



PM Shehbaz Sharif expected to visit China next month

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is likely to undertake a China visit from June 4-7, said sources. PM Shehbaz Sharif will hold meetings with the Chinese president and prime minister during his four-day state visit, they say, adding that matters related to CPEC phase-II and other issues would come under discussion.



Entry of visit visa holders to Makkah during Hajj season banned

In a bid to ensure the safety and security of pilgrims, Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Interior has restricted entry to Makkah for all individuals holding visit visas during the upcoming Hajj season. The Hajj season begins today and it will continue until June 21, 2024. In a statement, the Saudi ministry said that the visit visa holders do not grant permission to perform Hajj, Saudi Press Agency (SPA) reported.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Pak-UAE Relations

ABU DHABI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of UAE H.H Sheikh Muhammad bin Zayed Al Nahyan meet on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Barrister Gohar calls for 'ceasefire' in interest of country

Naveed Ahmad Khan



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Chairman Barrister Gohar called for a 'ceasefire' in the interest of the country, adding that party founder Imran Khan has also expressed a willingness for dialogue.

Speaking to reporters in Islamabad on Thursday, Gohar said that PTI does not believe in politics of revenge even though it was the one being victimised.

He added that the party had announced a 'general amnesty' for everything it had suffered. "This clash of titans should end," Gohar added.

He added that Imran Khan himself has said that he is

ready for talks for the country and for the rule of law.

Barrister Gohar denies 'back door' talks as govt removes more PTI-linked persons from no-fly list

Barrister Gohar once again elected as Chairman unopposed

PTI leaders including Omar Ayub and Barrister Gohar granted interim bail in Islamabad rally case

Gohar also said that Imran Khan had been saddened by the attack on Raouf Hasan.

UAE President commits \$10 bn investment in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ABU DHABI: President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Thursday assured his country's full support to Pakistan in all circumstances, pledging to invest \$10 billion in its multiple sectors. The UAE President made the commitment during a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. The meeting provided an

opportunity to discuss the whole gamut of bilateral relations, including cooperation in political, economic, social, cultural and defence sectors.

The prime minister underscored the importance of galvanizing existing cooperation and strengthening strategic partnership including in the fields of information technology, renewable energy and tourism. He highlighted the steps taken by the government aimed at ensuring

socio-economic stability in the country and building the investors' confidence.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensure meaningful implementation of investment cooperation agreements in the areas of energy, port operations projects, waste water treatment, food security, logistics, minerals, and banking & financial services. PM Shehbaz expressed gratitude to the UAE leadership for hosting 1.8 million Pakistani dias-

pora and highlighted Pakistan's huge human resource potential that could be engaged in multiple sectors.

Both leaders exchanged views on other issues of mutual interest, including regional and global developments.

The prime minister reiterated his invitation to the UAE president for an official visit to Pakistan, which was accepted by the latter. PM Shehbaz was accompanied by Deputy Prime

Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Special Assistant to Prime Minister Syed Tariq Fatemi. The prime minister also offered condolences on the passing away of close family members of Al Nahyan family, late Sheikh Tahnoon bin Mohamed Al Nahyan and late Sheikh Hazza bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

Police nabs RAW agents working in Karachi for 26 years

News Desk

KARACHI: Police and intelligence agencies in Karachi have carried out a joint operation and arrested two suspected Indian spy agency RAW operatives in the Korangi area. According to the SSP Korangi, the arrested suspects are Sheikh Muhammad Ayub alias Ayub Ansari and Hassan Reza.

The police arrested the two RAW operatives who had come to Karachi 26 years ago. The police also recovered extremist material from their possession.

During the investigation, the suspects confessed that they had come to Pakistan from Mumbai in 1998

Continued on Page 8

ECC approves \$8 million for Roosevelt Hotel

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Thursday approved \$8 million to pay severance packages and operational expenses of the Roosevelt Hotel.

Ministry of Aviation presented a summary to allow the utilization of \$8 million available with National Bank of Pakistan to pay severance and other operational expenses of Roosevelt Hotel.

The meeting was met under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, said a news release.

