



China urges U. S. to stop using Taiwan as tool to contain China

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Tuesday urged the United States to earnestly abide by its commitments of not using Taiwan as a tool to contain China, and stop hollowing out the one-China principle. Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a daily press briefing in response to a query about U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's "congratulations" to Taiwan region's new leader. (Details on Page 5)



PM Rishi Sunak announces UK general elections on July 4

British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak called a national election for July 4 Wednesday, saying Britons would be able to choose their future in a vote his Conservatives are widely expected to lose to the opposition Labour Party after 14 years in power. Ending months of speculation as to when he would call a new vote, the 44-year-old stood outside his Downing Street office in pouring rain.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the Supreme Leader of Iran, His Eminence, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, the Leader of Islamic Revolution on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz meets Iran's Supreme Leader Khamenei, offers condolences

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meets Iran Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran on May 22, 2024. Acting President of Iran Dr Muhammad Mokhber was also present during the meeting. PID

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Wednesday and offered condolences on the death of former president Ebrahim Raisi and his companions in a helicopter crash, Radio Pakistan reported.

"President Raisi was a visionary leader," he said

during a meeting with Khamenei in Tehran. "Services of Raisi for the unity of the Muslim Ummah and oppressed people of Gaza will always be remembered."

Raisi, a hardliner long seen as a potential successor to Khamenei, was killed in a helicopter crash in mountainous terrain near the Azerbaijan border, officials and state media said earlier today.

The charred wreckage of the helicopter which crashed on Sunday carrying Raisi, Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and six other passengers and crew was found early on Monday after an overnight search in blizzard conditions.

PM attends memorial ceremony of late President Raisi, FM Abdollahian; expresses condolences

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday attended the memorial ceremony of late President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi, late Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their companions, who embraced martyrdom in a tragic helicopter crash in the eastern province on May 19. During the ceremony, the prime minister arrived at the hall where the body of late president

was placed. The prime minister prayed for the high ranks of the departed soul and paid tribute to President Raisi's contributions towards progress and prosperity of the Iranian nation, promotion of Pak-Iran bilateral ties and efforts for the region. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also expressed condolences, on behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan, to Acting President Dr. Mohammad Mokhber, PM Office Media Wing said in a

press release. The prime minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and SAPM Tariq Fatemi. On the occasion, the prime minister said that the government and people of Pakistan received the news of martyrdom of President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim

Raisi, late Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and their companions with huge shock and grief. They shared the grief and sorrow of the bereaved families and the people of Islamic Republic of Iran and offered their sincere condolences, he added. He further expressed sympathies with the bereaved families and the Iranian nation, adding the entire Pakistani nation stood with the brotherly country of Iran in these difficult moments. Lauding the contributions of late Iranian

president, the prime minister said that Dr Raisi was a great friend of Pakistan, adding the memorable time he spent among the people of Pakistan during his last month's visit, would always be remembered. He also conveyed good wishes to the Iranian Vice President on assuming the office. Earlier, upon arrival at the airport, Iranian Minister for Road and Urban Development Mehrdad Bazrpash and Ambassador of Pakistan in Tehran Mr. Mudassar Tipu received the prime minister.

Islamabad police raid PTI Secretariat after Hammad Azhar shows up after a year



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad police raided the PTI Secretariat on Wednesday to arrest former finance minister Hammad Azhar after he showed up at the party's central secretariat in Islamabad, the party claimed. They left almost an hour after completing the search operation.

"I, along with other party leaders, were sitting when we were informed that police entered the office without any warrant," PTI Central Information Secretary Rauf Hassan said in a video shared by the party on social media platform X.

Upon inquiring, he said that the federal capital police were after Azhar. "When we asked them for a warrant, they said who are you to ask us for it."

The former minister left for Peshawar before a police team led by City SSP Khan Zeb and Karachi Company SHO Muhammad Naeem raided the party's office, sources told

Aaj News.

Azhar had reappeared after almost a year away from the public eye. He went into hiding last year after a crackdown against the party leadership last year following the May 9 events.

"I received a message from Imran Khan last night after the attack on Rauf Hassan. He directed that it is now time for me to join the party leadership," he said in a brief interaction with media personnel after arriving at the party central secretariat in Islamabad.

He said that he showed up at the office to meet Hassan. "I will then go to Peshawar and seek interim bails and request more time. I will also appear in Punjab courts and will then leave the matter to the Almighty. After the kind of attack on Rauf Hassan, I don't think it's right to stay hidden anymore."

Azhar stated that he would fight all the cases against him in Punjab courts, adding: "I'm not guilty in any of them."

Fact-finding committee formed on Bishkek violence as over 4,000 students return: Dar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: With the return of around 4,000 students to Pakistan from Bishkek consequent to an incident of violence, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has formed a fact-finding committee to look into the factors leading to the happening besides assessing the role of Pakistan's mission there in handling the situation. "For our own satisfaction, for the satisfaction of the ministry and the prime minister, we have decided to form an inquiry committee under Additional Secretary (Admin) Muhammad Saleem.

This will carry out the fact-finding as how these developments took place. It will interact with the relevant people including at Pakistan mission and the Kyrgyz government," Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said addressing a press conference on his return from Bishkek.

Ishaq Dar, who visited Astana to attend the meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign



Ministers flew to Bishkek from there along with his Kyrgyz counterpart, said the committee would submit its report within two weeks.

He told the media that the federal ministers had to cancel their visit to Bishkek on the suggestion of Kyrgyz authorities, however, during his interaction with Kyrgyz counterpart in Astana, he conveyed his desire for the visit to meet the Pakistani national affected by the violence, which led to his trip there. During the visit to Bishkek, the deputy prime

minister met Pakistani worker Shahzaib at the hospital who suffered a jaw fracture in the incident. He later flew back to Pakistan in the deputy prime minister's special aircraft, after the Bishkek health authorities allowed him to travel to his homeland, on his desire.

The deputy prime minister was told by the Kyrgyz authorities that the violence was not Pakistan-specific; however the matter was settled with the Kyrgyz president publicly announcing zero tolerance for any such violence in the future.

Dar said that the Kyrgyz government assured him that they would take the perpetrators to task though some have already been arrested. They said the Kyrgyz government considered foreign students their valuable guests who contribute to the national economy. The deputy prime minister said that on his request, the Kyrgyz authorities agreed to regularise around 1100 Pakistani workers who were about to be deported for overstay.

FIR registered as per Rauf's request: ICT Police

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police on Wednesday rejected the objections of PTI Spokesman Rauf Hassan on the First Information Report (FIR) registered against unknown transgressors for attacking him on Tuesday.

According to an ICT Police spokesman, the FIR was lodged on the basis of a written application submitted by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader bearing his signatures and a thumb impression, and relevant sections of law, including murder attempt and threat to kill, besides causing injuries.

Rauf Hassan's legal team was also present when he submitted the request for lodging of the case, he added.

PTI demands judicial commission over attack on Rauf Hassan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf has demanded the formation of a judicial commission on the attack on its central information secretary Rauf Hassan, who was injured after unidentified people assaulted him outside the office of a news channel on Tuesday.

At a press conference in Islamabad on Wednesday, PTI leader Omar Ayub described the attack as terrorism and alleged that Hassan was targeted. "It was an assassination attempt."

According to Islamabad police, Hassan was attacked with a blade and eyewitness-



es stated that he was hit in the face with a blade by a "transgender person".

The CCTV footage showed a person interacting with Hassan when he was walking towards the parking area after coming out from the TV office. Shortly, three other persons joined and they attacked him.

Ayub stated that the judicial commission should "immediately be formed" to investigate the attack.

Continued on Page 8

PM to visit UAE today



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising key ministers of his cabinet will pay a visit to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Thursday. This would be the prime minister's

first visit to the UAE since his election.

During the visit, the prime minister is expected to meet President of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed. "The two leaders will discuss bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE

with special focus on trade and investment. Prime Minister Sharif is also likely to hold meetings with other Emirati dignitaries, businesspersons, and heads of financial institutions," Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement. Pakistan and the UAE have long-standing fraternal relations deep root-

ed in religio-cultural affinity. Frequent high-level exchanges form a distinguishing feature of brotherly ties between the two countries. "The Prime Minister's visit marks an important step towards further deepening multifaceted bilateral collaboration between Pakistan and the UAE," it was further added.

AJK Muslim Conference to pay tribute to Mirwaiz Maulvi and Khwaja Abdul Ghani

Abdul Majeed Tahir

TATTA PANI/ARJA/RAWALKOT: President All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that Mirwaiz Maulvi Muhammad Farooq and Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lon pay tribute to them on their martyrdom day. are the heroes who sacrificed their lives for the freedom movement. Martyrs of Kashmir are our pride. The Kashmiri people will continue their mission of martyrdom till the liberation of Jammu and Kashmir from Indian rule. He said that the Kashmiri people will always remember the services of Mirwaiz Maulvi Muhammad Farooq and Khwaja Abdul Ghani Lone for the struggle for freedom, development and secure future. He said that the two Hurriyat leaders fought tirelessly for the freedom of Kashmir despite all the conspiracies, oppression and tyranny of India. Speaking on the occasion of lunch given by Mirza Haroon Jaral, the active leader of Conference Youth Wing. On this occasion, former DG Raja Irshad Khan, Sardar Saleem



Chaghatai, Raja Amjad Arif, Mastri Muhammad Afsar, Raja Asif Sayad, Shah Rukh Arbab. Abbasi, Sardar Azhar Nazr, Syed Azhar Ali Shah, Sardar Kamal Khan Advocate, Khwaja Muhammad Javed, Qazi Masood, Syed Imtiaz Hussain Shah, Sardar Amjad Aslam, Sardar Nawaz Hayat Khan, Syed Wasim Shah, Sardar Ilyas Khan, Haseeb Awan, Raja Babar Moazzam., Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah, Raja Mazhar Hayat, Syed Zahid Hussain, Shah Rukh Arbab Abbasi, Chaudhry Ilyas, Syed Zain Arif Kazmi, Syed Jafar Kazmi, Hamad Kazmi, Syed Murtaza

Kazmi and a large number of other workers of the Muslim Conference were also present. The conference further said that even today the entire Kashmiri people are paying homage to the martyrs of Hawal and the great Kashmiri martyrs who sacrificed their lives for national freedom. The Indian government has martyred the Kashmiri resistance leadership through conspiracies, executions and unnecessary use of military force. The whole world is seeing that the Indian imperialism has killed Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq Shaheed, Abdul Ghani

Lone Shaheed, Sheikh Abdul Aziz Shaheed, Syed Ali Geelani Shaheed, Muhammad Maqbool Butt Shaheed, Muhammad Ashraf Khan Sahrai Shaheed, Muhammad Afzal Gaur, and many leaders of Azad Kashmir Movement. Martyred the leaders. He further said that India cannot weaken Azad Kashmir movement through military coercion, terrorism, terrorism and conspiracies. The Kashmiri people will continue their struggle for the freedom of the state and the safe future of the new generation. Meanwhile, President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan condoled with his brother Sardar Haji Tahir Siddique on the death of former city president of Jammu and Kashmir People's Party Sardar Khalid Mehmood in Rawalkot. Later Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan called on former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Azad Kashmir Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi at Tata Pani rest house and discussed matters of mutual interest besides issues facing by the people of residing Line of Control.

