

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے عثمان بن عفان نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے
سوف بن ابی حنیبلہ نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے
ابو جابر عن ابن عباس نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے
بن حنیبلہ نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے
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RAWALPINDI



Sirbaz scales Mount Everest without supplementary oxygen

Pakistan's ace mountaineer Sirbaz Khan added another feather to his cap on Tuesday when he successfully scaled the world's highest mountain, The Everest, without using supplementary oxygen. Sirbaz, who had previously summited the 8849-metre peak using bottled oxygen, reached the top earlier today at around 12:30 PST to become the only second Pakistani to scale the mountain without using oxygen.



FIR should be filed against KE if someone dies of heatstroke: Sindh minister

Blasting the K-Electric (KE) over unannounced loadshedding amid sweltering weather conditions, Local Government Minister Saeed Ghani on Tuesday said that FIR should be registered against the power utility if anybody dies of heatstroke in Karachi. Addressing a Sindh Assembly session, Ghani said that the sole power distribution company does not fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial government.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ziq'a'd 13, Wednesday, May 22, 2024

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 18, Issue: 41

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Kashmiri Diaspora activists calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Peace in South Asia linked with just settlement of Kashmir dispute: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday emphasized that a durable peace in South Asia was contingent upon a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council

resolutions and the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The prime minister, talking to a delegation of Kashmiri diaspora activists, led by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General World Kashmir Awareness Forum which called on him here, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplo-

matic and political support for Kashmiri people's struggle for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

He lauded the Kashmiri activists' efforts to increase global awareness about the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the plight of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu

and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The prime minister recalled that he had never missed any opportunity to raise the voice in support of Kashmiri brothers and sisters, as evident from his address at the 2022 UN General Assembly, as well as at other forums including SCO and with other world leaders.

The Kashmiri activists thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's consistent support to the Kashmir cause.

They also apprised him of the latest developments in the region and shared their efforts to highlight the Kashmir freedom struggle in various parts of the world.

Supreme Leader calls Assembly of Experts symbol of Islamic democracy

IRNA

TEHRAN: Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei has described the initiation of the new term of the Assembly of Experts as the manifestation of Islamic democracy.

In a message on the occasion of the beginning of the sixth term of the Assembly of Experts, the Supreme Leader invited the entire world to ponder the comprehensive, steadfast, problem-solving, attractive and amazing system of Islamic governance.

Ayatollah Khamenei further highlighted the role of the Assembly of Experts in making wise efforts to align Quranic and Islamic know-how with rationality.

In this message, the Supreme Leader also paid tribute to the memory of the late President Ebrahim Raisi and



the Friday Prayer Imam of Tabriz city Mohammad-Ali Al-e Hashem, who were also members of the assembly.

Elsewhere in his message, the Leader pointed to the onslaught in the Gaza Strip, noting that the brutal massacre of the Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the West's support for the Zionist regime reveal the real meaning of Western human rights and freedom in the eyes of the awakened consciences.

Supreme Leader to do prayers over bodies of president Raisi and companions

IRNA

TEHRAN: Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei will do prayers over the bodies of late President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage.

Ayatollah Khamenei will do the prayers in a ceremony in the University of Tehran at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday before a funeral procession in the capital city.

Bodies of president Raisi and his companions were transferred to Tehran's Mehrabad Airport on Tuesday after a funeral in north-western city of Tabriz.

The bodies will be flown to the holy city of Qom in central Iran for a procession before returning to Tehran later in the day.

President Raisi,

Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, Tabriz Friday Prayer Leader Mohammad Ali Al-e-Hashem and Governor of East Azerbaijan Province Malek Rahmati were returning from a dam opening ceremony in Iran's border with the Republic of Azerbaijan on Sunday when their helicopter crashed in mountainous areas in Varzaghan region.

Two bodyguards, two pilots and a crew member were also killed in the incident.



Pervaiz Elahi freed from jail after LHC order

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and former Chief Minister of Punjab, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, has been released from Kot Lakhpat Jail and has returned to his residence, Zahoor Elahi Palace.

After the Lahore High Court approved his bail, Pervaiz Elahi, the President of PTI, was released from jail.

Following his release, Pervaiz Elahi arrived at his residence, Zahoor Elahi Palace, from Kot Lakhpat



Jail.

The Lahore High Court had granted bail to Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi earlier today.

The Lahore High Court had approved the bail application of former Chief Minister of Punjab, Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi, in the cases related to appointments in

the Punjab Assembly. Justice Sultan Tanveer of the Lahore High Court had granted the bail application.

Pervaiz Elahi's lawyer stated that Elahi has no connection with the appointments, and the anti-corruption case was filed with a delay of two years.

After bail was granted in four corruption cases against former Chief Minister of Punjab, he was released from jail. Various cases, including corruption charges, have been filed against former Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi.

Bill seeking ban on judges holding dual nationality submitted to NA Secretariat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: This undated file photo shows a general view of a parliament session at the National Assembly of Pakistan in Islamabad. Photo via social media

A private bill was submitted to the National Assembly Secretariat on Tuesday seeking a ban on judges holding dual nationality, days after the Islamabad High Court slammed a 'malicious' social media campaign against Islamabad High Court Justice Babar Sattar.

JUI-F lawmaker Noor Alam Khan moved the bill, which sought amendments to articles 177 (appointment of

Supreme Court judges), 193 (appointment of High Court judges), and 208 (officers and servants of courts) of the Constitution.

The text of the amendment bill emphasises the need to "ensure loyalty to the state from judges under the Constitution."

The proposed law is aimed at "ensuring judges' allegiance to Pakistan by barring those with dual citizenship from being appointed to the superior judiciary."

It further alleged that judges holding dual nationality risk their actual country's interest, citing that it was necessary to show judges' loyalty to the Constitution.

Great loss for Muslim Ummah: President Zardari condoles death of Iran's Ebrahim Raisi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday expressed profound shock and sorrow over the tragic death of Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, calling it a great loss not only for Iran but for the entire Muslim Ummah. "Today, Pakistan mourns the loss of a great friend. Just last month, we had the honor of hosting him in Pakistan. During our discussions, I found him very keen on strengthening our bilater-



al relations.

Agha Raisi always had a special place for Pakistan and its people, in whichever position he served whether as President of the Islamic Republic of Iran or as Custodian of Imam Raza's (A. S) Shrine," President Zardari said in a statement.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister meets with the President of Kazakhstan



Spokesman Report

KAZAKHSTAN: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today called on Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev at the Presidential Palace "Akorda", as part of SCO Foreign Ministers' audience.

The Deputy Prime Minister conveyed sincere greetings and warm wishes from the President and the Prime Minister of Pakistan to the Kazakh Presi-

dent and reaffirmed Pakistan's strong desire to further expand cooperation with Kazakhstan in all spheres.

The Deputy Prime Minister appreciated the role of the leadership of both countries in strengthening the mutually beneficial multifaceted ties and cooperation in multilateral forums. He highly appreciated Kazakhstan's Presidency of SCO and reaffirmed Pakistan's full support to the success of the Kazakh Summit to be held in July in Astana.

Meeting of Deputy PM with the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan

Spokesman Report

ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a bilateral meeting with Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhiddin, on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting being held in Astana from 20-21 May 2024.

The two Foreign Ministers reaffirmed commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and high-level



dialogue. They underlined the early implementation of CASA-1000 project and other connectivity and regional integration projects for mutual benefit of the two countries and the wider region.

PTI's Raof Hassan injured in attack



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Raof Hassan was injured in an attack in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Hassan was attacked by unknown men as he arrived at the office of a private TV channel in Islamabad.

News of the incident also reached the Senate, where the opposition staged a walk-out.

PTI leader Shibli Faraz condemned the attack, saying that Hassan was a spokesman of the largest political party in the country.

According to Aaj News, Hassan was attacked by 5-6 transgender people. The attackers targeted Hassan's face, leaving him bleeding.

Police has begun its investigation in to the incident and the CCTV footage of the incident is also being acquired.

AJK PM pays tributes to Kashmiri martyrs on martyrdom anniversary

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has paid eulogizing tributes to Shaheed Mirwaiz Molvi Mohammed Farooq, Khawaja Abdul Ghani Lone and martyrs of Hawal(Srinagar) on their martyrdom anniversary. In his special message, the AJK premier said that India has always targeted Hurriyat leadership with a malicious design to render the Kashmiris' freedom movement leaderless. He pointed out that the targeted killing of Mirwaiz Mirwaiz Farooq and Khawaja Abdul Ghani Lone was actually part of the Indian government's grand conspiracy. Lauding the life long struggle and sacrifices of the martyred Hurriyat leaders, the AJK premier maintained that the Hurriyat leaders always led the struggle against Indian occupation from the front with utmost courage and commitment. The AJK premier noted that



people of Kashmir can never forget the supreme sacrifices rendered by the APHC leadership and other Kashmiri martyrs. "It is because of the sacrifices of the Kashmiri martyrs that the Kashmir issue gained a central stage at the world level", the PM added. The

prime minister Haq stated that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have never accepted Indian dominance and it's illegal control over the territory. "Kashmiris have always considered Pakistan as their final destination", he said, adding that burial of

the Kashmiri martyrs in green flags speak volumes about Kashmiris' love and attachment with the state of Pakistan. The AJK premier lamented that India has turned Occupied Kashmir into an open air prison. "The entire Hurriyat leadership has been imprisoned. Hundreds of Kashmiri youth have been martyred during search operations and fake encounters by the Indian occupation forces", he said. The prime minister Haq also voiced his grave concern over the declining health condition of the detained Hurriyat leaders.