The ECC also allowed the request of Industries and Production Division for the release of Rs. 2,159.53 million from already approved budgeted allocation, to pay gas bills of Pakistan Steel Mill (PSM).

The Committee also considered the summary of Finance Division to make amendments in policy for equity investment abroad to facili-



tate IT exports.

ECC approved Rs. 2,217 million to the Power Division for development expenditures during current fiscal year, Rs. 184.509 million to the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority while \$2.58 million and Rs. 2.5 million to the Ministry of Water Resources as the compensation packages for Chinese and local casualties at DASU Hydropower Project.

The committee approved Rs. 70,484 million to the Ministry of Water Resources as rupee cover for

hydropower projects.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervez Malik, Governor State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Chairman Security Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Federal Secretaries, and other senior officials of the relevant ministries.

PTI's central office in Islamabad sealed over 'encroachment'



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's administration raided the central office of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf late on Thursday night in an anti-encroachment operation. The office was later sealed.

A heavy contingent of police arrived at the office in G-8/4 along with heavy machinery and sealed off all routes leading to the building.

A statement from the Capital Development

Continued on Page 8

Naqvi presides meeting, directs NADRA to make national registration policy



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi while presiding over a review meeting regarding National Database Registration Authority (NADRA) on Thursday directed to make National Registration Policy.

The minister in a meeting said that authenticity of identity card and citizenship is of utmost importance, therefore, a comprehensive policy should be evolved in this regard.

He also directed to develop consensus of all provinces on this policy because union council has the status of foundation and access of NADRA to Union Councils is necessary in this connection.

He said that the policy will make citizen's registration transparent and foolproof.

The new policy will also prevent illegal registration of citizenship, due to which the issue of releasing identity cards and passports to foreigners came to light, the minister said. The plan to increase NADRA centers in six major cities was also reviewed in a meeting.

Apart from Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi, Multan had been decided to be included in this plan. The plan should be finalized and implemented in the next few days, so that people could avoid unnecessary rush and hassle, said the Interior Minister.

Secretary Interior Khurram Ali Agha, Chairman NADRA Lieutenant General Mohammad Munir Afsar and senior officers also participated in the meeting.

Major reshuffle in bureaucracy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a major reshuffling, the federal government transferred and posted several top officers of the federal bureaucracy.

According to notifications issued by the Establishment Division, Hasanat Qureshi has been appointed as Managing Director (MD) of the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PEPRA). A 21-grade officer Hasanat Qureshi was serving as the financial advisor at the Pakistan Ordnance Factories.

Secretary National Heritage Hassan Nasir has been given additional charge of Secretary Information. Similarly, the services of Hasan Raza, a Police Service officer of Grade 20, have been given to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Mian Saeed Ahmed, a Police Service officer, has also been directed to report to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

As per the notification, the services of Asif Iqbal Mehmood have been handed over to the Gilgit-Baltistan government. Saudur Rehman, a Police Service officer, has been transferred to the Balochistan government.

Earlier on March 21, the Establishment Division notified several secretaries after the approval of Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif

According to the details, a 22-grade officer Aizaz Aslam has been appointed as the Secretary of Climate Change.

A Grade 21 officer Ali Tahir, who was serving as Special Secretary in the Establishment Division, has now been appointed as Additional Secretary Incharge of Science and Technology.

Secretary of Science and Technology Ali Raza Bhutta has been directed to report to the Establishment Division

Separate notifications have been issued by the Establishment Division in this regard.

PTI urges SC to allow Khan to appear in person in NAB amendment case

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) demanded that PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan should be allowed to appear in person in the Supreme Court (SC) in the NAB amendment case.

PTI Spokesperson said that

Imran Khan, as the former Prime Minister and leader of the largest and most popular political party in the country, has the fundamental constitutional right to appear in person in the apex court.

He said that Imran Khan wanted to fight this case himself despite facing baseless, frivo-

lous, bogus and politically motivated cases because it is a matter of national interest.

PTI Spokesperson termed the SC's decision of not allowing Imran Khan to speak during the previous hearing and imposing a ban on live broadcasting of the proceedings as disappointing because he was not only a leader

of the biggest political party but a national hero, who was the most effective voice against corruption and the corrupt leaders of the country.

