and service capability provided by Systems Limited to meet the unique needs of their local markets.

Ramki Ramakrishnan, Managing Director - APAC, Temenos, commented: "Country Model Banks are a key differentiator for Temenos and working with partners like Systems Limited brings additional value to our platform, which benefits our clients and ultimately delivers incremental growth for Temenos. Systems is a trusted partner for the development and maintenance of Country Model Banks and this new agreement extends their expertise to Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Brunei, helping banks in those markets with their progressive technology renovation."



"This collaboration signifies our dedication to advancing the financial technology landscape in the APAC region by providing prebuilt functionalities and tailored services that meet the unique demands of the local banking industry.

For the last 23 years, we have always focused on reinventing our capabilities to bring value to our clients and support them

in their mission critical transformations, ultimately driving growth and innovation in the global banking industry. We are excited to be a part of this agreement and look forward to supporting banks in the APAC region to scale and optimize their businesses on the Temenos banking platform." said Ammara Masood- Global Industries GM BFS- Systems Limited

SIXTH ISEM Pakistan Solar Exhibition and Conference concluded at Lahore



PPA

LAHORE: The event, inaugurated promises to be a significant gathering for professionals, stakeholders, and enthusiasts within the solar energy sector in Pakistan and across the globe. The three-day exhibition, running until Sunday, has drawn the participation of various leading solar companies showcasing their innovative products and solutions.

There were many Solar and Energy Stalls were decorated during the 3 days ISEM Solar Exhibition.

With a focus on sustainable energy practices, the event aims to promote awareness, foster industry collaborations, and drive the adoption of solar energy technologies across Pakistan.

Zong 4G Collaborates with Planet Beyond to simplify Credit Management system for Zong Users



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading telecom provider, Zong 4G has joined hands with Planet Beyond to create a seamless solution aimed at streamlining balance management for Zong 4G users.

Established in 2004, Planet Beyond stands as a prominent company specializing in mobile Value Added Services (VAS), with operational presence in both the United Kingdom and Pakistan. The direct integration between Zong and Planet Beyond signifies that Zong 4G recharge services will now be seamlessly accessible through the Planet Beyond platform.

The MOU was formally signed on April 30th at Zong 4G's Islamabad headquarters.

Bank of Khyber conducted Islamic banking seminars in Battagram, Oghi

PPA

PESHAWAR: Bank of Khyber (BoK) conducted awareness seminars in Battagram, and Oghi on the operations and services of Islamic banking. These seminars were held in the bank's Islamic branches; Hazara University Sub-Campus, Battagram, and Govt. Boys High School, Oghi, and provided a detailed overview of Islamic banking principles and practices, as well as the specific products and services offered through BoK.

Abdul Samad, BoK Shariah Resident Board Member; Muhammad Zahid Khan, Islamic Banking Area Manager Islamabad & Hazara Region; Adeel Khan, Officer Islamic Liability Business Division, Abdul Basit, Officer Islamic Banking Product Development, as well as Branch Managers: Battagram, Imtiaz Ahmad; and Oghi, Syed Razaqat Ali Shah, addressed the participants.

CCP Hearing on Collusive Practices of Poultry Companies

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) conducted a hearing in the poultry cartelization case, wherein the Pakistan Poultry Association (PPA) presented its defence against allegations of price fixing. This hearing was fixed after show cause notices were issued to PPA and eight other entities for cartelization.

The CCP's investigation revealed prima facie collusion and price fixing of day-old broiler chicks by a suspected cartel of eight hatcheries from 2019 to June 2021. These entities include Hitech Group, Islamabad Group of Companies, Olympia Group, Jadeed Group, Supreme Farms (Season's Foods), Big Bird Group, and Sabirs' Group.

Babar on brink of historic milestones in T20I cricket

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's captain, Babar Azam, is poised to achieve several significant milestones in T20I cricket as he prepares for upcoming matches against England.

With his impressive track record, Babar is set to add more accolades to his name, cementing his position as one of the greatest batsmen in the format.

Firstly, Babar needs just 45 runs to become the first Pakistani player to reach 4000 runs in T20I cricket, surpassing the current top run-scorer for Pakistan.

This feat would demonstrate his exceptional skill and consistency, as he currently sits third among the highest run-scorers in T20I cricket with 3955 runs, behind only Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma, as quoted by cricketpakistan.com.pk.



To surpass Virat Kohli's total runs in T20Is, Babar needs only 82 more runs. The current standings are: Virat Kohli: 4037 runs (109 innings), Rohit Sharma: 3974 runs (143 innings), Babar Azam: 3955 runs (110 innings).