He said that India was hell bent on changing the region's demographics. The Prime Minister also demanded the international community to take effective notice of the fast deteriorating political and human rights situation in the held territory. Expressing solidarity with the Kashmiri masses, the PM reaffirmed his government's all support to Kashmir cause.

Red Line BRT Completion Delay Poses Economic and Health Risks

Mustehkam Pakistan, an advocacy firm dedicated to safeguarding the interests of the community, is deeply concerned by the ongoing disruptions faced by Karachi's residents and commuters due to prolonged delays in the construction of the Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. These delays have escalated severe health, economic, and environmental challenges within the city. The construction work has led to significant disruptions, such as dug-up roads, open drains, and excessive dust, creating serious issues for residents and commuters alike. The Sindh Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) has reported a substantial deterioration in Karachi's air quality, with particulate matter (PM) levels exceeding the safe limits set by the World Health Organization (WHO). The combination of construction activities and



increased traffic congestion has further compounded these issues, endangering the health of millions of Karachiites. These risks, coupled with the mental stress and anxiety caused by navigating through

disrupted roads, are adversely affecting the well-being of Karachi's residents. Fawad Khan, spokesperson for Mustehkam Pakistan, has emphasized the urgent need for the government to expedite

the completion of the Red Line BRT project, highlighting that the delays are not mere inconveniences but are leading to serious health concerns and significant economic challenges for local

businesses and the people of Karachi.

It is pertinent to mention that the Red Line BRT project was launched in March 2022 with an estimated completion time of 30 months. However, more than two years have passed, and the construction is still not finished. The government has now set June 2026 as the new target for its completion.

Muhammad Arham, a commuter affected by the delays, expressed his frustration, stating, "The BRT project has turned my daily commute into a headache, significantly increasing travel times and causing mental stress."

Mustehkam Pakistan urges all stakeholders to prioritize the timely completion of the Red Line BRT project to address the health hazards, economic impacts, and environmental effects on the people of Karachi.

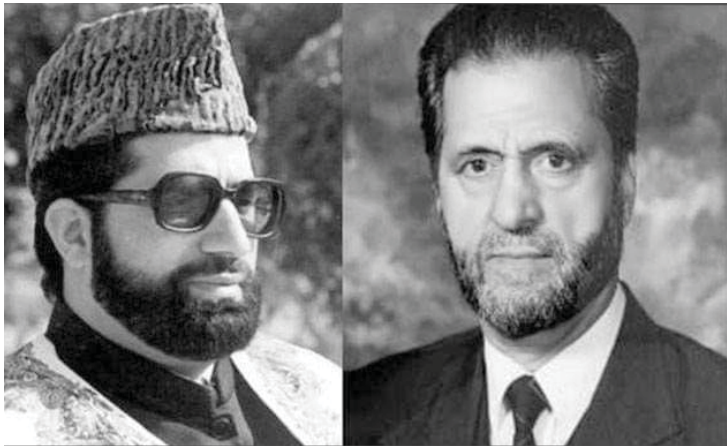
Martyrs will always be remembered and followed: JKLF

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Our freedom struggle is adorned with the blood of martyrs and therefore no power on earth can defeat it. Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone Shaheed and Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq Shaheed are among those martyrs who will always be remembered and followed. This was stated by the JKLF chief spokesman Muhammad Rafiq Dar.

On the occasion of martyrdom anniversary of these two great leaders, the JKLF spokesman in a press statement issued today from party's central information office said that today we remember Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone Shaheed and Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq Shaheed who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom.

Recalling the struggle and sacrifices



of Khawaja Abdul Gani Lone, Rafiq Dar said that he was one of the best politician, intellectual and Human being in the political circle of the State of Jammu

Kashmir. He always fought for the cause of freedom and went through hardships, sufferings and miseries. Shaheed Lone sahib rejected the

power and position, and after joining the freedom struggle in 1987-88 he never looked back, the spokesman added. He said that his death was a national loss for the State of Jammu Kashmir as he was a selfless well-wisher of this nation.

For being symbol of intellect and wisdom, the nation of Kashmir will never forget his sacrifices and the contributions he made during the struggle. Shaheed Lone sb will remain in our hearts for the ages to come, added Mr. Dar.

The JKLF spokesman said that today on the occasion of martyrdom anniversary of these two great leaders, JKLF along with the nation of Kashmir remembers and pays rich tributes to them for their role they played in the freedom struggle. The JKLF spokesman prayed to Almighty Allah for elevation in their position in Jannah.

Dawood Global Foundation is Pleased to Donate 155 High Standard wheelchairs

Kiran Asim



MULTAN: Additional Deputy Commissioner General Muhammad Saif and Vice Chancellor Nish-tar Medical University and Hospital Professor Dr. Mahnaz Khakwani have said that in today's era of inflation, providing wheelchairs to disabled and sick people is no less than a blessing and the number of patients in government hospitals is increasing. Considering the number of donations, Dawood Global Foundation is pleased to donate 155 standard wheelchairs and this charity is ongoing. Tara Azra Dawood said that so far we have distributed thousands of wheelchairs all over Pakistan and the real life is to serve the suffering humanity in this is our success in this world and the hereafter. Since the foundation has been running since then, we will continue to extend this chain. Dr. Abdul Wali, Dr. Shah Zaman, Usman Gilani, Dr. Ali Mehdi, Naem Al Hasan, Dr. Farzeen, Syed Shabir Bukhari and PMA President Prof. Dr. Masood Haraj were also present on this occasion. They appreciated the initiative of Dawood Global Foundation and He told other philanthropists and NGOs that they should also encourage patients by providing wheelchairs in as many hospitals as possible. Hundreds of wheelchairs were given in Chaudhry Pervez Elahi Institute of Cardiology Multan Victoria Hospital Bahawalpur, Sheikh Zayed Hospital Rahim Yar Khan.

Sui Gas Task Force Multan Action Against Sixty-Eight Customers

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: on the orders of Sui Northern Gas Pipeline Company Hussain Zafar, four meters disconnected. The siege against thieves. A consumer was using the household meter in Gulzeb Colony for commercial purposes, his meter was disconnected. In another case, a user was found involved in pulling gas by installing a compressor machine, the meter of which was disconnected and the compressor machine was also seized. In the third case, a user first changed the self-made meter and then reversed the meter. Its meter was disconnected. In the third case, a user was found on non-billing. Its meter and riser were also seized. In addition, the meter of one user in Mian Chanu was changed and sent to the laboratory due to the reverse, and the extension of more than fifty users on the billing report was removed in Mian Chanu. One meter was changed due to the reverse meter in Shujaabad and the extension of ten customers was taken down. In Multan, the extension of four customers was taken down. Today, Billing issued bills for fines of lakhs of rupees after the meter was tampered with in the meter laboratory report of the disconnected customers. The task force has received all the bills and handed them over to the special recovery team of the task force. So that the department can get recovery. The in-charge task force has praised the work of Mian Chanu in-charge Syed Zulqarnain and Shujaabad in-charge Usman Habib that they have taken timely actions against the gas thieves.



Dr Rubina Akhtar expresses gratitude to voters for support during election



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Dr Rubina Akhtar, the candidate of Constituency NA 148, while addressing the press conference, said that the people of NA 148 Constituency expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the voters for the respect and encouragement given by the people of NA 148 during the election campaign. He said that he considers it his duty to serve the constituency and will continue efforts to improve their lives and will solve the problems of women in particular. Due to the arrest of May 9, I got an opportunity to campaign only for 16 days, but I am very happy that in the form of an election campaign, he found out about going to the homes of the common people and knowing the problems of the constituency and got an opportunity to know the problems, difficulties and needs of the people. I have to serve which I will continue and solve their problems. Taslim Bano, Razia Sultana, Bisharan Bibi were present in the press conference.

All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference demands Kashmir Banega Pakistan rally to be held immediately

Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the legitimate demands of the people of Kashmir including Joint Public Action Committee should be resolved immediately.

It is important to resolve the problems of everyone, including the Joint Action Committee. Some have been resolved. When Kashmir became independent, there were four high schools in Azad Kashmir, today there are colleges and schools in the every Union Council as well. Now there is no such area where there is no electricity, road or water. All this was done by our leadership and up to Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan without any protest and no baton charge, teargas or



tear gas was used, but the leadership made sacrifices. Today, Azad Kashmir has become a peaceful region.