Protection of lives of Citizens is the First Priority of Traffic police: Jalil Imran Galazai



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Multan Chief Traffic Police Officer Jalil Imran Galazai has said that students and citizens are our precious capital. He expressed these views while speaking as a special guest at the speech competition organized on the topic of (safe roads, safe nation) in connection with traffic rules awareness campaign at Punjab College Mumtazabad campus. The aim is to raise the awareness of road safety among children and to make the roads safe. Students can make sure to wear helmets and don't rush on the roads. Careless driving is a constant threat not only to the driver and his family, but to everyone on the road. Roads are the guarantee of a safe nation. He appreciated the commitment of the traffic police and expressed his determination to walk side by side with the traffic police.

Traffic Education Incharge Farrukh Mehmood and Humira explained road safety and accident prevention measures and gave special lectures. At the end, the chief guest distributed prizes to the students who took positions. Director Osama Bashir gave Commemorative shields were also given to Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) and other traffic officers

DFP recalls Mirwaiz M Farooq, Khawaja Abdul Ghani on their martyrdom anniversary

Abdul Majeed Tahir

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

In a statement issued here today, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal, while recalling the martyred leaders' contribution to the ongoing freedom struggle said that the duo would be remembered for a long time in the annals of Kashmir history for their unprecedented role and supreme sacrifices the duo had rendered for the noble cause of freedom.

Reaffirming his party's stand on the issue of Kashmir, the DFP spokesman reminded the international community that the election drama staged in the region by the Indian government cannot be a substitute to plebiscite.

Wazir tribes Peace Jirga held in Wana, Demand from Govt to establish peace in Waziristan.

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: A Wazir tribe grand Jirga held in the name of peace in the Kari Kot area of Wana, Lower South Waziristan District, on wednesday.



On this occasion Former provincial assembly candidate Taj Wazir, who led the Peace Jirga, said that the main purpose of holding the Aman Jirga was to send a message to the world that we want peace, abhors unrest and desire education.

Other leaders participating in the Peace Jirga expressed fear that the peace in Wana would be disturbed once again.

The Grand Jirga unanimously decided that we will not allow anyone to disturb the peace in Waziristan.

Jirga members said that it is the responsibility of the government to establish peace, the government should take concrete steps to establish peace in the region.

Jirga participants said that if anyone tried to disturb the peace, they would be forced to start a strong protest.

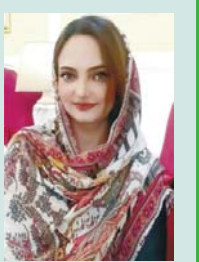
Former provincial assembly candidate Taj Wazir added, a few days ago, unknown persons blew up the building of Under Construction Girls Academy, Wana with the help of private organization Wana Welfare Association.

Wazir said this incident is not only regrettable but also a shame for the government.

Attack on Central Information Secretary of Tehreek-e-Insaf sad and condemnable: Sara Ali Syed

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Imran Khan should be released immediately if the arson and encirclement is not proved. Chief Justice High Court to release innocent people from jails. The government should resolve the issue through negotiations. These views were expressed by Senior Vice President Insaf Lawyers Forum (ILF) Punjab Advocate Sara Ali Syed Said. She Further said that the attack on PTI leader Rauf Hasan is a very cowardly act. We condemn the attack on Rauf Hassan as a very despicable act. No one will be safe from such measures that have been initiated. It has not sent a good message to those who have done this. There is a need for political stability in the country. Every party should be allowed to do politics within its sphere. She said that if the arson and encirclement could not be proved, the PTI leadership and workers should be released. We appeal to the Chief Justice High Court that innocent people should be released from jails, steps should be taken for political stability in the country and the tradition of revenge politics should end and all issues should be resolved through negotiations. Advocate Sara Ali Syed. She said that the people are suffering from despair, there is chaos everywhere and the political workers who speak for the rights of the people are being targeted for revenge. False cases filed against Imran Khan are deliberately delayed. Arrest of lawyers and family members, ban on meetings with party leaders, black night of oppression is now over the country, unprecedented in the country's history. All issues should be resolved through negotiations.



Hot weather

RAWALPINDI: A young boy covered his face with cloth on his way at Murree Road during hot weather in the city.



Photo: Online

Jamaat-e-Islami pays condolence visit to Khana Farhang Islami Iran

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Amer-e of Jamaat-e-Islami district Multan Dr. Safdar Hashmi paid a condolence meeting with Khanum Zahida Bukhari, in-charge of Khana Farhang Islami Iran, Multan.

The Muslim Ummah is like a single body. The suffering of the Iranian nation is the suffering of the Muslim Ummah. Ummah has lost a courageous ruling leader. Jamaat-e-Islami is with the Iranian nation in this sorrow. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Dr. Safdar Hashmi along with a delegation paid a condolence meeting to the in-charge Khanum Farhang



Khanum Zahida Bukhari at Khana Farhang Islami Iran Multan today..

On this occasion, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Dr. Safdar Hashmi said

that the way President Shaheed tried to strengthen relations with the neighboring Muslim countries actually provoked Taghut. Taghut wants to break the Ummah. The way Iran responded to Israel's aggression in Palestine, the entire Muslim Ummah praised its bold move. Jamaat-e-Islami has a long-standing relationship with Iran, and we are with the Iranian nation in this time of sorrow. At the time of the revolution of Iran, Imam Khomeini (RA) gave a slogan, "La Sharqiya La Gharbiya Islamiya Islamiya, we must be one." On this occasion, Maulana Hadi Hussain, Divisional President of Majlis Wahdat Muslimeen, Multan was also present.

Mehsud tribes demand KP Govt to resolve issue of District headquarters SWU

Adam Khan Wazir

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: The decision to establish the district headquarters of South Waziristan Upper (SWU) could not be resolved after two years and the issue of shifting district offices of line departments from District Tank is still pending.

A grand jirga of students and social personalities including various political parties of Mehsud tribes was held at Najeed Shaheed Kot Ladha subdivision on wednesday regarding the establishment of district headquarters South Waziristan Upper.

Local journalist Shakir Mehsud told Dawn that the local people are campaigning from house to house to establish the district headquarters of

Upper S Waziristan in the appropriate location.

He said while jirgas are being organized repeatedly by the local residents and apart from this, people are also preparing for a peaceful protest.

Local journalist Shakir Mehsud added, the former provincial government of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Khyber Pakhtunkhwa divided South Waziristan into two districts on 12 December 2022, in which one district was named as Lower South Waziristan and the other as Upper South Waziristan.

He said but instead of setting up district headquarters in both the districts, the provincial government seems to be lagging behind.

On this occasion spokesperson of Center Waziristan Youth Trust, Chairman Ishaq, Chairman Noor Alam, Mufti Ibrahim and elder Javed Mehsud said, that for the development of Upper South Waziristan, prosperity and settlement, establishment of district administration offices from Tank district to the areas of Upper Waziristan is the urgent need of the hour.

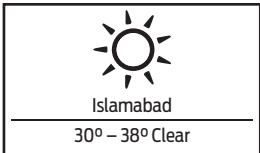
Jirga participants said that we are conducting door-to-door campaigns all over Upper Waziristan and are in contact with various political leaders and social figures including regional elders at different places.

They added that we have also requested the elected members of the provincial assembly and nation-

al assembly to support our demand, they expressed hope, the two public representatives will represent us on the floor of the National and Provincial Assembly.

Jirga participants said that present Deputy Commissioner Upper Waziristan and all his staff are also sincere in shifting the district headquarters offices from Tank district to Upper Waziristan.

Jirga participants strongly demanded from Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur that the issue of the district headquarters of Upper Waziristan should be resolved immediately so that the basic problems of the life of the people of Upper Waziristan can be resolved.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:24 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	5:01 pm
Maghrib	7:07 pm
Isha	8:46 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886

Railway workers' union demands 100% increase in government salaries and allowances

PPA

RAWALPINDI: Mubarak Hussain, Central Information Secretary of the Railway Workers Union and other officials said that the salaries and allowances of government employees should be increased by 100%, the budget should be labor friendly. If the budget is not presented labour-friendly, the railway workers' union will again start a protest campaign against inflation and privatisation.

These views were expressed by Mubarak Hussain, Central Information Secretary of the Railway Workers Union, on the occasion of a special meeting with the members of the Executive Council of the Railway Workers Union Tara Nishan Open Line divisional officials and local officials. Central Joint Secretary Tahir Mehmood Bhatti, Divisional Leaders Shaukat Raza, Sharafat Hussain, Mushtaq Khan, Chaudhry Shabbir and others also spoke on this occasion. Central leaders and officials said that government sources are saying that up to 50 percent increase in salaries and 30 percent increase in pensions is likely. On the other hand, President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari suggested to the government that the salaries and allowances of government employees should be increased by 100%. Because the salaries of government employees are low and inflation has made routine their life. They said that a Bag reduction in the price of a bag of flour by 1000 rupees, reduction in the prices of petrol oil and diesel is considered as a welcome move.

Climate Change ministry in collaboration with NDMA going to initiate GLOFIII project: Romina

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam has stated that she is going to initiate GLOF III project to protect the glacial water resources of Pakistan. She was holding a meeting with Chairman NDMA lieutenant general Inam Haider Malik HI(M) and it was agreed that

NDMA and ministry of Climate Change would jointly work on this project.

The both sides reiterated to closely collaborate on heat waves, natural disasters and upcoming floods in the country. It was also decided to formulate a joint strategy to save the wildlife vulnerable species during the upcoming floods.

Chairman NDMA and PM's Coordinator on climate change Romina Khurshid Alam also thoroughly discussed the upcoming COP29 and it was agreed that the both sides would closely collaborate on preparing of reports, documentaries, recommendations for upcoming UN global summit being held in Baku at the end of this year. PM's Coordinator also apprised the highest acknowledgement of COP29 president & minister of ecology & natural resources of Azerbaijan H. E. Mukhtar Babayev about Pakistan's



cooperation, commitment and technical support for the COP29.

PM's coordinator also agreed with the proposal of chairman NDMA to set up a joint project bank by NDMA and MoCC for long term sustainable development projects and to avoid the duplication of efforts.

Condolences

ISLAMABAD: Allama Syed Sajid Ali Naqvi, Mr. Tazeen Akhtar, Editor, Pakistan in the World Magazine, Mr. Naveed Ahmad Khan, Editor, Daily The Spokesman/Daily Imroze extend heartfelt condolences over the martyrdom of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi Shaheed, Foreign Minister Abdullahian Shaheed and other colleagues to Dr. Reza Amiri Moghadam, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Iran at Iranian Embassy Islamabad:



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Synergy Group celebrates its Silver Jubilee Anniversary

PPA

KARACHI: Synergy Group, a leader in the integrated marketing communication (IMC) industry, celebrated its 25th Anniversary recently.