Furthermore, with 48 more runs, Babar will become the only captain to score 2500 T20I runs, distinguishing him as a top player and a leader who consistently contributes to his team's success.

It's worth noting that Babar recently created a world record during the T20I series against Ireland, becoming the most successful T20I captain with 45 wins, eclipsing the record held by Brian Masaba of Uganda, who had 44 wins as captain.

As Babar continues to break records and achieve milestones, he solidifies his position as one of the greatest cricketers of all time.

The Pakistan team would play the four-game T20I series against England, on May 22 (Wednesday) at Headingley Cricket Ground in Leeds.

SJAL XI rout RISJA XI in friendly T20 match

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Sports Journalists Association of Lahore (SJAL) XI claimed a decisive victory over the Rawalpindi Islamabad Sports Journalists Association (RISJA) by 63 runs. The standout performance came from Murtaza, whose unbeaten century was instrumental in SJAL XI's triumph.



This friendly match, organized by the Pakistan Super League franchise Lahore Qalandars, featured sports journalists from Lahore and Islamabad-Rawalpindi. After winning the toss, SJAL XI elected to bat first, setting a formidable total of 149 runs for the loss of seven wickets. Murtaza Ali led the charge with an impressive unbeaten 109 runs, while Muhammad Waqas contributed 20 runs.

In response, the RISJA XI struggled and was all out for 86 runs. Ayaz Yusufzai was the notable performer for RISJA, scoring 56 runs. For SJAL XI, Sanaullah took three wickets, while Imran Sohail and Muhammad Waqas each claimed two. Ehtesham-ul-Haq, Yusuf Anjum, and Aqib Qureshi each took one wicket.

At the conclusion of the match, Lahore Qalandars owner Atif Rana presented commemorative shields to the journalists from both the teams, celebrating their participation and sportsmanship during the friendly match.

Punjab govt to make top class arrangements for S Asian Games

Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial assured the federal government that Punjab government will make top class arrangements for the mega event of South Asian Games (SAG). He gave this assurance during a virtual meeting chaired by Federal Secretary Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Nadeem Irshad Kayani on Monday.

The online meeting was convened to review the preparations of South Asian Games.

Director General IPC Zahoor Ahmed, Secretary Youth Affairs Punjab Muzaffar Khan Sial and DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal along with all secretaries sports and DG sports from all provinces were among the participants of key online meeting.

Federal Secretary IPC Nadeem Irshad Kayani will chair another meeting in Lahore on May 27 to give final touches to the preparations of South Asian Games. The provincial capital Lahore is being considered as host of competitions of 14 games during the mega event.

Sial told the meeting that all essential efforts are going on for the successful conduct of South Asian Games competitions in the provincial capital. "Whatever responsibility is assigned to the Punjab Sports Department, it will be executed in the best possible way. Implementation of a comprehensive plan has been started for the successful holding of South Asian Games competitions in the provincial capital."

DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal told the meeting that Punjab has international level sports venues and facilities to organise South Asian Games competitions in a befitting manner. "A comprehensive Talent Hunt Programme and Annual Sports Calendar are being conducted in a professional manner for the preparation of the teams for the grand South Asian Games event."

Pakistan downs Bhutan in ATF 12 & under team competition

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tennis team started their campaign with a resounding victory against Bhutan in the Asian Tennis Federation (ATF)12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia at Kathmandu, Nepal.

Pakistan beat Bhutan by 3-0 in the tournament, in the first singles Rashid Ali Baccani beat Dudu Tenzin Dudu by 6-0-6-0, said a press release.

In the second singles Muhammad Shayan Afridi beat Tshering Pelthop by 6-6-0-0. In the Doubles Muhammad Shayan Afridi, Junaid Khan beat Dudu Tenzin Dudu, Tshering Miphom by 6-1,6-0. The details of Group A and B are as follows, Group A: India, Bangladesh, Maldives; Group B: Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka.

Australian volleyball team to tour Pakistan on May 26

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a historic move, the Australian volleyball team would arrive in Pakistan on May 26 to play a three-match series against the national team.

According to Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, Chairman of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF), this landmark event was made possible after the Australian Volleyball Federation (AVF) expressed its desire to play a series of matches with Pakistan, and all arrangements have been finalized.

The Australian team will play matches against the national team on May 28, 29, and 30 in Islamabad. This marks the first time an Australian volleyball team has visited Pakistan, and excitement is building for the highly anticipated series, he said.

Pakistan's national team has been in top form, recently after winning the title and remaining unbeaten in the Central Asian Volleyball League.

Chaudhry Yaqoob expressed optimism that Pakistan would perform brilliantly against the strong Australian team, hoping to continue their winning streak.