He expressed these views while addressing the consultation meeting held regarding Kashmir Banega Pakistan rally. He said that on May 25 Kashmir Banega Pakistan rally will start from Mujahid e Awwal shrine and will participate in the rally of Muzaffarabad Division in Kohala. All the rallies will go to Muzaffarabad. These rallies are being held because it was necessary to

eliminate the impact of the past events in Azad Kashmir.

The Muslim Conference has fulfilled its responsibilities in every difficult and critical period. He said that Quaid Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah declared Kashmir as the aorta of Pakistan and Mujahid e Awwal replied in the form of Kashmir Banega Pakistan. To guard the edict of Quaid-e-Azam, more than 6 lakh Kashmiris sacrificed their lives to raise the flag of Pakistan and complete Pakistan. Today some

certain elements want to spread ideological chaos in Azad Kashmir. All the political parties of Azad Kashmir should raise the awareness of solidarity with Pakistan in Azad Kashmir at the party level.

There are political differences between us, but there are a number of people who believe in the idea of joining Pakistan. After the rally in Muzaffarabad division, we will also hold rallies in Poonch and Mirpur divisions. On 25th, rallies will be taken out in Paki-

stan and around the world, including Azad Kashmir, and the Muslim Conference workers will raise the flag of Kashmir and Pakistan. We have done enough to raise the flag of Pakistan only in the rally.

The workers hoist the flag of Pakistan in their cars, motorcycles, trucks and shops. The picture of Mujahid e Awwal should be raised in Kashmir and Pakistan all over the world. The flag of Pakistan is a symbol of our honor and pride. It is a symbol

of numerous mujahideen, martyrs, ghazis and the best past and rich present and glorious future, so the flag of Pakistan cannot be undermined in any way. From 3 o'clock to 5 o'clock, the workers of the Muslim Conference gathered at the Press Club of Pakistan and hoisted the flag of the Muslim Conference, the flag of Kashmir and Pakistan. Preparations of Pakistan Rally in Muzaffarabad division are at peak. Later rallies will be held in all divisions.



Islamabad

30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:25am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	5:00 pm
Maghrib	7:06 pm
Isha	8:46 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

ISSI hosts Roundtable with SAARC Secretary General on

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organised a Roundtable Discussion, titled "Prospects and Challenges of Regional Cooperation in South Asia", with Ambassador Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). The event was attended by diplomats, academics, practitioners, and researchers of various Islamabad-based think-tanks and Universities.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood delivered welcome remarks.

During the Roundtable discussion, the importance of SAARC for the region was highlighted by the participants. It was noted that SAARC is a people-centric organization. It has played an instrumental role in addressing myriad of common challenges faced by member states like food insecurity, growing population, natural disasters, and deficient intra-regional trade and connectivity. Currently, among other things, the organisation envisions a 'SAARC Youth Charter', which will help promote cultural cooperation among youth of member states.

Chairman BoG ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, made concluding remarks.

Secretary FE&PT Spearheads the Revolutionary 'Each One Teaches One' Initiative

PPA

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark move to combat illiteracy in Pakistan, the Secretary of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (FE&PT), with the support of the National Commission for Human Development (NCHD), has announced the launch of the 'Each One Teaches One' (EOTO) initiative under the Prime Minister's Roshan Pakistan - National Literacy Drive. This groundbreaking program aims to eradicate illiteracy and empower citizens across Pakistan by mobilizing students from schools, colleges, and universities to serve as literacy teachers.

The EOTO initiative, meticulously designed and led by the National Commission for Human Development under the Ministry of FE&PT, aims to harness the potential of Pakistan's youth by engaging students from schools, colleges, and universities as literacy teachers. The Secretary's vision is to empower citizens across Pakistan through education, thereby contributing to the country's broader development objectives.

The Each One Teaches One initiative aims to reduce illiteracy rates, enhance life skills, and create economic opportunities for participants. The initiative targets 66,759 illiterate individuals in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), involving 185 educational institutions (150 schools and 35



colleges) and approximately 1,932 teachers in Phase I.

Students from Grade 9 and above in ICT schools, colleges, and universities will serve as Literacy Teachers. Each student will be

responsible for teaching illiterate individuals based on their educational level:

Grade 9th-12th (SSC-HSSC): Each One Teaches One learner.

Graduate (BA/BS): Each One Teaches Two learners.

Postgraduates: Each One Teaches Three learners.

In the first phase, EOTO is restricted to Each One Teaches One only.

The initiative follows a Ministry of Education-approved syllabus, including three Urdu and one Maths book along with a Teachers Guide. The duration of the literacy course is 12 weeks. Participating students will receive 10 marks as incentives, integrated into their curricular scheme. The initiative

will be rolled out biannually across all educational institutions in ICT, and newly literate individuals will have facilitated access to essential documents such as CNICs, driving licenses, and passports at no cost.

Future phases will expand the initiative to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and incorporate all educational institutions under the Federal Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (FBISE). The program will also involve students in distance learning courses and integrate digital literacy components.

"The Each One Teaches One initiative represents a groundbreaking effort to tackle illiteracy in Pakistan," said MoHyud-

din Ahmad Wani, Secretary of MoFEPT. "By harnessing the potential of our students and educational institutions, we can create a literate and empowered society. This initiative not only fulfills our constitutional and international obligations but also paves the way for a brighter future for all Pakistanis."

Mirza Nasir ud Din Mashhood Ahmad, Director General of NCHD, added, "Our collaboration with MoFEPT on the Each One Teaches One initiative is a pivotal step towards achieving universal literacy. Through comprehensive training and support, we aim to equip our youth with the skills needed to educate and uplift their communities."

Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Spain, Jose A. de Ory addressing inauguration ceremony of an exhibition held at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), in collaboration with Embassy of Spain, presented the inauguration of a captivating art exhibition by acclaimed Spanish artist Gonzalo Ruiz Navarro. Titled "Impressions of Pakistan," the exhibition offered a mesmerizing collection of modern impressionist works inspired by Navarro's profound experiences in Pakistan.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Mushaal visits Iranian embassy to condole tragic deaths of President Raisi, Hossein



PPA

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussean Mullick, former Special Assistance to Prime Minister (SAPM) on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran on Tuesday to convey her profound condolences to the government and people of Iran on the tragic deaths of President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Amir Hossain Abdollahian in a helicopter crash.

During her meeting with Iranian Ambassador to Pakistan Raza Amiri Moghadam, Mushaal, a wife of unlawfully incarcerated Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik, paid rich tributes to the late Iranian President.

"President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi was a great leader, a visionary person and a scholar of great credibility," she remarked.

The hurriyat leader said that she was deeply saddened and shock over the tragic demise of Irani President and FM along with and other senior officials.

Chairperson BISP Mrs. Rubina Khalid Reviews Anti-Fraud Measures With Technology Wing

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Mrs. Rubina Khalid, held an important meeting with the BISP Technology Wing to discuss the ongoing efforts and future strategies to counter fraudulent activities associated with BISP. The meeting was also attended by the Additional Secretary BISP, Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor.

The primary focus of the meeting was to brief the Chairperson about the Technology Wing's functions and the measures taken so far to combat fraud. Mrs. Rubina Khalid emphasized the need to publicly identify and shame those involved in fraudulent activities that defame BISP. She advocated for a "name and shame" policy to deter future misconduct and protect the integrity of the program.

During the meeting, Mrs. Rubina Khalid instructed the Technology team to organize a meeting next week with the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), and other relevant stakeholders to address and resolve security issues collaboratively. She also directed the Technology Wing to draft a comprehensive proposal to present to the FIA, aiming to strengthen their efforts in tackling individuals, organizations, and elements committing fraud in the name of BISP.

Mrs. Rubina Khalid instructed Additional Secretary Dr. Muhammad Tahir Noor to arrange a meeting with the National Socio-Economic Registry team of BISP. This meeting will focus on discussing the data-sharing mechanisms with relevant parties, reviewing the survey mechanism, and the registration of beneficiaries. Additionally, the geo-fencing of devices will be examined to enhance security protocols.

Pakistan makes a significant improvement on WEF's Travel and Tourism Development Index 2024

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Travel and Tourism Development Index ranks the countries based on the set of factors and policies that enable the sustainable and resilient development of the travel and tourism industry of each country.

Pakistan has shown significant improvements in its global rankings of the Travel and Tourism Development Index (TTDI). Keeping the base year 2019, Pakistan has improved 20 ranks and scores at 101 on the TTDI in 2024.

Speaking on the occasion, Aftab Rana, Managing Director of PTDC said, Pakistan's scores identify a significant improvement and shows the collective efforts of public and private sector partners under the umbrella of Pakistan Tourism Development Corpo-



ration (PTDC) and its team to achieve this target in making Pakistan a more attractive tourist destination.

He further said, the joint efforts of PTDC, provincial tourist departments, private sector partners, tourism educational institutions, development partners such as World Bank have played a pivotal role in moving forward on the path of growth in tourism sector over the past three years.