Founded in 1999 by Ahmed Kapadia, Synergy Group began its journey with a clear mission of fostering a work culture where teamwork, experimentation, and knowledge-sharing are paramount. The Group's 25th Anniversary was marked by celebrations of its achievements, collaborative culture, and continuous

growth. "Synergy Group's success over the years is a testament to our unflinching belief in the power of collaboration, innovation and limitless potential," said Kapadia, Chairman of Synergy Group.

"From our humble beginnings, we have always encouraged our team to dare to dream big, experiment, learn, and grow together. It is this spirit of unity, teamwork and the challenger mindset that has driven us to achieve remarkable milestones over the past 25 years."

Understanding the challenges and the opportunities that the world of IMC offers in Pakistan, Synergy Group remained ahead of the curve and established brands and companies that are involved in BTL marketing, digital media, public relations, media buying, publications, and activation campaigns.

Synergy Group's crowning moment came when it won its first international award at Abby Awards and was officially lauded with two Silver Awards at iCOM for the Asia Pacific region. In total, it has

won more than 200 awards including 25 Awards at PDA, 11 Effie Awards (six of which came this year), two PAS Awards, 10 APNS Awards, 17 PAA Awards, and one win each at Dragons of Asia and Dragons of Pakistan.

Synergy Group remains committed to its core values of collaboration, innovation, and learning. With plans to expand its services and explore new markets, the Group is poised to continue its legacy of excellence and drive forward with the same passion and dedication that marked its inception.

Synergy Group celebrates its Silver Jubilee Anniversary

PPA

KARACHI: Synergy Group, a leader in the integrated marketing communication (IMC) industry, celebrated its 25th Anniversary recently.

Founded in 1999 by Ahmed Kapadia, Synergy Group began its journey with a clear mission of fostering a work culture where teamwork, experimentation, and knowledge-sharing are paramount. The Group's 25th Anniversary was marked by celebrations of its achievements, collaborative culture, and continuous growth.

"Synergy Group's success over the years is a testament to our unflinching belief in the power of collaboration, innovation and limitless potential," said Kapadia, Chairman of Synergy Group.

"From our humble beginnings, we have always encouraged our team to dare to dream big, experiment, learn, and grow together. It is this spirit of unity, teamwork and the challenger mindset that has driven us to achieve remarkable milestones over the past 25 years."

Understanding the challenges and the opportunities that the world of IMC offers in Pakistan, Synergy Group remained ahead of the curve and established brands and companies that are involved in BTL marketing, digital media, public relations, media buying, publications, and activation campaigns.

Synergy Group's crowning moment came when it won its first international award at Abby Awards and was officially lauded with two Silver Awards at iCOM for the Asia Pacific region. In total, it has won more than 200 awards including 25 Awards at PDA, 11 Effie Awards (six of which came this year), two PAS Awards, 10 APNS Awards, 17 PAA Awards, and one win each at Dragons of Asia and Dragons of Pakistan.

Synergy Group remains committed to its core values of collaboration, innovation, and learning. With plans to expand its services and explore new markets, the Group is poised to continue its legacy of excellence and drive forward with the same passion and dedication that marked its inception.

ISSI hosts "Global Bridges" delegation from Germany



PNP

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an in-house meeting with a delegation from 'Global Bridges', Germany. The 17-member delegation - including decision-makers from politics, business, academia and media-exchanged views with the ISSI side that included Director General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Chairman BoG Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Director China Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) Dr. Talat Shabbir; Director CSP Dr. Neelum Nigar; and other members of CSP and CPSC.

Dr. Talat Shabbir presented an overview of the broad range of ISSI's research work and outreach. Dr. Christian Altenhofen made remarks about Global Bridges' mission and initiatives as well as the purpose of its study tour to Pakistan.

In his remarks, DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood shared perspective on the evolving global geopolitical landscape, noting the key economic, security and power dynamics influencing international relations. He highlighted the broad spectrum of traditional and non-traditional security threats and challenges at the global level, underlined the transformation visible in the global order, and stressed the importance of addressing global issues through a collaborative rather than combative approach. He also highlighted how Pakistan was navigating this complex web of geopolitics and was focused on accentuating its pivot to geo-economics.

Lyallpur Museum is playing its full role in preserving history: Alhaj Naseer

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Calligrapher from Lyallpur Hafiz Anjum's magnificent display of calligraphic art is worth seeing, Central President of Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra said while talking to the media. He wrote his historical words in the visitor's book while looking at the works of calligrapher Hafiz Anjum (deceased). The Creator of the universe has said in his last heavenly book, the Holy Quran, that by the pen and what it writes, it is as if this word is a mirror of the greatness of the divine pen and writing. The art of calligraphy has an important place in the culture and history of Islam. This art belongs to the wonderful traditions of about 14 centuries. Naseer Vohra further said that the great tradition of calligraphy has remained very stable in the Indian sub-continent as well as in the Islamic world. The Muslim calligraphers here ignited this art with new innovations. One such example is that of Pakistan's famous calligrapher and artist Hafiz Anjum (deceased). While



His devotion to calligraphy, the ancient great member of Islamic arts, had brought him to Pakistan's international fame and award-winning status. Former director of Arts Council and Lyallpur Museum Tariq Javed Chaudhry, in-charge Lyallpur Museum Sajid Sattar and others were also present in this visit.

CBD Punjab creates history by signing 16 MoUs in one day for NSIT city

PPA

LAHORE: Signaling a new era of economic and technological advancement, the Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has made history by signing 16 MoUs in one day for CBD NSIT City. The MoUs were signed in the presence of Chief Minister of Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, witnessed CBD Punjab forging crucial alliances with 12 leading Chinese companies, 3 prominent Turkish firms, and a notable Pakistani IT enterprise.

The historic signings were executed by COO of CBD Punjab, Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua, alongside officials from the partnering companies. Distinguished attendees included Federal Minister for IT Sheza Fatima, Provincial Minister for Information Punjab Azma Bukhari, Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman, CEO of CBD Punjab Imran Amin, foreign diplomats, members of the Punjab Cabinet, and various officials from CBD Punjab.

Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, remarked on the significance of these partnerships, stating, "These MoUs are not just agreements they are a testament to the trust and confidence that the international business, IT, and education sectors have in the potential of NSIT City. We are committed to fostering a conducive environment that will fast-track the establishment and growth of Pakistan's premier and biggest IT hub."

NUML 23rd Convocation held

PNP

ISLAMABAD: 23rd Convocation of the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) was held at the Jinnah Convention Centre Islamabad on Wednesday. Honourable Chairman Higher Education Commission (HEC) Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed was the Chief Guest. 849 students were conferred upon degrees along with 47 students were awarded gold medals. Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (Retd), Pro Rectors, Deans, Registrar, Directors, Heads of Departments, and a large number of students along with their parents attended the Convocation.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Guest Dr. Mukhtar congratulated the students, parents, and teachers on the successful completion of degrees in various disciplines. He emphasized upon the importance of ethical outlook of the students besides mental



and physical learning and said that it is your moral and intellectual duty to utilise your abilities and talents for the progress of your motherland and the prosperity of your fellow countrymen. Earlier, Rector NUML Major

General (Retd) Shahid Mahmood Kayani welcomed the honourable Chief Guest and highlighted the achievements and contributions made by NUML in various fields of education. While addressing the graduates

Rector NUML said that you are the guardians of the future, entrusted with the noble task of employing your talents and insights for the advancement of humanity and the preservation of our world at large.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**
 (mszk786@gmail.com)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
 Email: **spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com**
 Whatsapp: **0346-5008408**

Managing the Student Crisis in Kyrgyzstan: A PR Perspective

Despite the Pakistan government's extensive efforts to manage the crisis involving students in Kyrgyzstan, social media platforms, particularly X (formerly Twitter), were rife with criticism regarding the perceived mishandling of the situation. Many users expressed frustration over the initial delay in government response and the lack of clear communication during the early stages of the crisis.

Concerns were being raised about the adequacy and timeliness of the measures taken to ensure the safety and well-being of the students. Criticism also focuses on the reported instances of students being left without food and shelter, highlighting a perceived disconnect between official statements and on-ground realities.

Parents and relatives used X (banned and slowdown in Pakistan) to voice their anxieties and dissatisfaction, questioning the government's preparedness and ability to protect its citizens abroad.

However, the Pakistani government's response to the crisis involving Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan serves as an excellent case study in effective public relations (PR) and crisis management. The government's response started rolling after the Prime Minister fired a tweet showing his concern over attacks on Pakistan students by local mob in Bishkek on 17 May while according to Kyrgyz authorities 41 victims sought medical help.

The government, though a bit late starter, demonstrated its prioritization of the issue through rapid, high-level intervention. The Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Minister of Interior, and Minister of Infor-

mation immediately got involved. The Prime Minister also coordinated efforts on the ground by speaking directly with the Pakistani Ambassador in Kyrgyzstan.

Effective communication strategies played a crucial role in managing the crisis. Multiple press conferences were held to provide accurate information and updates, ensuring transparency and keeping the public informed. This approach helped manage panic and prevent misinformation. Additionally, updates and reassurances were shared on social media platforms and government websites, allowing the government to reach a wide audience quickly.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar reached Bishkek, the capital of Kyrgyzstan. He met with Mr. Shahzaib, a Pakistani textile worker in hospital who was injured during the recent mob violence in Bishkek.

He met with Deputy Chairman of the Kyrgyz Cabinet of Ministers Edil Baisalov and Kyrgyz Minister for Health Alymkadyr Beishenaliev and took up the matter of the unfortunate incident and issues appurtenant to it. He also held a meeting with a group of Pakistani medical students at Bishkek Airport and assured them the commitment of the Government of Pakistan to the welfare of overseas Pakistanis. He also held a detailed meeting with Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Kulubaev Zheenbek Moldokanovich in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan and discussed the unfortunate incidents of violence against Pakistanis. He hoped that those responsi-

ble for the violence would be held accountable.

The Deputy Prime Minister also took note of the losses of the student in terms of education and financial losses of the parents and promised that a meeting of the stakeholders will soon be convened to look into the possibility of accommodating them in the Pakistani medical institutions.

The government also constituted an inquiry committee to establish what led to the mob attacks on its students and to look into the reasons, response readiness of Pakistani mission and the government. The committee would coordinate with the Kyrgyz authorities to review all the findings and developments in Bishkek and submit its report within two weeks.

Due to the government's proactive initiative, around 4,036 Pakistani students were repatriated as of 22 May on several special evacuation flights in an operation that is ongoing even as Kyrgyz authorities have insisted the situation in Bishkek is now calm.

Whereas no such efforts were made by the governments of India and Bangladesh despite the evacuation demands of their students which stands at 28,800 in toto including from India (15,000) Pakistan (10,000) and 1200 from Bangladesh.

While the Pakistani government and its embassy in Bishkek undertook significant measures to address the crisis involving Pakistani students in Kyrgyzstan, there are areas where improvements could have been made. The embassy's website

is almost non-existent, with blank sections and, besides adorning a picture of the Ambassador, having no useful information at all. There are no press releases, video messages, or safety and security SOPs for the stranded students on the website.

There is no mention of any hotline established to register the concerns of the students. There is a total absence of organized and focused centrally controlled registration of pressing needs of the students and making arrangements to meet their essential requirements.