This historic series is a significant milestone for volleyball in Pakistan, and fans are eagerly looking forward to witnessing top-class competition between the two nations.

Judo competition talent hunt kicks off

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Comsats University Islamabad organized the Prime Minister Provincial League Talent Hunt Judo Competition for men here at the Rodham Hall of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday. It saw participants from Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Gilgit, Skardu, and Islamabad featuring in the extravaganza.

The event's opening ceremony took place and was graced by Prof. Dr. Sajjad Ahmed Madni, Registrar Comsats University, as chief guest. In his address, Prof. Dr. Madni commended the participants for their enthusiasm and skill. He also lauded the management of the HEC Sports Division and the Ministry of Youth Affairs for their remarkable initiative in launching this Talent Hunt program, which offers athletes a valuable platform to showcase their abilities at the national level. "The Talent Hunt program is a significant step towards nurturing and promoting sports talent across Pakistan," he said.

Atalanta aim to end 61-year trophy drought in Europa League final

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Atalanta have a date with history and Bayer Leverkusen on Wednesday when the Italians aim to become the first team to beat the new German champions this season and win their first-ever Europa League title.

Gian Piero Gasperini's side have in the Dublin Europa League final another shot at winning a first trophy in 61 years after losing the Italian Cup final against Juventus last week.

The traditionally small club from Bergamo travel to Ireland in high spirits after securing a spot in next season's revamped Champions League.

Star forwards Charles De Ketelaere and Gianluca Scamacca secured a 2-0 win at Lecce on Saturday which guaranteed Atalanta at least fifth spot in Serie A and led to a hero's welcome from supporters after they returned from Italy's extreme south.

Hundreds of fans waited under torrential rain for their team at the Zingonia training centre outside Bergamo, greeting them with flares, flags and fireworks, loudly expressing their appreciation at another brilliant season under Gasperini which may yet become the best in the club's 117-year history.

"Qualifying for the Champions League



is best we can achieve at Atalanta, it's not like we can aim to win Serie A," Gasperini told reporters on Saturday.

"We were a bit tired in the final with Juventus... between now and Wednesday we need to make sure that we're the very best version of ourselves."

Atalanta will be missing key midfielder Marten De Roon to a hamstring knock picked up during the Italian Cup final, an injury which Gasperini called the "real loss" of that evening.

Gasperini can, however, count on the brilliant form of Scamacca and De Ketelaere, who will start on Wednesday and

potentially the return of defender Sead Kolasinac as the 66-year-old tries to win his first final in his eight-year reign in Bergamo after losing his previous three.

Belgium forward De Ketelaere has been a revelation since being loaned to Atalanta from AC Milan with a 24 million euro option to buy last summer, scoring 14 goals and setting up eight more as he slotted perfectly into Gasperini's attack-minded set-up.

"I don't know if I'll be in Bergamo next year. I just concentrate on my football and we'll see what happens," said De Ketelaere on Saturday.

"Gasperini's style of play gives me confidence. I'm disappointed that I didn't do at Milan what I've done with Atalanta, but I've had a great season here."

A provincial club playing in the shadow of the Milanese giants down the road, Atalanta have reached new heights, reaching the Champions League four times, since Gasperini took over.

Atalanta have managed to overtake traditionally bigger clubs like Fiorentina and Lazio while maintaining close ties with their local community and are one of the few Serie A teams to own their stadium, whose reshaping into a modern arena should be complete for the start of next season.

And their run through the Europa League knockouts has taken them past Sporting Lisbon, Liverpool and Marseille, all more storied teams with vastly bigger fan bases and at least one European honour in their trophy cabinet.

Atalanta have already experienced their two greatest-ever nights against Liverpool and Marseille as their run to the 2020 Champions League quarter-finals came at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic which devastated Bergamo.

They might start as underdogs in Dublin against another giant-killer in Leverkusen but have almost nothing to lose after going further than anyone ever expected.

Talent hunt

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Provincial League Talent Hunt Judo Competition held for men here at the Rodham Hall of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Monday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

National football team training camp kicks off in Islamabad

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan national football team Monday has started an intensive training camp in Islamabad as the national side gears up for the upcoming FIFA World Cup Qualifiers Round 2 home match against Saudi Arabia on June 6 in Islamabad followed by an away match in Tajikistan on June 11.