He further said that recently UN Tourism Organization (UNWTO) has also acknowledged Pakistan's outstanding performance in tourism, marking a remarkable 92% recovery to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

The country experienced a 115% surge in foreign tourist arrivals compared to the previous year, signaling a robust comeback in post-Covid-19 era.

Iranian people will never forget, deep concern and grief of Pakistan over death of President Raisi: Reza Amiri Moghadam

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Iran His Excellency Reza Amiri Moghadam has extended his heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Pakistan and its people for expressing sympathies and solidarity over the martyrdom of President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hussain Amirabdollahian and other dignitaries in the consequence of a helicopter crash.

The Ambassador was talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry who paid a visit to the Embassy along with a delegation to condole the death of President Raisi and other high-ups in the tragic incident.

The envoy while describing Pakistan a great friend of Iran said that President Raisi's vision of strengthening and promoting Pakistan-Iran relations would continue and all the agreements

inked on the occasion of his recent visit to Pakistan will be implemented letter and spirit and that there will be no change in the foreign policy of Iran.

He especially expressed his thanks to President and Prime Minister of Pakistan for sharing their deep concern and grief over the tragedy.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that late President Raisi was a bold, sincere and dedicated leader of the Islamic world. His efforts for peace and services for the nation are unforgettable and restoration of diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia was one of his big achievements for unity of the Muslim Ummah which elevated his stature as a true leader of the Islamic world. He also recalled the crystal clear stance of the late President over the Palestine issue.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the late President was keen to boost Paki-



stan-Iran trade upto \$10 billion and we are determined to fulfil his this dream.

He said that martyrdom of President Raisi is not the loss of Iranian nation only but the entire Muslim world and prayed to Allah Almighty for grant of the highest place in Jannah to the departed souls.

The President also registered his sentiments in the Condolence Book placed in the Embassy.

Former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari said that the late President was a statesmen whose contributions to his country and reinforcing Pakistan-Iran relations and regional cooperation will always be remembered.

Executive member Maqsood Tabish mentioned his elevation from an orphan child to the President of the Islamic state of Iran.

ICCI members Imran Cheenna, Khalid Chaudhry were also the part of the delegation.

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General Election: It's More Than The Economy

I believe that maintaining the unity of the UK is amongst the biggest challenges facing our country. The bond between England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has been built on our shared values and outlook. It is deep rooted and special. The recent English local election results show the dangers that lie ahead if our traditional values are not immediately reasserted as the anchor of the government's agenda underpinning economic recovery.

We are a country whose economic and political stability has been rooted in an evolutionary democracy. The EU referendum unleashed a chain of events that have enabled politicians and governments to pursue policies wholly unsuited for preserving our Union. This leaves us ill-equipped today to manage global challenges of increasing complexity and danger.

It is vital that the next government is one that voters believe has listened to them and will act in an honest and meaningful way to address their concerns. It must then deliver. This requires securing an electoral coalition of voters who believe that only by refocusing on our traditional values of tolerance, openness, fairness, and individual opportunity can we navigate to a position from which we can rebuild.

A strong government with a Parliament committed to repairing our institutional framework and delivering for our people is the need of our time.

It is heartening to see that the predictions of Lee Anderson delivering Reform election successes came to nothing in the local elections.

Nonetheless, there remains a pressing need to engage deeply with our work-

ing class communities to ensure they are stakeholders in the journey ahead. Coming from an English, northern working class community, I know the majority will reject the politics of division and hate once they feel valued and understood. The lure of the simplistic rhetoric of the nationalist right and left is fed on despair at being abandoned by mainstream politicians.

There is clear evidence that the public are unhappy and want change. The explicit assumption that change is coming in the form of a Labour government carries a danger. But our electoral system can produce capricious results. Many Conservative voters remain to be persuaded how to vote, despite their unhappiness with the divisive culture war politics pursued by Johnson, Truss, Braverman and disappointingly, to an extent, Sunak. While seeking their support, Labour also needs to regain its Muslim voters. Labour should not treat this as an either/or option. It needs both electorates.

Among the available options, there is alarming growth in support for the reactionary, populist, grievance driven politics promoted by both Nigel Farage and George Galloway and their allies. Both these men seek to weaken the rich tapestry of ties that bind our communities, undermine our established institutional framework and increase tensions between the constituent parts of the Union itself. Johnson's chipping away at our conventions and institutions has left a base for these extremists. Appealing to English nationalism and stoking sectarian anger

while offering simplistic proposals serves their purposes well. Politicians have a stark choice. Either bring our people together or let divide and rule flourish. We need a government that believes in the former. A government committed both to inclusive national unity and economic revival. Lack of social cohesion is detrimental both to the Union and the economy.

Among those feeling particularly excluded from mainstream politics are many British Muslims, most of whom have historically voted Labour. Too many Labour councillors and activists voted independent in the local elections. Others have aligned for now with George Galloway or the Greens. Yet the majority remain open to persuasion back into the fold. This task needs to be undertaken urgently, both for the cohesiveness of our society and to stop these communities being played by those opportunist politicians who revel in setting one group of citizens against another.

Great swathes of British Muslims feel a profound sense of betrayal by the Labour leadership over Gaza. These voters neither support Hamas nor are they anti-semitic. Why would they be? Muslims, Jews and Christians are all part of the Abrahamic faith tradition. They see the Conservative stance on Islamophobia for what it is - exclusionary, discriminatory and divisive. A country that allows such distinctions to persist can expect to see other forms of discrimination flourish. The rising anti-semitism must ring loud alarm bells. It is the canary in the coalmine and the

first sign of our society heading down a dangerous pathway.

It is disenchantment with the Labour Party for not upholding its own principles and the traditional British values that back international law that have led to these Muslim voters walking away. Without fear or favour, Labour must reassert its unequivocal commitment to both international standards of human rights and legal conventions governing the conduct of war. This will unify all sections of our population in all the constituent parts of the UK and wrong-foot those seeking to rip us apart from within. It is also a huge step towards reinstating our standing on our continent and globally.

Sadly, the current Conservative leadership offers nothing but a wrecking ball. That wrecking ball, in the hands of English nationalists, be it from the left or right, will destroy the Union and place England's minority communities in peril.

The next General Election will fundamentally determine which pathway we are on. Our electorate must understand what is at stake.

It is time to return to our norm of a consensual, democracy built from, and in, the political centre ground. The future of the Union and a stable, diverse but united society lies in the support for mainstream politics and the rejection of the divisive dangers of the extremes.

The write was the first British Muslim member of the European Parliament from 2004-2019. He chaired the European Parliament's Conduct Committee and Islamophobia Inter-Group. He is a lawyer, entrepreneur, international trade specialist and peace negotiator. He was born, bred and lives in Lancashire. He can be reached at @SHK_UK



Analysis

Sajjad Karim

Cabinet expresses dissatisfaction over probe Commission's report on Faizabad sit-in

The federal cabinet, with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, on Tuesday expressed its dissatisfaction over a report of an Inquiry Commission into Faizabad sit-in (dharna) by observing that the commission had not adhered to its Terms of Reference (ToR). The meeting directed to constitute a special committee of the cabinet that would submit its recommendations in this regard.

The Attorney General for Pakistan submitted an inquiry report over the matter and gave a detailed briefing to the cabinet, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. The cabinet also adopted a resolution expressing condolences on the shahadat of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their companions in a helicopter crash. The meeting also granted its approval to the recommendation of Ministry of Interior for duty and tax exemption on the equipment donated to Balochistan police by Guangdong Public Security Department, China. However, under Federal Excise Tax 2005, the federal excise duty would be imposed on these items. The cabinet directed that in future, such like donations and grants would be exempted from taxes. It also approved signing of memorandum of understanding between Pakistan and the United Kingdom with regard to handing over of three accused of Pakistani nationality on the recommendation of the ministry of interior. During the meeting, the National Livestock Breeding Policy, 2022 was presented by the Ministry of National Food Security and Research and the cabinet directed it to resubmit it after holding consultations with the private sector. While on the recommendation of ministry of national food security and research, the cabinet approved in principle the legislation work related to National Animal Health, Welfare and Veterinary Public Health Act 2024. A Cabinet Committee on Legislative would comprehensively look into the matter. The prime minister also directed for formulation of a mechanism under a private-public partnership project for establishing a quality slaughterhouse for Islamabad and its surrounding areas. The cabinet on the recommendation of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) granted its approval to ex-post facto on the relief goods dispatched to the Palestinians by the NDMA. The meeting was apprised that the government of Pakistan had sent 931 tons of relief goods via six airplanes and two ships.



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

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

The AAC, representing a diverse coalition of voices, emerged as a catalyst for social and political change, advocating transparency, good governance, and meeting socio-economic needs. Thousands gathered in Muzaffarabad, AJK's capital, to raise awareness about pressing issues such as unemployment, inflation, and inadequate services, demanding reductions in electricity and flour prices, as well as curbing elite privileges. From young activists to seasoned campaigners, participants expressed frustration with the status quo and urged concrete action to address socio-economic disparities. Encouragingly, the Pakistani Government swiftly responded to the protests, approving funds to meet the demands, recognizing their legitimacy.