The embassy failed to set up a centralized support group of the Pakistani community in Kyrgyzstan, create a listing of available resources, or compile an inventory of contact numbers and addresses of community members to help students in distress. In Pakistan, there was no help desk for parents to seek answers to their queries, nor a centralized system to garner help from the community to mitigate the suffering of the students.

Proactive communication, an early warning system, enhanced coordination, and a swift evacuation process could have mitigated initial delays and confusion. Regular updates and virtual town hall meetings with parents could have reduced anxiety and built trust. Follow-up support for returning students would demonstrate a continued commitment to their well-being. By addressing these aspects, the government could have ensured a more robust and compassionate response.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Increasingly desperate situation in Rafah

Israeli attacks across Gaza continued Wednesday, fueling already alarming aid access problems and dire food insecurity as the main entrance routes for relief convoys remained closed or too dangerous to access, UN aid workers warned. In a post on X, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) confirmed that food distribution had been suspended because of a lack of supplies and ongoing hostilities that have made it too dangerous for aid teams to work.

"The situation in Rafah has been significantly deteriorating since the initial evacuation orders were issued there on May 6," UNRWA Spokesperson Louise Wateridge told UN News, a media website, on Wednesday. "As this military operation has expanded further into Rafah, this has severely, severely restricted our ability and the wider humanitarian ability to provide aid, to provide services and in this case, to distribute food," the spokesperson said. "We now no longer have access to the food distribution centres in this area because of the active military operations, there is no safety and in addition to this, we are receiving no unimpeded access to aid through the crossings." Ms Wateridge stressed that "we have a lot of people on the ground ready to provide aid and provide services, but without access across the borders to any supplies and without access to our distribution centres, we are simply unable to distribute food." Those comments echoed an update to the Security Council by Tor Wennesland, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, on Monday. "I am deeply concerned that the current trajectory – including the possibility of a larger-scale operation – will further undermine efforts to scale up the entry of humanitarian goods and their safe distribution to desperate civilians," he said. While welcoming the opening of the Erez West/Zikim crossing in northern Gaza, Wennesland stressed that "much more aid is needed to meet the enormous scale of the needs... There is no substitute for the full and increased operation of existing land crossings." "Saving lives and addressing the critical needs in Rafah and Gaza more broadly must remain our immediate priority and I reiterate the Secretary-General's call for a humanitarian ceasefire," he added. The UN official also highlighted the risks of a "wider spillover" regionally from the conflict as long as it remained unresolved, while on Wednesday, Ireland, Spain and Norway jointly announced that they intended to recognize a Palestinian state. The diplomatic move to recognize Palestine, "effective May 28", follows months of consultations "with like-minded countries across Europe and the Middle East", the Irish Government said in a statement. As of May 18, OCHA reported that only 10 bakeries were operational out of a total of 16 supported by the UN agency's partners. "It is expected that these will run out of stock and fuel within days if no additional supplies are received," Ms. Wosornu said. The remaining six bakeries – all in southern Gaza – had closed "due to either shortages of fuel or because of ongoing hostilities". According to UNRWA's online aid tracking platform, no trucks have entered the main crossings into the enclave via Rafah and Kerem Shalom in the south since 27 vehicles made it through on Saturday. At least 500 aid trucks are needed every day to keep Gazans healthy, humanitarians have said repeatedly, while also calling for relief supplies to flood into Gaza to try to halt the new crisis caused by the Israeli military's incursion into Rafah on May 6, in response to deadly rocket fire by Hamas fighters. While more than 5,600 humanitarian aid trucks entered Gaza in April via both crossings, only around 1,400 have made it so far in May, UNRWA data indicates.



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

'Neglecting Mental Health in Schools: A Crisis We Can No Longer Ignore'

Zarlish Ali

In an era where academic achievement often overshadows well-being, it's time to recognise that mental health is not a luxury but a fundamental necessity in our schools. We are witnessing a silent pandemic, a generation struggling under the weight of anxiety, depression, and stress. Pakistan is the sixth-most populous country in the world, with almost 35% of its population under the age of 14. Schools are a natural platform for addressing and witnessing emotional and behavioral problems, and they can play a potent role in the development of positive mental health by reducing stigma, raising awareness among teachers, parents, and children about mental health issues, and identifying and supporting children experiencing mental health difficulties. But unfortunately, we lack such skills and luck in this area, as our instructors are incompetent to do so due to a lack of this professional training, ultimately giving rise to the effective gap between a child and a teacher in an emotional setting. This concept is almost nonexistent in Pakistan due to the prevalence of the traditional so-called education system. The reported prevalence rates of children and adolescents' mental health problems in Pakistan are much higher (35%) than the global prevalence estimates of 10–20%. Moreover, COVID-19 contributed to this deadlock as a major cause behind a child's mental and physical abuse. Child mental health is influenced by three major types of social and educational factors: the child's family environment, the larger community, and their education. Each of these wide categories includes several factors. For example, the child's family environment includes the family type and their relations with one another. Such factors have also been found to have a protective effect on children's mental health, particularly in developing coun-

tries. Other important family-related socioeconomic factors include the parent's employment status and level of education. High expectations of parents from children in academics, limited focus on emotional wellbeing of personality, lack of support systems, and negative influence on self-esteem in education are overshadowing the importance of mental health. In a cross-sectional community-based study in Pakistan, children between the ages of two and nine were evaluated for cognitive and developmental disabilities using the Ten Question Screen (TQS) in the rural Rawalpindi area. The study's findings showed that about 24.8% of the youngsters were found to have learning impairments upon screening. In a different study, parents of children aged 5 to 11 stated that approximately 34% of their offspring had emotional or behavioral issues. This information was gathered using a strength and difficulty questionnaire.

Other common referrals include Tourette syndrome, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, pervasive developmental disorders, early-onset psychosis, other psychoses, psychosomatic/dissociative disorders, eating disorders, depression, anxiety, and obsessive-compulsive disorders. There is a potent role for families in this regard to check up on the child, neglecting societal pressures. Teachers can help improve the mental health status of students by detecting preliminary signs of mental health concerns, making appropriate referrals to health professionals, and also by creating awareness about mental health problems among adolescents. According to a study done by Yates (2017), children spend about 32 hours of their time a week during an academic year in school. Schools can conduct mental health screenings to identify students who are likely to be suffering from mental health concerns and detect mental health problems at an early stage. Recently, in 2019, the Ministry of Health in Pakistan launched the President's programme

to promote youth mental health through schools. It emphasises the role of early-life interventions to promote mental health and prevent mental illnesses, takes a multitiered approach, and recommends training nonspecialists such as 'university graduates' to promote the socioemotional well-being of school-going adolescents. Early Adolescents Skills for Emotions (EASE), a programme under the President's Programme, is being introduced in Pakistani rural public schools to help school-age adolescents who are internalising problems. The World Health Organisation created EASE, a transdiagnostic group psychological intervention that is brief and can be administered by non-specialists, to assist children between the ages of 10 and 14 who are experiencing internalising issues like psychosocial discomfort and symptoms of anxiety and depression. In urban Lahore, Pakistan, a randomised controlled trial (RCT) was designed to assess the effectiveness of a teacher training intervention based on the WHO-EMRO Manual of School Mental Health. The curriculum is called the WHO-EMRO School Mental Health Curriculum. The WHO-EMRO School Mental Health Manual-Based Intervention was successful in raising teachers' awareness, confidence, and self-efficacy in their capacity to support them. Addressing the mental health crisis among children in Pakistan is not just an option but a necessity now. As academic pressures mount and societal expectations grow, the silent pandemic of mental health issues cannot be ignored any more. Together with academic success, mental health should be prioritised if we want to create a future where kids are not just educated but also emotionally stable and mentally well. It's time to acknowledge the critical role that mental health plays in our kids' achievement and general well-being.

Writer is Student of BS International Relations in National Defense University, Islamabad. She can be reached zarlasharja@gmail.com

Education System of Pakistan: Issues, Problems-I

Mahnoor Khan

In the mosaic of nations, the architecture of a robust education system lays the cornerstone of societal progress and intellectual enlightenment. Pakistan, a nation soaked in rich cultural heritage and endowed with vast potential, stands at a critical juncture in its quest for educational transformation. As the beating heart of any civilization, the education system of Pakistan reflects not only its aspirations but also the challenges that beset its path towards enlightenment and empowerment. Embarking on an exploration of Pakistan's educational landscape unveils a tapestry woven with diverse narratives, where the threads of tradition and modernity intertwine amidst the backdrop of socio-economic complexities and institutional reform. The education system of Pakistan is by and large the same as it was originally devised by the British when they became the new masters of India during the rule of the East India Company. The main thrust of this system was to recruit loyal natives to carry out their imperial ambitions. It did not reflect any national aspirations nor meet any individual needs. It didn't take the British long to convince the battered people that the path of survival lay in serving their masters and this could happen when they renounced their past and immersed themselves in a foreign culture through their system of education. The Muslims were late to realize this but when they took to Western education they like others were brainwashed into thinking that they were the only enlightened people and were alienated from their people. In a land of massive ignorance and superstition, a literate man appeared to be like a god for whom everything was available. He dressed differently and tried

to live differently. Education then had become a status symbol and from a purely economic point of view, it was not under the reach of every person. Those who did go up to professional schools and universities were creature apart and they behaved that way as a result there was no rapport between the public and themselves. Those who came out of universities looked for jobs as civil servants because it carried a halo around the holders of that position manual work even for a Babu or less functionary was sinful.

Our present system is no better; From the bustling corridors of urban academies to the humble classrooms in remote villages, the journey of education in Pakistan traverses a spectrum of experiences, and disparities, it has in fact gone down and has not contributed anything towards the national growth or development. We are by comparison materially better off than most countries of Asia but as literate people, we are the tail-enders, we speak of entering the 21st century but we have not started making any preparations for it. Our youth is adrift because the majority of them haven't learned anything. Ignorance and illiteracy are damaging democratic, industrial, and economic growth.

With the weight of history shaping its present and the promise of the future beckoning, the narrative of Pakistan's education system resonates with the echoes of past achievements. Pakistan has a net literacy rate of 56% majority of which is devised by Islamabad and AJK followed by Punjab, GB, KP, Sindh, FATA and Balochistan. Many experts believe that the source of the country's education challenge is undervaluing, but Pakistan actually spends a lot on education. Considering the report of Wilson center London about 17 to 28 percent of provincial budget is allocated for the education sector. Pakistan's military budget is not much larger than its education budget.