Head coach Stephen Constantine was leading the team's efforts, focusing on refining their skills and tactics for the encounter against one of the football powerhouses (Saudi Arabia), said a press release. Goal-keeping coaches Rogerio Ramos and Noman Ibrahim have been dedicating their efforts to the goalkeepers, while fitness coach Claudio Altieri was ensuring the peak performance in preparation for the crucial match. The preliminary squad of Pakistan includes: Goalkeepers: Hassan Ali and Tanveer; Defenders: Haseeb Khan, Mamoon Moosa Khan, Huzafa, Waqar Ihtisham, Abdul Rehman, Umar Hayat, Muhammad Adeel, Muhammad Saddam and Zain ul Abideen.

Lahore Division bag Summer Super Table Tennis League

Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: Lahore Division won the Summer Super Table Tennis League for girls and boys at Nishtar Park Sports Complex on Monday.

Knight Rider clinched first position, North Star second while South Star finished third in the girls' team event organised with the collaboration of Sports Board Punjab. On the other hand, Taha Bilal from Lahore has won the first position, Irtaza Ali clinched second position while the third position was taken by Armaan in the boys' singles competition.

Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal has congratulated the winning players. Director Admin Sports Board Punjab M Kaleem was the chief guest of the event. Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Irfanullah Khan from Punjab Table Tennis Association and others were present on the occasion.

Director Admin M Kaleem on this occasion said that sports events are being organized under the supervision of DG



Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal. Prior to this event, Sports Board Punjab has already organized the first Chief Minister Punjab Pink Games quite successfully.

Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar on this occasion said that new talent emerges from such events. The work will continue for the development of sports under the

leadership of Provincial Minister Sports Punjab Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar and DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal, she added.

Called on

RAWALPINDI: General Angus J. Campbell, Chief of Defence Forces Australia called on General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at Joint Staff Headquarters.



Photo: ISPR

Australian Defence Chief calls on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces Australia, General Angus J. Campbell is on official visit to Pakistan for 13th Round of Pakistan – Australia, Defence and Security Talks and 10th Round of 1.5 Track Security Dialogue, called on Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, General Sahir Shamshad Mirza here at Joint Staff Headquarters on Monday. During the meeting, the two senior military leaders engaged in comprehensive discussions on defence and security cooperation, regional dynamics, and global securi-

ty challenges, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

Both sides reiterated the resolve to further strengthen and enhance security and defence cooperation between the two countries.

The Australian dignitaries remained appreciative of the high professional standards of Pakistan Armed Forces, their achievements in fight against terrorism and continued efforts for regional peace and stability. Earlier upon arrival at Joint Staff Headquarters, General Angus J. Campbell, was presented "Guard of Honour" by a smartly turned-out tri-services contingent

Turkish foreign minister visits Pakistan Army chief, discusses regional and bilateral ties



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: His Excellency Mr. Hakan Fidan, Turkish Foreign Minister, paid a visit to General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS).

During their meeting, matters of mutual interest came under discus-

sion. Both sides expressed their satisfaction with the deep-rooted relations between the two countries, founded on a historic, cultural, and religious bonds.

The visiting dignitary commended the Pakistan Army's role in maintaining peace and stability in the region.

Acting President for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Monday called for further consolidating bilateral ties with Malaysia for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. Pakistan and Malaysia, he said, enjoyed cordial cooperation at all international fora, which needed to be further strengthened.

The Acting President expressed these views while talking to the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy, Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob, who along with his delegation called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf also attended the meeting. During the meeting, the Acting President urged the need to further



explore avenues of cooperation in maritime sectors for the mutual benefit of the

two brotherly countries. He expressed the hope that training and exchange programmes

between the two navies would further cement naval cooperation between Pakistan and Malaysia. The Acting President expressed satisfaction over the regular conduct of bilateral naval exercises and training collaboration between Pakistan and Malaysia. He appreciated the Royal Malaysian Navy for regular participation in AMAN exercises and emphasised the need for continuity of the same in future. He stated that Pakistan was looking forward to the continued support of Malaysia for Pakistan's bid to become the Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN.

Earlier, the Acting President conferred the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) upon Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob during a special investiture

ceremony. Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob is a close friend of Pakistan and has played a prominent role in promoting cooperation between the Royal Malaysian Navy and the Pakistan Navy. The award was conferred upon him in recognition of his professional achievements and endeavours for strengthening the friendship and cooperation between the two navies. The Acting President congratulated the Malaysian Naval Chief on receiving the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military) and appreciated his contributions towards increasing naval cooperation between the two countries. Admiral Tan Sri Abdul Rahman bin Ayob thanked the Acting President for conferring upon him the award of Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military).

Pakistan, Turkiye resolve to strengthen trade, investment, defence ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye on Monday expressed a strong commitment to further broaden the scope of bilateral cooperation in all areas of interest, including trade, investment and defence. The bilateral relationship was discussed during the delegation-level talks between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan who is here on a two-day official visit.