The tourism sector has been severely impacted by the Awami Action Committee's protests, greatly affecting local businesses as Azad Kashmir's hotels and tourist spots remain deserted. These decisions have dealt a severe blow to the local tourism industry, and the people look to the Public Action Committee and the government for solutions to improve the situation. Collective protests often attract a mix of individuals with varying intentions. While some remain aligned with the protest's core objectives, others seek to exploit the situation for personal gain, spreading negativity. This dichotomy was evident in these protests, with few

elements advocated anti-Pakistan sentiments and even endorsed independence. However, it's important to clarify that these voices do not represent the majority of Kashmiris. Investigating external influences seeking to incite violence in protests and manipulate public sentiment against Pakistan and its armed forces is crucial. Another aspect to consider is that although the protest for these demands began approximately a year ago, why wasn't it effectively managed beforehand to prevent escalation upon reaching the capital city of AJK? Who should be held accountable for this oversight? An inquiry into this negligence is warranted. Furthermore, there needs to be an investigation into why, despite the Prime Minister of Pakistan and other stakeholders

approving the protesters' demands, the local administration failed to promptly communicate these developments to the protesters. Additionally, why did local management fail to address these issues before they reached a critical point and turned violent? While the incident and its tragic consequences have passed, fundamental questions remain unanswered, necessitating resolution to prevent similar issues, violence, and bloodshed in the future. It was noticed that certain elements persistently engaged in spreading false propaganda against Pakistan and its armed forces, particularly on social media platforms, both prior to and during the protests. Some elements have also made unsuccessful attempts to steer

this protest towards advocating for an Independent Kashmir, a direction that does not reflect the desires of the majority of the people of AJK. However, the protests in AJK were primarily centered around addressing local grievances and were not directed against the nation or its military. It is crucial to initiate an investigation into these activities to pinpoint the individuals or groups responsible for such malicious intentions. Additionally, there is a need to explore the possibility of involvement by foreign entities and adversaries. In today's interconnected world, misinformation and propaganda are pervasive, often employed to tarnish the reputation and credibility of nations and their military forces. Propaganda, characterized by biased or deceptive information aimed at manipulating public perception, poses a significant threat to societal stability and cohesion. Whether disseminated through traditional media channels, social platforms, or other avenues, propaganda can foster discord, breed distrust, and fuel division among citizens.

The strong sentiment echoed by the populace of Pakistan and AJK is that of unity and genuine affection. Kashmir's fate is undeniably linked with Pakistan. Efforts to instigate animosity between Kashmiris, Pakistan, and the Pakistani military are disconnected from the actual situation and misdirected. Indeed, the people of AJK express gratitude towards Pakistan, the Prime Minister, and the Army Chief for promptly addressing the protesters' demands and allocating funds. The ill intentions of our adversaries will not succeed. All segments of Pakistani society are united in their patriotism for the nation and its armed forces.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

'Cultural Diplomacy' and Pakistan

Neyaiish Tauseef

The era of race of cultural prepotency to illustrate the positive image of a country is on its peak. Each country is trying to present the best of its culture to the world under the elegant name of "Cultural Diplomacy". A way of attracting the world wide public and portraying the positive image of the country before them is the present time's keen desire of the countries world crosswise. Astonishingly, the cultural diplomacy has been practiced since ages but the traditional security emphasis left these measures behind somewhere. Now, the world is engaged in so many serious conflicts and to avoid them non-traditional security measures are more often signified.

The cultural interactions of Pakistan and China regarding the Cultural Diplomacy are the way to achieve cultural recognition in both countries. The CPEC brings boom of China's language and cuisine with it. The cultural festivals such as, the Lantern Festival is elevating the culture of China among the Pakistani public. There should be a way round, the Pakistani culture should also be honored and practiced in China with the similar pace also. These Chinese ambitions increase the understanding of their culture among the Pakistanis many folds which is a positive impact on their soft image building. There is a need not to limit such drives to China but also resource them in collaboration with other countries.

Pakistan and India share history, culture, norms and values most in the Asia. If the genuine efforts are made the cultural collaboration will lead to better relations among the neighbors. The shuffling of people-to-people ties between the neighboring states was way better through the Kartarpur Corridor initiative. The open door given to Indian Sikhs to visit the Holy Shrine was undoubtedly an impactful move towards the Cultural Diplomacy. The artists of the both countries hooked up many times throughout the post-Independence history. The Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed in 1988 and Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation of 2012, needs to be emend for the sake of cultural cooperation among the two.

The Ministry of Culture and Heritage, Pakistan is stimulating the cultural diplomacy through the mean of cultural exchange program. These programs are usually architected bilaterally for the public-to-public interactions and magnify the positive image of the Pakistan. The cultural diplomacy exchange programs are organized with Iran, Saudi Arabia,

Turkey and America habitually. The cultural festivals are now motivated towards gaining more limelight on social and digital media. This eventually increases the familiarity of the Pakistani culture in the world.

The National Institute on Cultural Study working under the Ministry of Culture and Heritage contributes in education and research in the domain of the cultural diplomacy. This provides with an exceptional understanding of what public wants and what to do to the authorities. Once, the objectives are clear and well-defined, the way of implementation became easy to cross. Under the Ministry of Culture and Heritage the "Pakistan Cultural Week" and "Pakistan Heritage Day" are held to promote the culture of Pakistan. The social media has provided us an effortless access to the world's public. We need to share and spread the fragrance of our diverse culture across the world. Undoubtedly, the measures are being taken but they are not enough to join the race and compete with the other countries. Also the measures lack public interaction and direct contact. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan is still on the way of using social and digital media for the cultural promotion. Pakistan is blessed with the versatile talent in ever field; the need is only to utilize it in meaningful ways.

What Pakistan need is not to border these drives to the specific countries but to expand them across the world. Pakistan is in a need of detaching the negatives tags from it. The time is to foster a positive image before the world and appeal the world's public. The youth all over the world should be invited to make them familiar of Pakistani culture. It is acknowledged more capable to bring change through the minds of youth. The world is now just away from us on a single click; the need is just to exercise the potential we have in a positive way before the world.

The room for making more efficient efforts is there, the need is to understand and implement them effectively. The efforts on the individual as well as on the governmental level should be made the "Soft Image" of Pakistan sparkle through the lens of the culture. Culture demands to be spread across the borders to be alive elsewhere the culture dies. There is always a need to the cultural revival. What we have left behind should bring back as a common practice of our everyday lives. Once we own our culture proudly, we will be able to make it familiar to the public worldwide. In the world of chaos, cultural diplomacy practices are considered able to bring peace and stability.

Writer is student in Fatima Jinnah Women University (Department of Defense and Diplomatic Studies)

Astana Hosts SCO Foreign Ministers Council Meeting



Spokesman Report

ASTANA: Twenty-two resolutions regarding multilateral cooperation in the political, diplomatic, trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian sectors were signed at the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states on May 21 in Astana. The meeting was chaired by Murat Nurtleu, Kazakh Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

The meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation

Organization (SCO) member states. Photo credit: The Astana Times

Attendees included Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Secretary of the Minister of External Affairs of India Dammu Ravi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy of Iran Mahdi Safari, Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Jeenbek Kulubaev, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Mukhriddin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbek-

istan Bakhtiyor Saidov, SCO Secretary General Zhang Ming, and Director of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Executive Committee Ruslan Mirzayev attended the meeting. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, Sergei Aleinik, also took part in the meeting.

Nurtleu welcomed the meeting participants and asked for a moment of silence to honor Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, and other diplomats who died in the helicopter crash on May 19.

During the meeting, the heads of delegations exchanged views on the international and regional situation, security, and the development of cooperation within the SCO in the political, trade, economic, cultural, and humanitarian spheres.

The participants noted the organization's effective activities aimed at ensuring regional security and stability, as well as the prosperity and well-being of its peoples. They emphasized that in today's challenging geopolitical environment, the SCO's authority and influence in world affairs are growing stronger.

SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming highlighted in his speech that the organization's modernization process is enabling it to not only maintain its operations at a steady pace but also to enhance its activities in certain areas. In the face of the "three forces of evil," he expressed confidence that the organization will continue to contribute to preserving international security and will provide member nations with all the support they need. He also spoke about the activities of the SCO Secretariat in political, diplomatic, trade, economic, cultural, humanitarian, and administrative-legal areas.

Comprehensive preparation and agenda for the Astana SCO Summit, scheduled for July 3-4, were among the primary topics covered at the meeting. The sides approved a list of topics and documents submitted for consideration for the Heads of SCO member states, including the SCO Initiative on World Unity for Just Peace and Harmony, and the draft roadmap for the development of interaction with the SCO dialogue partners.