To be continued

China urges U. S. to stop using Taiwan as tool to contain China

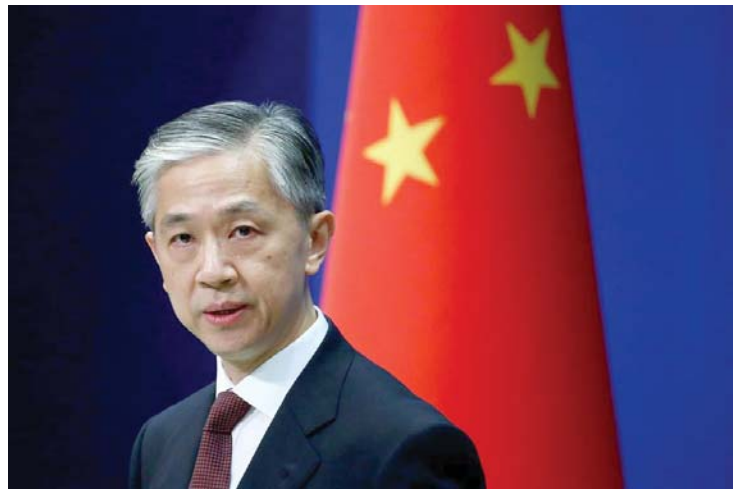
Xinhua

BEIJING: A Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson on Tuesday urged the United States to earnestly abide by its commitments of not using Taiwan as a tool to contain China, and stop hollowing out the one-China principle.

Spokesperson Wang Wenbin made the remarks at a daily press briefing in response to a query about U. S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken's "congratulations" to Taiwan region's new leader.

What the United States has done seriously violates the one-China principle and the three China-U. S. joint communiques, and breaches its political commitment to maintaining only cultural, commercial, and other unofficial relations with the Taiwan region. This sends a seriously wrong signal to "Taiwan independence" separatist forces. China deprecates and opposes it, and has made serious representations to the United States, Wang said.

There is but one China in the world. Taiwan is an inalienable part of China's territory. The Taiwan question is at the very core of China's core interests and is the first red line that must not be crossed in China-U. S. relations, he stressed.



"China firmly opposes official interaction in any form between Taiwan and the United States and opposes U. S. interference in Taiwan affairs in any form or under any pretext," the spokesperson said.

China urges the United States to correct its wrongdoing at once, act on President Joe Biden's commitment of not supporting "Taiwan independence," "two Chinas" or "one China, one Taiwan" and not using Taiwan as a

to contain China, stop fudging and hollowing out the one-China principle, stop emboldening and supporting "Taiwan independence" separatist forces in any form and stop disrupting peace and stability in the Taiwan Strait, Wang said.

"Taiwan independence" leads nowhere and anyone who connives at and supports "Taiwan independence" is doomed to failure. No external interference can hold back the trend toward

China's reunification. Any attempt to challenge the one-China principle and endanger China's national sovereignty and territorial integrity will be met with China's resolute response, he added.

Recently, Taiwan's "foreign affairs department" issued a statement, protesting the mainland's condemnation over the Taiwan authorities' bribery of Guatemalan leaders and officials in exchange for political support.

"This is just one example of the Taiwan authorities' 'dollar diplomacy.' No matter how angrily they protest or try to deny it, the fact that they sought political support through 'dollar diplomacy' will not change," Wang noted.

Around the world, 183 countries have established diplomatic ties with China. That proves the DPP authorities' reckless pursuit of "Taiwan independence" and secession to be futile and self-deceptive. Whatever the DPP authorities do, it will not shake the one-China principle, and will not hinder the unstoppable trend toward China's reunification, Wang said.

"We hope that Guatemala and the very few other countries will come to recognize where the trend leads and make the right decision soon," he added.

Pakistani envoy to Russia signs condolence book



Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: Ambassador Muhammad Khalid Jamali signed condolence book today at the Embassy of Islamic Republic of Iran in Moscow, conveying sincere commiserations on the tragic incident on 19th May that led to passing away of H. E. Mr. Ebrahim Raisi, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran and H. E.

Mr. Hussein Amir-Abdollahian, Foreign Minister and seven other precious lives.

After riots in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 170 Medical students reached Multan



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Aero Nomad flight ANK 4587, originating from Bishkek, landed at Multan International Airport at 3:44 am. The aircraft carried a total of 170 Students passengers, who were primarily students, and 6 crew members. Upon arrival, the airport and Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) officials warmly greeted the returning students. Additionally, the OPF arranged for refreshments to be provided to the students and transportation for 23 students who resided outside the city.

Canadian HC meets the Minister for Finance & Revenue Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan H. E. Ms. Leslie Scanlon called on Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division today.

The Finance Minister welcomed the Canadian High Commissioner and informed her about the successful completion of the nine-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He further stated that the Government is currently in talks with the IMF mission for further engagement. Senator Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb also apprised the High Commissioner about Government's key priority reform areas that include tax-to-GDP ratio by bringing untaxed segments into the tax net, end to end digitalization and administrative reforms. The Minis-



ter said that the consultants have been engaged in this regard.

The Federal Minister, while mentioning the privatization initiatives affirmed the Prime Minister's commitment to privatize State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). He added that a positive response has been received from local and foreign investors for privatization of Pakistan Interna-

tional Airlines (PIA). The Minister also explained the complex energy equation, informing that DISCO boards have been reconstituted with the subject matter experts from private sector, to increase their efficiency. Furthermore, the Finance Minister emphasized the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a pragmatic single-window plat-

form, designed to streamline investment processes and attract foreign investments. The High Commissioner Ms. Scanlon recognized the efforts of Government to improve the country's economy. While expressing hope for the economic growth and stability in the country, she assured that the Canadian government will continue to support the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

form, designed to streamline investment processes and attract foreign investments.

The High Commissioner Ms. Scanlon recognized the efforts of Government to improve the country's economy. While expressing hope for the economic growth and stability in the country, she assured that the Canadian government will continue to support the socio-economic development of Pakistan.

CCP takes notice of beverages ads sans disclaimers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has taken notice of extremely dangerous stunts performed in the TV Commercials (TVCs) of leading beverage manufacturers. These stunts promote soft and energy drinks without advising viewers not to attempt similar stunts independently on their own, as they have been performed by professional experts under proper safety arrangements and are fictional displays.

The Commission has issued letters to various beverages firms to explain their position vis-à-vis showcasing physical stunts with bikes, cars and other extraordinary performances enabled by or for a few sips of the advertised drinks.

While, screening of such stunts is not a violation of Pakistan's Competition Law, the absence of proper disclaimers advising viewers to avoid attempting such stunts amounts to withholding material information from their consumers, especially young adults. CCP has warned these companies of their potential violation of Section 10(2) (b) of the Competition Act, 2010.

Leading Experts Convene in Islamabad for OICCI and Shell Pakistan's Energy Symposium

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), and Shell Pakistan Limited jointly hosted the Pakistan Energy Symposium. This significant event was produced by the Nutshell Group and took place at a local hotel.

The Pakistan Energy Symposium—'Powering the Future' brought together public stakeholders, policymakers, thought leaders, and industry specialists, to chart out a course for Pakistan's sustainable energy future.

Deliberating on adding renewables to Pakistan's energy mix Senator Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum & Water Resources, said, "Pakistan has sunlight, wind, water, and nuclear energy. We can produce green electricity on a large scale. In 2018, when the strategy was being made, solar energy was 22 cents and wind energy was 23 cents, which has now been reduced to 3 to 5 cents. Pakistan can produce energy using a hybrid system. Battery technology is improving, and if that happens, we can generate electricity from sun, wind, and water."

In his welcome address, Rehan Shaikh, President and CEO, Standard Chartered Pakistan & President, Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), highlighted that Pakistan is at a pivotal juncture in its journey towards energy sustainability. Rehan shared that, Energy security and self-sufficiency are the fundamentals of progress and prosperity for any nation. While Pakistan's power sector has faced issues like circular debt, demand & supply gaps, and rising costs and tariffs, there is huge potential to change the course. With over 300 sunny days in a year, vast wind corridors in Sindh and Baluchistan, and abundant hydropower in the North, Pakistan must capitalize on these green energy resources and move to a sustainable energy mix."

In his opening address, Waqar Siddiqui, CEO & Managing Director, Shell Pakistan Limited, stressed urgent

action to achieve sustainability. "Pakistan is at a critical economic juncture, and to steer the country on a sustainable trajectory, resolving the energy puzzle is of utmost importance. There is tremendous opportunity for growth in the energy sector of the world's 5th most populous country, with sizable potential for investment. What we propose are partnerships and solutions that seek to shape the energy future of Pakistan."

Rabia Shoaib Ahmad, Director & CEO, Nutshell Group, added that by fostering innovation and leveraging partnerships, we can pave the way for a resilient and energy-efficient Pakistan. In her remarks, she said, "To help highlight the issues of the investors, to create an enabling environment, and to help promote a healthy investment climate for foreign investors in Pakistan, Nutshell Group has been working with the OICCI for over a decade. Nutshell Group is known for curating dialogues on critical sectors of the economy and bringing together multiple stakeholders under one roof, providing platforms for collective thought, value-adding debate, and devising result-oriented, actionable solutions."

During his address at the Pakistan Energy Symposium, Syed Moonis Abdullah Alvi, CEO, K-Electric, highlighted the numerous opportunities in Pakistan's energy sector. He said, "While Pakistan has competitively low energy purchase prices, we still face significant challenges such as high-capacity charges and circular debt, unlike other countries. The strategic shift towards utilizing our abundant coal reserves and transitioning to indigenous resources will result in reduced energy costs and enhanced self-sufficiency. Notably, K-Electric's zero contribution to the circular debt highlights the importance of privatization and thus sets a roadmap for other distribution companies to follow."

Moonis also discussed K-Electric's renewable energy initiatives, adding, "We remain committed to achieving the vision of increasing our share of



renewables to 30% in KE's energy mix by 2030. We are garnering significant interest from foreign and local investors on our renewable energy projects which are part of our long-term Power Acquisition Program. This is very encouraging for K-Electric as well as for the power sector of Pakistan at large."

Dr. Nazir Abbas Zaidi, Secretary General, Oil Companies Advisory Council, recommending possible solutions for the structural issues to unleash the possibilities of the power sector said, "Implement rules to curb the inflow of smuggled products, close approximately 2,500 illegal retail outlets immediately, roll out new explosives rules and remove non-aligned rules/standards between OGRA and Department of Explosives. Oil Marketing Companies should have their licenses extended by

OGRA for 30 years as per initial application, the building of strategic stocks to ensure energy security, fast-tracking infrastructure upgradation around oil storage areas, and one window solution for all required regulatory approvals."

Mazhar Hasnani, CEO of Engro Vopak & Elengy Terminals, shared recommendations on how LNG can fuel Pakistan's economic progress. He stated, "LNG can play a critical role towards ensuring the energy security of Pakistan. Expanding LNG infrastructure, deregulating the market, curbing gas circular debt, and establishing new LNG terminals are some immediate steps that can bridge the current supply-demand gap. For a more long-term solution, there is a need to establish strategic onshore LNG terminals, and improve pipe-

line capacity issues through new pipeline development."

The session titled Unlocking the Opportunities in the Oil & Gas Sector was moderated by Faisal Iftikhar, Head of Supply Operations, Shell Pakistan Limited and included 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, Director Corporate Relations, Shell Pakistan Limited; Asrar Muhammad, VP, Finance and Commercial, United Energy Pakistan Limited, as the esteemed panelists. Referring to Pakistan's vast untapped reserves of oil and gas, particularly in the Indus Basin and offshore areas, the discus-

sants concurred on the need for significantly increased investment in exploration and production activities. Enhancing exploration activities can reduce the country's reliance on imported energy, which currently leads to a substantial trade imbalance.