The two leaders reviewed progress on bilateral cooper-

ation and exchanged views on regional and international matters of mutual interest. Deputy Prime Minister Dar appreciated Türkiye's firm and consistent support for the oppressed people of the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). He also reiterated Pakistan's support for the legitimate rights of the people of Northern Cyprus. The two ministers also discussed regional and global developments, especially the ongoing genocide and the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza. They stressed the need for urgent and unconditional ceasefire in Gaza and the



provision of urgent humanitarian relief for the besieged Palestinian people. They reiterated the imperative for the creation of an independent Palestinian state for lasting

peace in the Middle East. The two leaders also discussed the need to combat Islamophobia and stressed the urgency of addressing it in a holistic manner. They also assessed preparations for the upcoming 7th session of Pakistan-Türkiye High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council (HLSCC) to be held in Islamabad in the near future. Pakistan and Türkiye enjoy special bonds of friendship and brotherhood rooted in history, culture and religion. Regular dialogue and exchange of high-level visits are the hallmark of Pakistan-Türkiye robust bilateral relations.

Cabinet considers issue of paying for damages to injured foreign students

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyzstan Edil Baisalov held a meeting with rectors of 18 higher educational institutions. The republican headquarters reported.

They discussed the incident with an attack on a dormitory with foreign students in Bishkek and the necessary measures to resume the educational process and maintain the attractiveness of the republic's educational institutions for foreign students.

On the instructions of the country's leadership, the Cabinet of Ministers is considering the issue of paying for damages to injured foreign students. The form and timing of compensation

will be announced later.

The meeting participants discussed issues of ensuring the safety and well-being of students, strengthening their integration into the life of local communities and conducting awareness-raising work both within the republic and abroad.

The deputy head of the Cabinet of Ministers said that the next meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers would be devoted to issues of educational and pedagogical work with young people, stopping the mass arrival of illegal labor migrants in the country and ensuring public order.

According to the Ministry of Health, 41 victims sought medical help as a result of the mass brawl with foreigners in Bishkek.

Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan meets the Minister for Finance & Revenue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Italy to Pakistan H. E. Ms. Marilina Armellini called on Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division today, to discuss the cooperation and longstanding relations between Pakistan and Italy.

The Finance Minister welcomed the Italian Ambassador and highlighted the significant improvements in Pakistan's economic landscape. He discussed the government's achievements, in decreasing current account deficit, globalization of currency, the stock market reaching an all-time high and the successful completion of the nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He further mentioned

that the ministry is currently in engagement with the IMF mission for a new program on longer term basis.

Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb also outlined the government's strategic initiatives aimed at broadening the tax base by targeting previously untaxed and under-taxed segments. Additionally, he reiterated the government's commitment to privatize various State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), starting with Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) also followed by major airports. Ambassador Armellini acknowledged the promising economic indicators and appreciated the upward trend in Pakistan's economy. She emphasized the potential for enhanced cooperation between Italy and Pakistan, particularly in the textile, machinery, agriculture, and dairy sectors.

DPM Dar urges Kyrgyz FM to punish perpetrators involved in attacks on Pakistani students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday urged his Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Jeenbek Kulubaev to take a swift action against the perpetrators involved in the recent attacks on Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan. The Deputy Prime Minister, who arrived here for the regular meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), held a meeting with the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister.

The meeting focused on the recent developments in Bishkek and the welfare of Pakistani nationals there. Recalling their telephonic conversation of yesterday on the same subject, the Deputy Prime Minister underlined that Pakistan's main concern was the security and well-being of its nationals, especially the students who were primarily affected by the developments of Friday.

He shared the feelings of insecurity and fear among the Pakistani students and requested Foreign Minister Kulubaev to ensure their safety and security. He also request-

ed for holding to account those responsible for the attacks on Pakistani students.

Foreign Minister Kulubaev shared that Kyrgyz government had taken a swift action to restore law and order, and the perpetrators of the mob riots would be punished under the Kyrgyz law.

He reassured the Deputy Prime Minister about the safety and security of Pakistani nationals and full facilitation for safe repatriation of students who wish to return to Pakistan. Ishaq Dar commended the role of the Kyrgyz government, health department and law enforcement agencies, and thanked Foreign Minister Kulubaev for ensuring the much needed health and security assistance being provided to the Pakistani students.

He emphasized that the two countries should maintain close liaison in that regard. Bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kyrgyz Republic especially in the domains of energy, connectivity, trade and people-to-people contacts also came under discussion and both dignitaries expressed satisfaction at the progress of established bilateral institutional mechanisms.