He recalled that he was the only leader, who was declared "Sadiq and Amin" because all his asset was declared and in Pakistan, while the others crook-

ed, seized powers through polls fraud, were involved in Panama leaks, Pandora box leaks and Dubai leaks.

PTI Spokesperson demanded that the SC should allow Imran Khan to appear in person during the next hearing and the proceeding should be livestream.

A Delegation of Businessmen and industrialists Met with Yousuf Raza Gillan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A delegation of businessmen and industrialists met Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in Multan. On this occasion Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that President Asif Ali Zardari always attracted friendly countries including China to invest in Pakistan. He said that President Asif Ali Zardari's efforts in launching game-changing projects like CPEC are commendable. While appreciating the role of businessmen in the country's economy, the Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani assured him that the problems of businessmen will not be ignored in the upcoming federal budget. Romana Tanveer Sheikh, President of Industrial State



Board of Management Asif Majeed, Chaudhry Waheed Arshad, Khawaja Jalalud-

din Rumi, Khawaja Younis and others were included. But Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani was congratulated. On this occasion, lunch was also given at the residence of the well-known industrialist Mian Tanveer Sheikh. Earlier, Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani arrived at Multan Airport by commercial flight and members of the National Assembly from Multan. Abdul Qadir Gillani, Ali Qasim Gillani, Members of Provincial Assembly Ali Haider Gillani, MPA Kamran Maral and Rana Iqbal Siraj along with Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fawad Hashim Rabbani, Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan, Deputy Commissioner Rizwan Qadir and other local administration welcomed him.

ICCI-AIR University ink MoU to promote Industry-Academia linkages



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Vice Chancellor AIR University Air Marshal Abdul Moaced Khan HI(M) has said that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry is playing a significant role in the promotion of Academia-Industry linkages which is the dire need of the hour for the economic stability of the country.

Talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry who called on him while leading an ICCI delegation here on Thursday he said that promotion of entrepreneurship among the youth will definitely yield fruits for the advancement of businesses in the country and thereafter meeting the much needed requirement of Foreign Direct Investments.

On the occasion both the AIR University and ICCI inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under which later will provide incubation and Research facilities to the students of AIR University to instil entrepreneurship skills among them. Moreover, both sides will also promote and project the importance of Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) for the benefit of the business community as well as the general public.

President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while mentioning the achievements of the ICCI in promotion of industry-academia linkages for ease of doing business in the country and pulling the country out of the existing economic mess said that ICCI doors are always open for this noble cause.

He said that ICCI considers it a matter of pride for it that it is playing the role of a bridge between the business community and the government for achieving the greater objective of making the country an economic hub.

Former President ICCI Zafar Bakhtawari underlined the need to overcome the negativity against the business community in the country and asserted that success stories of the key businessmen of the country must be made part of the syllabus to encourage the youth to become good job providers instead of job seekers.

On this occasion ICCI executive member Ch. Maqsood Tabish, Ch. Mohammad Ali and members Adnan Mukhtar Zia Chaudhry were also present.

Three-Day Training Workshop on Traditional and Herbal Medicine Concludes



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A three-day training workshop on Regulations and Capacity Building in Traditional and Herbal Medicines for the Republic of Senegal and OIC West African countries concludes. The workshop was jointly organized by the COMSTTECH (The Organization of the Islamic Cooperation Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation) and the National Academy of Science & Technology Senegal (ANSTS) at ANSTS in Dakar, Senegal.

Through a message, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Chaudhary, Coordinator General of COMSTTECH, highlighted the growing trend of using traditional and herbal medicines in OIC member states, particularly in Senegal. He emphasized that regulations are essential to ensure the safety, effectiveness, and quality of these medicines. Prof. Chaudhary expressed COMSTTECH's commitment to supporting Senegal in drafting, finalizing, and promulgating legislation for traditional and herbal medicines.

Prof. Dr. Ousmane Kane, President of ANSTS, delivered opening remarks expressing gratitude to COMSTTECH, Pakistani partners, ANSTS, and Senegalese partners for organizing the workshop.