The session on, Unearthing the Potential of Pakistan's Power Sector, was moderated by Palwasha Ahsan Riar, Head of Learning, Asia Pacific, Shell Pakistan Limited. The panelists comprised Aftab Mahmood Butt, CEO, Kot Addu Power Company Limited; Ruhail Muhammad, CEO, Lucky Electric Power Company; Ali Khizar, Head of Research, Business Recorder; Amir Iqbal, CEO, Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company; and Dr. Khalid Waleed, Head of Energy and Climate at the Sustainable Development Policy Institute. The panelists concurred on the criticality of expanding renewable energy sources, particularly solar and wind into the energy mix. Referring to the ambitious 30/30 plan that entailed increasing the share of renewables in the electricity generation mix to 30% by 2030—equivalent to around 24,000 megawatts, the experts highlighted its multiple benefits, including lower electricity costs, enhanced energy security, reduced carbon emissions, and significant economic savings.

In his vote of thanks, M Abdul Aleem, Secretary General, Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI), said, "As we conclude the Pakistan Energy Symposium—'Powering the Future', we extend our heartfelt gratitude to all participants, stakeholders, policymakers, and industry experts for their invaluable contributions. Together, we have laid the foundation for a discourse on a sustainable energy future in Pakistan, driving innovation, collaboration, and progress. Let us continue to work hand in hand to harness the power of renewable energy, technology, and policy to shape a brighter tomorrow for generations to come. Thank you for your unwavering commitment and support."

Without political patronage, this vital sector will collapse: Mian Zahid Hussain

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance Mian Zahid Hussain, and former provincial minister said on Wednesday that the agricultural sector is very important for the country's economy.

He said necessary measures and legislation are needed to remove it from the control of different types of mafias.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that important decisions should not be kept secret so that the opinions of experts, farmers, and consumers on the pros and cons can be revealed before their implementation.

Talking to the business community, the

veteran business leader said that agriculture's share of the country's GDP is 23%, it provides employment to more than 37% of the people, and seventy per cent of the country's exports depend on this sector.

This sector should not face a step-motherly attitude from policymakers, as food security and exports are linked.

The business leader said that loan sharks, profiteers, and hoarders have already damaged the critical agricultural sector, while the illegal import and sale of substandard seeds are also occurring.

He added that fake pesticides are thriving, fertilizer prices are skyrocketing, and water availability is dwindling. Farmers do not get loans, which traps them in the clutches of loan sharks.



Mian Zahid Hussain said that Punjab currently has 23 lakh tonnes of wheat, which

has halved the procurement target, which has yet to be started. As a result, many farmers have been forced to sell their produce at low prices.

Now, the farmers have been forced to sell wheat using mobile applications, which has worried the illiterate farmers.

He further said that Pakistan imports billions of dollars worth of agricultural products every year. If this huge amount is used to improve the country's agriculture, then Pakistan will become a big producer of agricultural products.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that if farmers' problems are not solved and the market remains unstable, many farmers will be attracted to other crops instead of wheat next year, which may cause food security problems. Punjab needs to take measures to instil confidence in farmers, he said.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: H.E. the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea Park Ki Jun called on Federal Minister for Industries and Production on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Wrong foreign exchange rules have crippled the economy

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Wednesday that elites view Pakistan as a valuable resource and are only interested in resource extraction.

They do not consider Pakistan their country; otherwise, they would not have plundered it so ruthlessly, he added.

He claimed that the elite only cares about looting in Pakistan and sends black money abroad to start businesses and buy properties.

Shahid Rashid Butt, in a statement issued here, said that the investment made by Pakistanis in Dubai's real estate market is equal to almost half of the value of our stock exchange. On the other hand, Indian investors' investment in Dubai represents less than 0.5 percent of the value of their stock exchange.

This demonstrates Pakistanis' preference for property and confidence in Dubai's market.

The business leader said that according to Dubai Leaks, Pakistanis have invested eleven billion dollars in its property



market, while if the property purchased in the name of companies is also counted, this amount will jump to at least 20 billion dollars.

He stated that political actors' amendments to Pakistan's foreign exchange laws have legitimised numerous illegal measures, leading to a dangerous increase in capital flight from the country. The continued flight of capital has left our economy lifeless.

He noted that Pakistan, a nation struggling to make ends meet and frantically seeking assistance from international lenders and other nations, continues to transfer billions of dollars outside of the country.

Within some of Dubai's most affluent neighbourhoods, such as Dubai Marina, Emirates Hills, Business Bay, Palm Jumeirah, and Al Barsha, Pakistanis own a wide variety of real estate, ranging from commercial properties to entire buildings and luxury villas.

He observed that there is a stringent prohibition against taking large sums of money outside of the country without first obtaining approval from the central bank. Therefore, many of those involved in property scams may have sent money abroad illegally to buy real estate.

A Pakistani citizen who purchases property outside of the country is required to declare the transaction in their tax returns and pay any taxes that are payable to the property, but the majority have not cared about it while making purchases in Dubai.

The FBR should review the wealth statements of Pakistanis with overseas properties to confirm their declaration and payment of any relevant taxes.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that after Swiss banks and London, Dubai has now become the global centre for hiding black money, but the FATF and other international institutions continue to ignore it.

Urgent need to increase taxes on tobacco products to save Pakistani youth & economy: Solangi

ISLAMABAD: In a collaborative effort to tackle the urgent issue of tobacco consumption in Pakistan, the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) organized a prominent event in partnership with the Punjab Group of Colleges (PGC) to celebrate World No Tobacco Day 2024. The event, aimed to highlight the voices of youth against big tobacco.

Former Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan Mr. Murtaza Solangi while speaking at this occasion shared that, Pakistan has the largest generation of young people ever recorded in national history. However due to relaxed tobacco control policy in Pakistan, this group is severely exploited by tobacco industry, putting their health and future at extreme risk. Tobacco and Nicotine addiction serves as a gateway to many other forms of substance abuse and may cause serious health and mental health issues among youth. If the attempts of tobacco industry to attract young customers are not kept in check through proper mechanisms, they will grow more powerful and keep being the cause of deaths and diseases in the country.

Malik Imran Ahmad, Country Head Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids (CTFK) said, that a 26.6% FED increase for the fiscal year 2024-25, appears to be a significant step forward. Not only could it help recoup a substantial portion of healthcare costs, but it also has the potential to discourage hundreds of thousands of individuals



from smoking. Additionally, the projected revenue increase could be valuable for funding various public health initiatives and strengthening the national economy.

Ch. Muhammad Akram, Director Punjab Group of Colleges emphasized the key role of academic institutions stated that, by taking a proactive stance against tobacco use, educational institutions can contribute to creating healthier environments for their students and staff by introducing extracurricular activities.

Dr. Khalid Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager SPARC said that, 10-stick cigarette pack is another tactic of tobacco industry to lure more children and adolescents towards smoking because it will be more cost effective. Hence, it will be purchased

easily by students. Government of Pakistan and relevant ministries should see this as a way to destruction and death and should not permit this to happen.

Members of Anti-Tobacco Youth Club, delivered a poignant message, highlighting tobacco consumption as the biggest threat to the youth of Pakistan, declaring, "Tobacco not only steals our health but also our future. We must unite to protect our youth from this menace."

The event celebrated individuals from academia, media, civil society and youth who have dedicated themselves to the cause of creating a tobacco-free Pakistan. This collective effort reinforces the commitment to building a healthier and more resilient nation.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
74,956.67	75,206.77
Day's High	Day's Low
75,513.89	74,835.48
Index Value	Change
9,634,598,837	-250.10
Percentage	Time
-0.33%	22 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,370.33	-46.12
Percentage	Time
-0.55%	22 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,847.40	-25.59
Percentage	Time
-0.064%	22 May, 1:14 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
38,617.10	-329.83
Percentage	Time
-0.85%	22 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	184.8
Bahrain Dinar	740.52	748.52
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.51	38.91
Danish Krone	40.52	40.92
Euro	297	300
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.3	912.3
Malaysian Ringgit	59.39	59.99
New Zealand \$	170.11	172.11
Norwegians Krone	25.92	26.22
Omani Riyal	723.46	731.46
Qatari Riyal	76.42	77.12
Saudi Riyal	73.45	74.2
Singapore Dollar	203	205
Swedish Korona	26.02	26.32
Swiss Franc	305.97	308.47
Thai Bhat	7.67	7.82
U.A.E Dirham	75.2	75.95
UK Pound Sterling	349.5	353
US Dollar	277.35	280.1

Fly Emirates to Dubai This Summer and Unlock Exclusive Offers Including Access To The City

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Emirates has launched great offers for holidaymakers travelling to Dubai this summer. With a return ticket, all Emirates customers can enjoy complimentary access to some of the city's top attractions, ensuring an exciting summer without breaking the bank.

Moreover, Emirates passengers flying to, through, or back to Dubai can leverage their boarding pass to access exclusive discounts at a wide range of retail, leisure, and dining establishments, as well as renowned attractions and luxury spas throughout Dubai and the UAE.

From thrilling adventures to irresistible shopping experiences, there's something for every traveller to enjoy.

Create a summer of memories with Emirates

Running from 22 May 2024 to 11 June 2024 and valid for travel between 25 May 2024 to 31 August 2024, this fantastic offer includes access to The View at The Palm, AYA Universe, Dubai Parks & Resorts and Wild Wadi Waterpark.

Whether travelling alone, as a couple, a group of friends or as a family you can make the most of your Dubai summer escape with access to the following unforgettable experiences.

DG FGEHA briefs Federal Ombudsman team about projects

ISLAMABAD: Director General (DG) of the Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA), Zafar Iqbal on Wednesday briefed the Federal Ombudsman inspection team on various projects including G-14, F-14, F-12, Green Enclave-1, Green Enclave-II (Sky Garden) and other apartment projects.

According to a Ministry of Housing spokesman, an inspection team consisting of officers of the Federal Ombudsman headed by the Senior Advisor visited the office of the Housing Authority to review the various projects of the authority.

Business Community's grievances with customs preventive & anti-smuggling should be addressed: Atif Ikram Sheikh



PPA

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has apprised that the business, industry and trade community of Pakistan have grievances with the malpractices in preventive and anti-smuggling functions of the customs departments. He emphasized that situation can be much improved; if the human interaction is minimized in anti-smuggling function.

There are reports on a daily basis wherein the anti-smuggling staff stops the consignments unnecessarily on their way to up country on the pretext of rechecking the containers and their contents again, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, said that the complaints that customs staff stops consignments which are already assessed and examined by the appraisal staff against GDs; which are also duly duty paid.

Mr. Magoon demanded that there is a glaring need to review and update the relevant laws and regulations; and, the role of clearing agents may be defined clearly. For this purpose, FPCCI's committee on customs enforcement will extend its full support from platform of the apex body.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, stressed that it is repeatedly pointed out that the FIRs lodged in these matters by the customs unfairly hold the clearing agents equally responsible for the crime - if any - along with the importer.

Mr. Arshad Jamal, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Customs Enforcement, highlighted that when the goods are stopped on the roads by the customs and cleared accordingly on the expense of importer; such as container rent and rent of the vehicle etc., then why not the relevant officials of the customs are held responsible for taking action on wrong information or reason.