"Kazakhstan's chairmanship in the

organization has been very meaningful and interesting. I am confident that with the support of the SCO state members, the Astana summit will be successful and will provide new impetus to the organization, becoming another important milestone in its development. For our part, we are ready to provide maximum assistance in its preparation and conduct," Zhang said.

The sides agreed to enhance cooperation in ensuring regional security and combating terrorism, extremism, separatism, drug trafficking, cybercrime, and other areas. A special focus was placed on the organization's growth, namely the conclusion of Belarus's admission process to the SCO.

Kazakhstan is chairing the SCO from July 2023 to July this year. During its chairmanship, Kazakhstan has arranged more than 180 events in various fields. In light of the SCO Year of Ecology, the nation has particularly focused on environmental issues, as well as economic, investment, transportation, and humanitarian operations throughout its term.

Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari visits the Pakistani Embassy in Doha

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in Doha, Qatar, on Monday. He was warmly welcomed by Pakistan's Minister/Deputy Head of Mission, Syed Mustafa Rabbani, along with Community Welfare Attache, Mr. Waheed at the Pakistani Embassy.

Chairman PRCS, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, engaged in discussions with Syed Mustafa Rabbani, focusing on humanitarian collaboration and cooperation. The meeting, held at the embas-



sy, addressed various topics including the services provided by the Pakistan Red Crescent, fostering relationships

with the Qatar Red Crescent Society, and strategies to enhance humanitarian efforts aimed at alleviating the suffer-

ing of vulnerable communities, particularly flood-affected people in Pakistan. During the meeting, Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari provided an overview to Pakistan's Minister/Deputy Head of Mission in Qatar regarding Red Crescent's historic assistance to the 2022 monsoon flood affected and the Biparjoo response through multifaceted interventions. He highlighted PRCS's efforts in augmenting the humanitarian activities by the government of Pakistan, NDMA, and Armed Forces, leveraging the strength and resources of its 1.8 million volunteers.

Minister/Deputy Head of Mission, Syed Mustafa Rabba-

ni, commended the exemplary services rendered by the Pakistan Red Crescent and expressed appreciation for Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari's leadership in advancing humanitarian initiatives.

He assured his support for engaging PRCS with the Pakistani diaspora in Qatar for mobilization, sensitization and awareness about the PRCS's humanitarian mission, and also channelling the funding support and program collaboration to provide optimal humanitarian services to those in need and linking PRCS with Qatar Charity and different organizations working in Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister meets with his Kazakh counterpart

Spokesman Report

ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today met with Kazakh Foreign Minister Murat Abugaliuly Nurtleu on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in Astana. They reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and regional connectivity projects.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Dar conveyed Pakistan's full support for Kazakhstan during its Presidency of the SCO Heads of State Council. He emphasized enhanced regional connectivity for the prosperity and development of the SCO region.

The two Deputy Prime Ministers underlined the importance of regular convening of various institutional mechanisms to tap the true potential of Pakistan-Kazakhstan ties. They agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the spheres of trade, regional connectivity and tourism.

Bank of Khyber announce a tripartite arrangement with ILink and Quickpay



PPA

ISLAMABAD: he arrangement was signed by Jawad Hassan Khan, Divisional Head Alternate Delivery Channels, BoK, Bashir Khan, COO, ILink; and Wajahat Farooq, Regional Business Head North Region, Quickpay. Asim Bashir, Group Head Digital Banking, along with Shaikh Mashhood ur Rehman, CIO, Muhammad Ali Shahbaz, Divisional Head Automation, Saqib Shahzad, Senior Project Manager, and Shaharyar Zafar, Dept Head Media, Analytics, and Strategy were also present amongst the senior management at the event along with Omer Afzal.

This signifies a commitment to faster and more efficient business enrolment. Previously, online billers were onboarded onto the ILink platform through Quickpay which required individual participation memorandums and extensive documentation. This new initiative streamlines the process by authorizing BoK to sign these on behalf of approved online billers, eliminating the need for repetitive KYC documentation and ILink compliance checks.

LONGi Showcases Cutting-Edge Solar Energy Solutions at International Solar Energy Meet Exhibition & Summit (ISEM)

PNP

LAHORE: LONGi, a global front-runner in solar panel manufacturing, unveiled its latest innovations at the prestigious ISEM International Solar Energy Meet Exhibition & Summit held at Expo Center Lahore. The event served as a platform for LONGi to introduce its diverse range of products tailored specifically for the Pakistani market, with the spotlight on its groundbreaking offering, the LONGi Horizon with the slogan 'LONGi Horizon for Pakistan'.

LONGi Horizon stands out as a bespoke solution meticulously crafted to meet the unique demands of the



Pakistani market. This cutting-edge module, LR5-28HTH, is designed to deliver exceptional performance in varying environmental conditions,

ensuring reliability and efficiency in energy production. Offering a power output range of 215-225M, the LONGi Horizon provides flexibility and scalability for diverse applications, catering to the evolving needs of customers.

With a 5-year warranty for both materials and processing, as well as an additional 5-year warranty for extra linear power output, LONGi Horizon exemplifies the company's commitment to quality and customer satisfaction. Its impressive 21.6% max module efficiency ensures maximum energy production, while the 0-3% power tolerance guarantees consistent and reliable power output under real-world conditions.

Mashreq Pakistan selects PTCL to expedite the bank's Digital Transformation journey

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and Mashreq Pakistan, a part of Mashreq which is the leading financial institution in the MENA region, have signed an agreement for the provisioning of primary data center colocation services at PTCL's Tier-III Data Center facility.

In the esteemed presence of Mohamed Abdel Razek, Group Head of Technology, Transformation and Information, Mashreq, Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO, Mashreq Pakistan, and Umar Farooqi, Group Director Enterprise PTCL, Mashreq Pakistan's Chief Information Officer, Khurram Abid, and PTCL's

Group Chief Business Services Officer, Zarrar Hasham Khan signed the agreement at a special ceremony recently held at PTCL Data Center II, Karachi.

PTCL is providing Mashreq Pakistan with its state-of-the-art infrastructure and platform solutions that are equipped with the latest technology & managed security. Mashreq is actively progressing towards acquiring a restricted license from the State Bank of Pakistan to initiate pilot digital retail banking operations in Pakistan.

On the occasion, Mohamed Abdel Razek, Group Head of Technology, Transformation and Information, Mashreq, said, "We are pleased to sign this agreement with PTCL as our trust-

ed partner for infrastructure and platform hosting as part of the Bank's digital transformation strategy. This partnership signifies a transformative step forward in the Bank's approach to infrastructure, platforms and data management. By leveraging PTCL's data center and telecommunications expertise, Mashreq aims to achieve an enhanced and reliable operating leverage, and reduced time-to-market of products and services."

Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO, Mashreq Pakistan, said, "Mashreq's digital initiatives and partnerships are designed to not just meet but exceed customer and partner expectations, to drive digital transformation and foster financial inclusion across Paki-

stan. Our partnership with PTCL showcases our commitment to Mashreq's agile operating model, enabling us to be ready to meet the changing demands of the market and our customers."

During the signing ceremony, Zarrar Hasham Khan, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said, "We are pleased to sign an agreement with Mashreq Pakistan to support them in fulfilling their business needs. PTCL, being a national company, is leading the digitalization effort across the country. Through such partnerships, PTCL continues to play its key role in the development of telecom infrastructure by providing innovative and secure solutions to the corporate sector that



will further contribute towards the overall economic growth of the country."

PTCL endeavors to provide

best-in-class services to its corporate customers across various industries in Pakistan. This agreement is part of the growth

momentum in the diverse areas of ICT and Security Solutions, which is key to a digital banking ecosystem in Pakistan.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
75,206.77	75,084.00
Day's High	Day's Low
75,482.46	74,958.09
Index Value	Change
7,862,049,765	+122.77
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	21 May, 2024 5:00 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,416.45	-7.75
Percentage	Time
-0.092%	21 May, 4:35 pm GMT
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,807.92	+1.15
Percentage	Time
+0.0029%	21 May, 1:28 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,946.93	-122.75
Percentage	Time
-0.31%	21 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Pakistan Energy Symposium 2024

OICCI and Shell Pakistan Unite to Address Energy Challenges

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), and Shell Pakistan Limited are jointly hosting the Pakistan Energy Symposium. This dynamic event, curated by Nutshell Group, will take place on May 22, 2024, at a local hotel in Islamabad and aims to address the pressing energy challenges and opportunities in Pakistan.

The Pakistan Energy Symposium—'Powering the Future' will bring together leading experts, policymakers, industry leaders, and stakeholders to engage in meaningful dialogue on the future of energy in Pakistan. The symposium will cover a wide range of topics, including sustainable energy solutions, energy security, innovation in the energy sector, and policy frameworks to support the energy transition.

The event aims to drive progress and innovation in the energy sector. Attendees can expect a day of insightful discussions, valuable networking, and forward-thinking ideas that will shape Pakistan's energy landscape.