Synite Digital Pakistan wins four dragons awards in Malaysia

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Synite Digital, Pakistan's Digital Agency of the Year for the past two consecutive years (2022 & 2023) has made a resounding mark on the global stage by clinching four prestigious awards at the 2023 Dragons of Asia Marketing Communications Industry Awards Programme. The awards were presented during a glittering ceremony that celebrated the very best work carried out across Asia, and marked the 11th year of recognition within Malaysia.

The Dragons of Asia Awards have been a beacon of excellence for 23 years, identifying and showcasing the finest achievements in the marketing communications industry. Pakistan's Synite Digital remarkable accomplishment at this year's awards cements its reputation as a powerhouse of creativity and innovation in the field.

"We are thrilled to have our work recognized and celebrated on such a grand scale at the 2023 Dragons of Asia Awards. These awards are a testament to the dedication, creativity, and hard work of our talented team. We are committed to pushing the boundaries of marketing communications and continuing to deliver exceptional campaigns for our clients," said Ahmed Kapadia, Group Chairman.

Continuing their winning streak, having been named Pakistan's Digital Agency of the Year for the past two years (2022 & 2023) and Pakistan's Digital Media Agency of the Year in 2023, the international quartet of Dragon Awards bestowed upon Synite Digital Pakistan stands as a testament to the company's unwavering commitment to media innovation, creativity, and its relentless pursuit of excellence.

Synite Digital Pakistan's innovative and impactful campaigns have not only captured the attention of industry peers but have also resonated with audiences far and wide. With these awards, the agency is well-positioned to continue setting new benchmarks in the marketing communications sphere.

England great Anderson has moments of regret over upcoming retirement

Sports Desk

LAHORE: England great James Anderson has said there are moments when he questions his upcoming retirement from Test cricket, although he is happy with his decision "90 per cent" of the time.

The most successful fast bowler in the format's history, with 700 wickets, Anderson announced earlier this month that the first Test against the West Indies at Lord's in July would mark his farewell to England duty.

Anderson, who will turn 42 next month, said Wednesday he had thoughts about playing on, having reached an age where most pace bowlers are long since retired.

"In my head I feel like I could play for 10 years," Anderson told his BBC Testers podcast. "Obviously I realise that is not realistic."

"Some days I wake up and wish I was not retiring but then 90 per cent of the time I'm happy with it."

"Not many people in sport get the chance to retire from sport at over 40.



I'm happy I've made it this far."

Only spinners Shane Warne and Muttiah Muralitharan have taken more Test wickets than James Anderson.

The England spearhead needs nine more wickets in his final match to surpass late Australia hero Warne's tally, with

Muralitharan way out in front on 800 Test wickets.

James Anderson's decision to retire from Tests followed talks with captain Ben Stokes, head coach Brendon McCullum and director of England men's cricket Rob Key with team chiefs looking to

refresh their attack ahead of the 2025/26 Ashes in Australia.

He could yet remain with England in a backroom capacity during the rest of the season, while Anderson has yet to decide whether he will continue to represent Lancashire, with an end at the county's Old Trafford headquarters in Manchester named after him.

The past few years have seen repeated speculation about Anderson's future, with the swing specialist saying much of the talk had proved a mental burden.

"There's probably been two or three moments on the field, if the opposition are 500 for three, I'll be thinking, 'do I really want to still be doing this?'" he said. "They are fleeting thoughts — nothing that has stuck with me for more than an over."

"I don't know how much of that was me and how much it was the external noise that comes with ageing. For the last six years, or even longer, it's been, 'how long can you go on for?'"

"That in itself, certainly for the last couple of years, has been quite draining."

Pakistan set to take on England in ICC Women's Championship matches

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan women will take on England women in a three-match ODI series, commencing tomorrow at the County Ground in Derby.

The second ODI will be played in Taunton on 26 May, followed by the third ODI in Chelmsford on 29 May.

The series, which is part of the ICC Women's Championship 2022-25, will be Pakistan's eighth and final series in the cycle. Pakistan are currently positioned on fifth spot with 16 points in the 10-team Women's Championship.

The top five teams from this championship, along with hosts India, will directly qualify for the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup 2025.

Earlier on the tour, both sides had featured in three T20Is, which were won by the hosts 3-0.

Opening batter Sidra Amin, who has 948 runs at an average of 52.66 in the ICC Championship 2022-25, stated that despite a dismal 3-0 defeat in the recently concluded T20I series, Pakistan women are determined to put on a good performance in the ODI series against England.

"Despite the recent T20I series not going our way, we are fully focused and eager to put on a good performance in the



upcoming ODIs against England.

"We believe in our capabilities and are focused on executing our plans well in the upcoming ODI series. The team spirit is high, and we are determined to end the ICC Women's Championship matches on a positive note."

Pakistan women squad: Nida Dar (c),

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

England women ODI squad: Heather Knight (c), Alice Capsey, Amy Jones,

Charlie Dean, Danielle Wyatt, Kate Cross, Lauren Bell, Lauren Filer, Maia Boucher, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Sarah Glenn, Sophie Ecclestone and Tammy Beaumont.

ODI series schedule:
23 May – 1st ODI, Derby
26 May – 2nd ODI, Taunton
29 May – 3rd ODI, Chelmsford

Pakistan-England first T20I called off due to rain

Sports Desk

LEEDS: The first T20I of the four-match series between Pakistan and England has been called off due to persistent rain here on Wednesday.

The picturesque Headingley Stadium remained under covers as it has been raining here since the morning.

Taking the field's condition and persistent rain into account, the match officials called off the T20I series opener between Pakistan and England, half an hour ahead of the scheduled time for the coin toss.

The action now shifts to Edgbaston where Pakistan and England battle it out on May 25 in a bid to secure an early lead in the four-match series.

For the unversed, the four-match T20I series between Pakistan and England, scheduled to run from May 22 to 30,



will serve as a warm-up for

both teams heading into the T20 World Cup 2024 as the

previous edition's finalists will skip the warm-up matches for

this year's mega event.

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

England squad: Jos Buttler (c), Phil Salt, Will Jacks, Jonny Bairstow, Ben Duckett, Harry Brook, Liam Livingstone, Moeen Ali, Sam Curran, Chris Jordan, Tom Hartley, Adil Rashid, Jofra Archer, Mark Wood and Reece Topley.

Pak vs Eng T20I series schedule:
1st T20I: Wed, May 22nd
2nd T20I: Sat, May 25th
3rd T20I: Tue, May 28th
4th T20I: Thu, May 30th

Match officials for Pakistan-India T20 World Cup clash revealed

A Sports

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday revealed the on-field umpires for the high-octane clash between India and Pakistan during the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Richard Illingworth and Rodney Tucker are slated to fulfil their duties as on-field umpires during the highly anticipated Group A match. Pakistan and India will square off on June 9 in New York.

Illingworth is also named as

the on-field umpire for the opening game of the event between co-hosts United States of America (USA) and Canada.

Bangladesh's Shahid Saikat will join him on the field, becoming the first umpire from the country to officiate at the Men's T20 World Cup.

Richie Richardson will serve as the match referee, while Sam Nogajski will be the TV umpire and Langton Rusere will serve as the fourth umpire for the tournament opener.

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 is slated to run from

June 1 to 29 and will be co-hosted by the USA and West Indies. The tournament kicks off with co-host USA taking on Canada in the curtain raiser at the Grand Prairie Stadium in Dallas.

The ninth edition of the mega event features a record 20 teams, divided into four groups. The top two teams from each of the groups will qualify for the Super Eight phase, where the sides will be split into two groups of four.

The top two teams in each group will then make their way to the semi-finals.

The Match Officials for the

T20 World Cup 2024

Umpires: Chris Brown, Kumar Dharmasena, Chris Gaffaney, Michael Gough, Adrian Holdstock, Richard Illingworth, Allaudien Paleker, Richard Kettleborough, Jayaraman Madanagopal, Nitin Menon, Sam Nogajski, Ahsan Raza, Rashid Riaz, Paul Reiffel, Langton Rusere, Shahid Saikat, Rodney Tucker, Alex Wharf, Joel Wilson and Asif Yaqoob.

Match referees: David Boon, Jeff Crowe, Ranjan Madugalle, Andrew Pycroft, Richie Richardson and Javagal Srinath.

Golden Kyokushin Karate Demonstrations



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan karate organisation Kyokushin kai kan IKO-MATSUSHIMA Japan organised a great karate event at (Atta Butt Dojo's) Hq Railway Stadium Garhi Shahu, Lahore.

The distinguished guests was Leader Tehreek E Istikam Pakistan Mr Shoieb Saddique (MPA) Member Provincial Assembly Punjab received a warm welcome upon his arrival. Alishba Zahra International Black Belt 1st Dan Japan, welcomed him presented a bouquet of flowers.

During the event, senior boys and girls karate kaz demonstrated their proficiency in the art of Kumite, kata and self defence techniques were highly appreciated by the chief Guest. Mr Shoieb Saddique MPA admire the services of Shihan Atta Hussain Butt Black Belt 5th Dan Japan. International karate master instructor/Referee IKO-MATSUSHIMA Japan for his efforts to promote Kyokushin karate in male/Female school colleges and universities through out Pakistan.

Chief Guest distributed Trophies to Sensie Saima Batool Black Belt 3rd Dan Japan, Sensie Adeel Ashfaq Black Belt 2nd Dan Japan, Sensie Mazher Ellahi Black Belt 3rd Dan Japan, Sensie Ali Adnan Black Belt 2nd Dan Japan. In his speech chief guest encouraged the players with inspiring words, He announced to help in promotion of Martial Arts financially by himself as well as Government level. He was surprised that a Karate Centre on a very high level in his constituency that up hold the image of Pakistan in the world. Visited Australia, Japan, Spain, Sweden, Indonesia, Sri Lanka etc.

He said I am surprised to see girls/ boys karate kaz demonstrated their proficiency ability as well as senior members of all age. The chief Guest was presented with a beautiful souvenir and Dojo jacket by Shihan Atta Hussain Butt.

Other Guests are Javed Yousaf senior politician, Sheikh Naem vp, Sana Ullah Ansari General Secretary Lahore Division Kyokushin, Faisal Abbas President PKK, Anwar ul Haq Accounts officer Railway, Kamran Bhatti coordinator Aleem Khan sb, M Ali, Sensie Amjad Prince 5th Dan, Senpai Ali Sabir Hussain Butt, Sanpai zoela, Sanpai Alizay, Sanpai Ali Raza, Senpai Jawad, Sanpai Dilshan Danish, Sanpai Zaid, Sanpai Zeshan, Ghulam Rasool Watto, Muhammad Ali Butt (politician), Kiran Black Belt, Maliyka, Ali Khayali, Ali Amir VP, M Ammar, Wilson etc.

Hamza Khan of KP honored for officiating Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Cup

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Former Hockey Olympian and inventor of the reverse flick in world of hockey Rahim Khan Wednesday hosted a reception in the honour of young and energetic Hamza Khan of Peshawar for officiating Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Cup in Ipoh, Malaysia.