Pakistan Energy Symposium will host a sterling lineup of speakers including Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives; Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum & Water Resources; Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division); Rehan Shaikh, CEO, Standard Chartered Pakistan & President, Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI); Waqar Siddiqui, CEO & Managing Director, Shell Pakistan Limited; Dr. Nazir Abbas Zaidi, Secretary General, Oil Companies Advisory Council; Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi, CEO, K-Electric; Masroor Khan, Chairman, Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA); Ahmed Zahid Zaheer, Country Chairman & General Manager, Chevron Pakistan Lubricants (Private) Limited; Adil Khattak, CEO, Attock Refinery Limited; Habib Haider, Head of Corporate Relations, Shell Pakistan Limited and Asrar Muhammad, VP, Finance and Commercial, United Energy Pakistan.

Illicit Cigarette Trade in Pakistan

NUST report highlights threat of illicit cigarette trade to national exchequer

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Current excise duty structure on tobacco products had pushed the consumers to down-trade from legally compliant cigarette brands to illegal tax-evaded brands easily available all across Pakistan, because of which the national exchequer was expected to face a revenue loss of around PKR310b annually with illicit cigarette brands having more than 60% of the total market.

This was highlighted in a report titled, 'Illicit Cigarette Trade in Pakistan - Current Situation and Way Forward', produced by the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST). The report was formally launched in a ceremony held at a local hotel.

Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and the Pro-Rector of Research Innovation and Commercialization, NUST, Dr. Rizwan Riaz graced the event. They were briefed on the complex challenges in administration, revenue collection, policy coordination, and market dynamics, of the cigarette industry which are causing significant tax revenue losses for the national exchequer. Additionally, the inadequate



enforcement of existing laws, rules, regulations, and policies has further bolstered the illicit sector.

While quoting efficacy of the Track and Trace System (TTS) under the government's enforcement regime, the report mentioned that the TTS had been aimed at reducing the levels of illicit trade in the country. Contrary to

that goal, the illicit trade had increased since its implementation. This increase of illicit cigarette trade is feared to cause the market shares of the illicit sector to exceed 60% of the total market in 2024, leaving a dwindling legitimate sector share.

To counter the challenges faced by the legitimate tobacco industry, the report urged the

government to come up with a well thought-out strategy including excise duty structure reforms, modified price threshold, increased enforcement of the law against sales of non-compliant brands, and extensive and consistent implementation of TTS. Increased law enforcement especially in the areas like AJK could help reduce infiltration of local tax-evaded brands into Pakistan, which is the main component of the illicit cigarette trade with a share of 90%, the report suggested.

During his speech, Mr. Asif said, "Track and Trace system can only work when it is coupled with proper retail level enforcement. It was done by the previous Government as a tick in the box exercise. We are revisiting this system and will ensure that the right system is installed."

He further said, "Our enforcement measures in AJK are bearing fruit with more than 4 billion cigarette sticks worth of raw material being seized. Furthermore, closure of counterfeiting factories in Islamabad, Multan and Jamshoro showcases the resolve of the Government against illicit trade. We are aware of this issue and are tightening the noose on this annual PKR300b loss."

Visit

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ahmar Ellahi, Accountant General of Pakistan Revenues alongwith senior officers visiting all sections of the AGPR on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

SECP conducts Workshop on Collaboration with China in Capital Markets



PPA

KARACHI: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) held a workshop in Karachi to explore areas of potential collaboration in capital markets between Pakistan and China. The purpose of the workshop was to benefit from the experience and ideas of financial market experts and veterans. The workshop was chaired by Mr. Akif Saeed, Chairman SECP. The participants included Mr. Abdul Rehman Warrach, Commissioner SECP, senior management of SECP, and experts from capital market infrastructure institutions, brokerage houses, banks, insurance companies, and asset management companies. The participants

deliberated ways to strengthen connections between the capital markets of both countries and to enhance Chinese investment in Pakistan's capital markets. Specific suggestions included exploring cross listings between the respective stock exchanges, establishing joint ventures between Chinese firms and their local counterparts, and creating Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs) to provide Chinese investors with easier access to Pakistan's capital markets.

The discussions further delved into ways to strengthen Pakistan's infrastructure, strive for continuous digitalization, increase the stock market investor base, and attain greater international financial integration. The need for further awareness on stock market as well as creating linkages between capital markets and the real economy was also emphasized during the workshop.

AkzoNobel's debut 'Dulux Experience Store' brings the magic of paint to consumers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Ushering in a new era of immersive experience for Dulux paint consumers in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, AkzoNobel Pakistan Ltd, today inaugurated its first Dulux Experience Store in the city in the IBM Mall, T chowk, Main GT Road, Rawalpindi.

A first-of-its-kind concept in the Pakistan paint industry, the Dulux Experience Store is developed on the concept of "See, Touch and Feel", helping paint consumers relish Dulux's superior quality and customer service under one roof.

"At AkzoNobel, we always go the extra mile, working with and for our consumers to anticipate their needs, tailor specific solutions and exceed their expectations - taking them further than they can go. Our decorative paint brand Dulux is privileged to the first choice of paint consumers in Islamabad, which is among the Top 4 paint markets in the country. Striving to be a trusted partner for our valued consumers, our debut Dulux Experience Store aims to help families in Islamabad and Rawalpindi



to personalize their home painting journey with more confidence and convenience", said Mubbasher Omar, Chief Executive Officer, AkzoNobel Pakistan Limited.

At AkzoNobel, we realize that families are increasingly considering many factors while choosing paint for their homes. However, getting credible information under one roof is still a challenge. Addressing all consumer concerns under one roof is our new Dulux Experience Store at the IBM mall.

Here Dulux paint experts empower

consumers to conveniently personalize their painting journey, right from globally on-trend colour inspiration to colour selection among more than 2,000 colour options of Dulux paints.

At the Dulux Experience Store, Dulux also aims to elevate the peace-of-mind of homeowners through the Dulux Assurance program. This #DuluxKaWaada gives confidence to consumers that Dulux paint will give them the Perfect Colour, Uniform Finish and the Coverage stated, else the paint will be replaced*.

Combating Malnutrition: Vital Imperative for Pakistan's Population and Economic Prosperity

Nauman Malik

The pervasive threat of malnutrition in Pakistan poses a formidable challenge, particularly among its highly vulnerable child population. Inextricably linked to poverty, malnutrition perpetuates a distressing cycle of deprivation, necessitating a comprehensive approach that addresses socio-economic factors. It is important to highlight the urgent need for concerted action by diverse stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, civil society, and the private sector, to combat malnutrition effectively.

Malnutrition in Pakistan is intricately entwined with the widespread poverty plaguing the nation. The scarcity of financial resources and limited access to nutritious sustenance perpetuate a relentless cycle of malnutrition, primarily afflicting marginalized communities. To address this profound challenge, it is imperative to confront the underlying socio-economic factors that contribute to its prevalence. Effectively addressing malnutrition demands a collaborative effort among multiple stakeholders. Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the private sector must forge strong partnerships and

foster multi-sectoral cooperation. By capitalizing on pooled resources, expertise, and innovative solutions, a comprehensive approach can be adopted to combat malnutrition holistically.

Iron deficiency assumes alarming proportions within the malnutrition landscape, exerting far-reaching consequences on Pakistan's economy and healthcare system.

The financial burden of treating malnutrition-related illnesses and ailments places an overwhelming strain on the already resource-constrained healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, malnourished children face hindrances in attending school and exhibit substand-

ard academic performance, which undermines their potential contributions to the future workforce. Consequently, the nation's economic growth and development suffer from a diminished pool of skilled and productive labor.

Among the various manifestations of malnutrition, iron deficiency emerges as a significant health concern for Pakistani children. This insufficiency gives rise to severe consequences such as stunted growth, heightened susceptibility to illnesses, chronic fatigue, respiratory difficulties, and compromised cognitive abilities.

Subsequently, affected children experience elevated rates of school absenteeism and encounter educa-

tional setbacks, further impeding their prospects for a successful future.

Sustained commitment is vital to translate political promises into tangible actions that yield meaningful impact.

One promising avenue for combating malnutrition lies in food fortification, wherein essential nutrients are added to commonly consumed food items.

This sustainable, long-term solution holds immense potential for preventing malnutrition. The food industry assumes a pivotal role in addressing this challenge by fortifying products such as milk and milk powders, with a particular focus on improving the nutri-

tional status of young children.

Fortified dairy products can significantly contribute to combating iron deficiency and enhancing overall nutritional well-being.

The issue of malnutrition in Pakistan demands immediate attention from decision-makers. Its multifaceted impact on health and the economy cannot be disregarded. By prioritizing evidence-based solutions like food fortification, the nation can embark on a trajectory toward a healthier and more prosperous future for its children.

It is incumbent upon all stakeholders to accord due importance to this pressing issue and allocate adequate resources to safeguard the well-being of the most vulner-

able segments of society.

Malnutrition remains an urgent and critical challenge in Pakistan, particularly among its susceptible child population. Addressing this issue requires a comprehensive, collaborative, and evidence-based approach that tackles the intertwined factors of poverty and socio-economic disparities.

By prioritizing effective strategies such as food fortification, decision-makers can pave the way for a healthier and more prosperous Pakistan.

Let us collectively recognize the significance of this pressing issue and commit to the necessary investments to secure a brighter future for all.

Martyrs' bodies arrive at Mehrabad Airport

Bodies of martyred President Ebrahim Raisi and Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian arrived at Mehrabad Airport on Tuesday afternoon (May 21, 2024) with the welcome of members of the government delegation, as well as military and country officials.



IRNA
Ali Sharifzadeh

NA Speaker expresses condolences over tragic demise of President Raisi and others in helicopter crash

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has expressed profound sadness and extended his deepest condolences to the people of Iran over the unfortunate demise of the President of Iran, His Excellency Ebrahim Raisi, the respected Foreign Minister Dr. Hussein Amir Abdollahian, and other distinguished dignitaries, in the helicopter crash.

In a letter addressed to Dr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq conveyed his heartfelt sympathies, stating, "The news of this heartbreaking incident has deeply saddened the entire global community. Pakistan stands in solidarity with Iran during this period of immense grief.

The loss of such eminent leaders is not only a tremendous loss for the people of Iran



but also for the entire Muslim Ummah."

Reflecting on the significant contributions of the deceased leaders, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq remarked, "We mourn the departure of visionary leaders who dedicated their lives to the service of their country and the Muslim world. Their loss is irreparable, and our thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families and the Iranian nation as they navigate through this tragedy."

Dar reaffirms Pakistan's adherence to SCO charter, warns against bloc-based geopolitics

Spokesman Report

ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday addressed the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) wherein he reiterated Pakistan's firm adherence to the SCO Charter and the "Shanghai Spirit" standing for mutual trust and respect for shared prosperity. In his statement, the deputy prime minister warned against bloc-based or confrontational geopolitics and advocated for a multipolar world firmly grounded in multilateralism.

He explained Pakistan's priorities as the current Chair of SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) which included promoting connectivity, transport links, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, and enhanced practical cooperation among SCO member states. The deputy prime minister



called for upholding international law and the UN Charter, emphasizing the people's right to self-determination and peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. He stressed the need to combat the menace of terrorism through collective and cooperative approaches including by addressing its root causes. He urged the rejection of myopic and self-serving interests to use the mantra of terrorism for political gains. Ishaq Dar strongly condemned the barbaric Israeli

onslaught in Gaza, which had resulted in the killings of over 35,000 innocent civilians, mostly women and children. He reiterated Pakistan's firm call for an unconditional and urgent ceasefire and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance. He also emphasized the need to realize the two-state solution for durable peace and stability. On the Afghanistan situation, he called on the international community to meaningfully engage with the Interim Afghan Government (IAG) for the genuine economic and development needs of Afghanistan and urged the IAG to ensure that Afghan soil was not used for terrorism against any country. The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan's geostrategic location offered an ideal trade and transit hub for the SCO region, and underlined the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for regional connectivity and

economic integration. Highlighting the climate change, the deputy prime minister called for collective efforts to address the challenge as any failure in this regard would put global security at stake. He said despite contributing less than one percent of the global emissions, Pakistan suffered huge economic and life losses consequent to the climate change-induced floods which necessitated capacity building of developing countries to overcome the issue. Dar told the gathering that Pakistan fully supported the reform process in the SCO which should also feature an enhanced monitoring and implementation capacity in the security and economic field. The deputy prime minister started his remarks with condolence over the sad demise of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the Iranian foreign minister and others, and sympathised with the

Chairman, Pakistan PM's Youth Program calls on Bangladesh's Minister for Youth and Sports

Spokesman Report

DHAKA: Chairman, Prime Minister of Pakistan's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, met Bangladesh's Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr. Nazmul Hassan on the sidelines of 1st D-8 Youth Ministerial Meeting in Dhaka. Matters of mutual interest with focus on bilateral sports and cultural linkages were discussed during the meeting. Secretary, Ministry of Youth & Sports, Dr. Mohiuddin Ahmed was also present during the meeting.



IHC gives four days to AGP to recover Kashmiri poet

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior and defence secretaries are expected to appear in the Islamabad High Court on Tuesday (today) as the single-judge bench resumes hearing a petition seeking the recovery of Kashmiri poet Ahmed Farhad Shah. On Monday, presiding judge Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani said that the intelligence agencies should shed the perception of their involvement in forced abductions. Shah was allegedly abducted from his home last week. The

Human Rights Commission of Pakistan had called on the authorities for his immediate release.

Last Wednesday, his wife approached the IHC and requested that he be found and produced before the court and to identify, investigate and prosecute those responsible for his disappearance.

Justice Kayani had ordered Senior Superintendent of Police Jameel Zafar to retrieve Shah at any cost, warning that he would otherwise summon the defence secretary. The judge had issued a notice to

the defence secretary in the next hearing.

Hours later, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar said that all the institutions should work within their constitutional domains.

At a press conference, he said that the government was ready to provide full assistance to the police for the recovery of the missing poet Ahmed Farhad.

The defence ministry had told the court through the additional attorney general that Farhad was not in the custody of any institution, he added.

Deputy Prime Minister's visit to National Hospital Bishkek and meeting with Kyrgyz Deputy Chairman of Cabinet of Ministers



Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: Immediately after arrival in Kyrgyzstan, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited the National Hospital, Bishkek to meet Mr. Shahzaib, a Pakistani textile worker who was injured during the recent mob violence in Bishkek. Deputy Prime Minister Dar was received at the hospital by Deputy Chairman of the Kyrgyz Cabinet of Ministers Edil Baisalov and Kyrgyz Minister of Health Alymkadyr Beishenaliev.

The Deputy Prime Minister inquired about the health of Mr. Shahzaib who expressed a desire to return to Pakistan. At a special request by the Deputy Prime Minister, the Kyrgyz authorities have decided to discharge him and to let him

undertake further treatment in Pakistan. He will travel to Pakistan with the Deputy Prime Minister on the special aircraft.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar also held a very productive meeting with Kyrgyz Deputy Chairman of Cabinet of Ministers Edil Baisalov. Deputy Prime Minister Dar took up the issues relating to the welfare of Pakistani textile workers living in the Kyrgyz Republic. The Kyrgyz leader expressed readiness to find an early resolution to their visa status issues and regularise their continued stay in the Kyrgyz Republic.

The two sides also agreed to initiate discussions on a government-to-government labour mobility agreement and to strengthen trade and economic ties between the two countries.

FM Aurangzeb meets with Delegation of Pakistan Retail Business Council



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Retail Business Council (PRBC) led by Chairman PRBC Mr. Ziad Bashir called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division today. Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Mr. Ali Pervez Malik also attended the meeting.

The PRBC delegation expressed their appreciation for steps being taken by the Government to improve economic conditions in the country. They also extended their support for FBR's Tajir Dost Scheme. Additionally, they informed the Finance Minister

about the challenges being faced by the retail businesses. They highlighted the need for the inclusion of untaxed undocumented retail sector in the tax net. Furthermore, they gave proposals to encourage documented business in the country.

The Federal Minister acknowledged their concerns and mentioned that McKinsey & Company has been engaged to assist the FBR's end-to-end digitalization, which will broaden the tax net. He also apprised the delegation that he has asked Minister of State Mr. Ali Pervez Malik to oversee this task on a day to day basis to ensure timely completion of this exercise.

CCP approves product supply agreement between Aramco and GO Petroleum

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has granted a time-bound exemption on the relevant clauses of product supply agreement between Aramco Trading (ATC) Fujairah FZE Ltd and Gas & Oil Pakistan Ltd (GO Petroleum) for importing and selling Gasoline and diesel products to Pakistan.

ATC Fujairah, registered in the United Arab Emirates, is one of the world's largest integrated energy and chemicals companies. Gas & Oil Pakistan Ltd, an Oil Marketing Company (OMC) registered in Pakistan that operates a network of retail outlets across the country that sell petrol, diesel, and lubricants.

Under the referred agreement, ATC Fujairah intends to meet GO Petroleum's demand for essential petroleum products for its outlets, which primarily includes gasoline and diesel. The parties submitted to the CCP that this arrangement is expected to achieve economies of scale in procurement for GO Petroleum,

potentially resulting in better prices for Pakistani consumers. Accordingly, the exemption sought was on exclusivity aspects of the commercial agreement to supply 100% demand of imported products for GO Petroleum's retail outlets.

CCP while considering the matter sought information on how the arrangement will enhance distribution network and resultant benefits will translate for the consumers. It also sought the status of approvals from relevant regulators on fuel stations, fuel terminals and storage depots. CCP also considered how synergy between the GO Petroleum and ATC Fujairah will benefit the economy and consumers besides enhancing competition in the relevant market.

CCP grants exemptions pursuant to Section 9 of the Competition Act, 2010, inter alia ensuring that such exemptions have the economic benefits that outweigh the anti-competitive effects. Besides, this promotes economic progress for the benefit of consumers and results in improving production and distribution.