Speaking on this occasion, Former Sports Minister and President KP Olympic Association, Syed Aqil Shah appreciated young Hamza Khan, who for the first time, acted as field judge in the recently held Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Tournament and thanked Hockey Olympian Rahim Khan for holding the reception in his honour.

Syed Aqil Shah presented a bouquet of flowers to Syed Hamza Khan and appreciated his performance and said that Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been a leading force in promoting hockey and producing notable Olympians and international players in the sport as well as other sports.

Syed Aqil Shah further said that just as the government appreciated the hockey team in Azlan Shah, it should also pay attention to this game so that this national game of Pakistan can be promoted at the global level.

Aqil Shah said that Pakistanis appreciated and supported the performance of the hockey team not only in Pakistan but around the world. "If the national team is supported in the same way, we are not short of talent," he added.

On this occasion, Olympian Musaddiq Hussain, Olympian Rahim Khan also praised the performance of Hamza Khan and expressed hope that the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the federal government will focus not only on hockey but also on other sports to improve the performance of other sportsmen associated with different games.

Ronaldo feels 'proud' of new Euro 2024 record

Cristiano Ronaldo is set to extend his international appearances record after being selected for Portugal's Euro 2024 squad and he is proud of it.

Ronaldo, 39, who has made 206 appearances for his country, scoring 128 goals, has been named in head coach Roberto Martinez's 26-man squad for the tournament in Germany from June 14 till July 14.

He shared a photo of himself in the new Portugal kit on his Instagram and captioned it: "Proud to be back representing Portugal at Euro. Let's go with it!"



Offering prayers on bodies of Martyrs of Service

Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of the Islamic Revolution, on Wednesday morning (May 22, 2024), attended the University of Tehran and prayed over the body of President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi and his companions.



Tens of thousands gather for Raisi funeral procession in Tehran

People holding portraits of Raisi gathered in and around the University of Tehran

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Tens of thousands of Iranians flocked to the streets of Tehran Wednesday to join the funeral processions of President Ebrahim Raisi and his entourage, who died in a helicopter crash on Sunday.

In the centre of the city, people holding portraits of Raisi gathered in and around the University of Tehran, where Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei is due to lead prayers for Raisi and his companions, including foreign minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Raisi's helicopter crashed

Sunday on a fog-shrouded mountainside in northern Iran on the way to the city of Tabriz after the group attended the inauguration of a dam project on the border with Azerbaijan.

A huge search and rescue operation was launched, involving help from Turkey, Russia and the European Union. State television announced Raisi's death early on Monday.

Raisi, who was widely expected to succeed Khamenei as supreme leader, was 63. In the capital, huge banners have gone up hailing the late president as "the martyr of service", while others bade "farewell to the servant of the disad-

vantaged".

The processions, which will be attended by foreign dignitaries, are planned to set off from the university and head to the vast Enghelab Square in the city centre, according to state media.

Funeral rites for the late president and his entourage began on Tuesday with tens of thousands of black-clad mourners in attendance in the city of Tabriz and the Shiite clerical centre of Qom.

From Tehran, the bodies will be moved to South Khorasan province before being transferred to Raisi's home city of Mashhad in the northeast,

where he will be buried on Thursday evening after funeral rites at the Imam Reza shrine.

Ayatollah Khamenei, who wields ultimate authority in Iran, has declared five days of national mourning and assigned vice president Mohammad Mokhber, 68, as caretaker president until the June 28 election for Raisi's successor.

Iran's top nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri, who was Amir-Abdollahian's deputy, has been named acting foreign minister. The country's armed forces chief of staff Mohammad Bagheri has ordered an investigation into the cause of the

helicopter crash.

Raisi was elected president in 2021, succeeding Hassan Rouhani at a time when the economy was battered by US sanctions imposed over Iran's nuclear activities.

After his death, global allies Russia and China and regional powers voiced their condolences, as did NATO, while the UN Security Council observed a minute of silence.

Messages of condolence also flooded in from Iran's allies around the region, including Syria, Palestinian militant group Hamas and Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, both of which are backed by Tehran.

Commissioner IESSI Rabia Aurangzeb visits ICCI

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Commissioner Islamabad Employees Social Security Institution Rabia Aurangzeb has said that more than forty thousand employees are registered with the IESSI which means that over forty thousand families of these employees of private entities are receiving the best medical treatment.

The IESSI Commissioner said this while talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry at Chamber house.

She stressed that workers are the backbone of the econ-

omy, and their welfare requires the cooperation of all stakeholders because no nation can make progress unless its workers do have better rights and that her department is committed to provide quality healthcare services to labourers by setting up our own hospitals and laboratories.

On his part Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry affirmed ICCI's complete support to the IESSI for the provision of medical facilities to the workers by demanding that a reasonable portion of the under construction Parking Plaza in Blue Area should be allocated to



the Social Security Hospital for establishing its laboratory. He also said that huge amount of Social Security Hospital's budget can be saved by recommending generic medicines to the patients.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari also demanded that ownership

of the hospital and dispensary located in I-10 sector should also be handed over to Social Security Hospital for the provision of better medical facilities to the workers and their families belonging to Islamabad.

He also said that he will also impressed upon more than

eight thousand ICCI members to get registered their employees with IESSI for their treatment.

On his part Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that ICCI-IESSI coordination will go a long way in the provision of required medical facilities to workers.

On this occasion Fassiullah Khan, Maqsood Tabish, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Syed Haider Assad, Khalid Ch. Ch. Waseem, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Ch. Babar, Ch. Nasir, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Malik Mohsin Khalid and other were also present.

A delegation of Aerated Beverage Industry called on Federal Minister for Finance



A delegation of representatives from Aerated Beverage Industry led by President of Lotte Akhtar Beverages Mr. Ghazi Akhtar, called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division today. Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan H. E Dr. Mehmet Pacaci also joined the meeting.

The delegation expressed their appreciation for the government's economic initiatives and conveyed that they are encouraged by supportive policies of Government. They presented several tax proposals for the upcoming fiscal year, suggesting adjustments to the Federal Excise

Duty (FED) that could support their industry growth and contribute to the government's tax collection efforts.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb highlighted the government's commitment to support the private sector. He emphasized the Prime Minister's vision for the private sector led economic growth as reflected in the ongoing privatization efforts. He assured the delegation that the government will proceed with strategic intent and within the available fiscal space.

The delegation thanked the Finance Minister and expressed optimism for continued collaboration and support.

NAB case: PTI founder wants to appear before SC 'in person'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan on Wednesday moved Supreme Court (SC), seeking permission to appear in 'personal capacity' in the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) amendment case.

Sources told that the deposed prime minister has sent a written request to the Chief Justice, seeking permission to appear before SC in person in the case.

The request has been forwarded to the Supreme Court through the Adiala jail administration. The apex court has fixed May 30 for the hearing of the NAB amendment case.

In the last hearing, PTI found-

er Imran Khan appeared before the Supreme Court (SC) bench via video link after a five-member bench okayed his appearance.

In the National Accountability (NAB) Ordinance 1999 amendment case.

The federal government filed the review plea in the NAB amendments case under the SC Practice and Procedure Law and made the Federation of Pakistan, National Accountability Bureau and PTI founder respondents.

Citing no violation of basic rights with the NAB amendments, the federal government pleaded with the SC to nullify its decision in the case. "Legislation is the right of the Parliament," the plea said.

Mechanism decided to ensure uninterrupted supply of fertilizer to farmers: Rana Tanveer

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Food Security and Industries and Production Rana Tanveer has said that a mechanism has been decided for uninterrupted supply of fertilizer to the farmers.

Punjab Minister for Agriculture Syed Aashiq Hussain Kirmiani held a meeting with Federal Minister for Food Security and Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain. During the meeting, Federal Secretary for Industries and Production Waqar Ajmal Chaudhry was also present.

Both ministers discussed matters of mutual interest related to agricultural development and mutual cooperation. They emphasized on Prime Minister's directive for the development of the agricultural sector.

PTI demands judicial...

Continued from Page 1

Ayub, who is the opposition leader in the National Assembly, warned that the forms of coercion mentioned by the six Islamabad High Court judges could spread to other places.

He demanded that Hassan should get justice. While quoting party founder Imran Khan's message, he said that the party would begin countrywide protests if such kinds of attacks were made against their party leaders.

"The impact of such demonstrations will be on the corrupt government," the PTI leader said and rejected the first information report (FIR) registered by Islamabad police for the attack.

He also rejected the decision to release the two suspects, saying that pieces of evidence were available against them. The PTI also rejected the defamation law passed in the Punjab Assembly.

Hassan, who has been vocal about the crackdown against the party and the government's policies, was seen sitting alongside Ayub at the presser.

Role of Social Media Influencers for Public Health: PANAH Conducts Training Session in Murree

City Desk

MURREE: More than 2100 die daily in Pakistan due to NCDs. Major causes of NCDs is use of Ultra-Processed Products. Ultra-processed foods are often very high in sugary, salt or trans-fats. Sweet beverages stand out as the primary source of sugar intake in our diet. Pakistan holds the top position globally in terms of the highest prevalence ratio of the diabetes with 33 million people living with diabetes. Approximately 1100 deaths in Pakistan are linked to diabetes and its complications daily. Without swift and decisive action, the number of individuals with diabetes is projected to reach 62 million by 2045. Implementing evidence-based policies, such as increasing taxes on UPPs can effectively reduce

consumption and mitigate associated chronic diseases. In response to the alarming rise of obesity and non-communicable diseases in Pakistan, the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) hosted a capacity-building training session for social media influencers on the 25th of February 2024 at a local hotel in Murree. The training aimed to equip influencers with the knowledge and tools to advocate for healthier dietary practices and combat the growing threat posed by ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks.

The social media influencers were engaged in a robust discussion on the role they can play in raising awareness about the health hazards of ultra-processed foods and sugary drinks. Influencer can play a pivot role in building pressure to influence policymakers to

tax Ultra Processed products. The event was not only an informative session but also served as a platform for fostering a collaborative effort among social media influencers and PANAH to collectively address the pressing public health challenges. By providing influencers with the tools to enhance positive change, the training session played a pivotal role in advancing the collective mission of public health in Pakistan.

Country coordinator Global Health Advocacy Incubator (GHAII) Mr. Munawar Hussain conducted the training session of the social media influencers. He said that increasing excise tax on Ultra-processed products is an evidence based first and an effective policy action to reduce its consumption and related chronic diseases. This may be smart policy

choice for government as it will reduce disease, hospital expenditure and increase revenue for government without spending any additional money and efforts. While referring a World Bank study conducted in 2022, he said that increasing 50 percent excise tax on sugary drinks can generate on an average USD 810 million every year for next 10 years. Similarly, economic value of the health impact in term of reduced hospital expenditures and others will be 8.9 million US dollars every year. Government must increase tax on all ultra-processed products in Finance Bill 2024-25 to reduce their consumption.

General Secretary PANAH, Mr. Sana Ullah Ghumman hosted the event. He shared with the participant that sugary industry propagating wrong infor-



mation to misguide the government, these tactics are adopted by the industry every year before budget without

having any fact and data. Certificates were disbursed among the participants of the event.