The Senegalese Minister of Higher Education, Research, and Innovation thanked COMSTTECH and the World Health Organization (WHO) for prioritizing traditional and herbal medicines. The Minister noted that in Senegal, 60% of patients first seek traditional medicines before resorting to allopathic treatments.

H. E. Saima Syed, Ambassador of Pakistan to Senegal, pledged the embassy's full support to COMSTTECH in organizing similar interventions in West Africa.

The workshop brought together traditional healers, Hakims (practitioners of traditional medicine), researchers, academics, and scientists. Dr. Abdur Rashid, Consultant (Health Initiatives) at COMSTTECH, delivered a lecture on the global protection of traditional and herbal medicines.

Poverty-stricken

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Mrs. Rubina Khalid interacting with the women beneficiaries at a payment campsite on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan People's Party announces stability of Pakistan rally in Kotli

Abdul Majeed Tahir

KOTLI: Muzaffarabad: On the call of President Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, stability Pakistan rallies were held throughout Azad Kashmir, the participants in these rallies carried the flags of Pakistan, Azad Kashmir and the People's Party and the atmosphere echoed with the slogans of Pakistan Zindabad. The biggest gathering was held in Kotli under the leadership of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin. President PPP Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Azad Kashmir Government Minister Aamir Yasin Chaudhry, Sardar

Aftab Anjum, Abdul Qayyum Qamar, Chaudhry Parvez Akbar Advocate, Shafiq Kalmarvi, Saqib Riaz, Raja Azhar, Faisal Shah, Rashid Baniyan Advocate, Raja Yasin, Chaudhry Ameer Qab, Chairman Chaudhry Hanif, and others, while speaking, vowed to make every kind of sacrifice for the stability of Pakistan. Hoy Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that today's stability of Pakistan rally is a witness to the fact that Pakistan is Kashmir and Kashmir is Pakistan. The dream of Pakistan was seen by a Kashmiri scholar, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal. The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, said Pakistan was created by my private secretary and my typewriter

and people, you know who that private secretary was, he was also a Kashmiri. The former president of Azad Kashmir, H Khurshid, was late. That is, the dream of Pakistan was seen by the poet of the East, Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal. The founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, testified that his private secretary KH Khurshid late also played a big role. Today, few people are propagating against Pakistan, against the forces of Pakistan. Look at the stability of Pakistan rallies and love for Pakistan. The whole assembly is on the streets in love of Azad Kashmir Pakistan, waving the green crescent flag everywhere. The package of electricity flour is not-

ing but a substitute for the breath of freedom. Look at Iraq, look at Syria, look at Egypt, look at Libya, look at Afghanistan. And look at Gaza today, we were the first target, but the Pakistan forces failed all the conspiracies. These people wanted to create a gap between the Pakistan forces and the people and make this region a victim of insecurity, but they failed and will fail. Kashmir was a part of Pakistan and the destination of Kashmiris is Pakistan. He said that the major demands of the Action Committee from the Federation have been resolved. There is no justification for calling the Action Committee again on May 27. The Action Committee came to the talks.

World No Tobacco Day 2024: Protecting Pakistani Youth from Tobacco Addiction

Ashfaq Ahmad

The World Health Organization (WHO) started World No Tobacco Day in 1987 to raise awareness about the harmful effects of tobacco and preventable illnesses and deaths caused by it. In 1987, the World Health Assembly passed a resolution to have a "world no-smoking day" on April 7, 1988. Then, in 1988, another resolution was passed to celebrate World No Tobacco Day every year on May 31. For the past 36 years, WNTD has been observed worldwide.

This annual event educates people about the dangers of tobacco use, the actions of tobacco industry, what WHO is doing to fight tobacco use, and how people can protect their health and future generations.

World No Tobacco Day 2024 will provide a platform for young people

worldwide to call on governments to protect them from aggressive tobacco marketing. The tobacco industry targets youth to create lifelong customers, leading to a new wave of addiction. The studies show that school/college children are using e-cigarettes more than adults everywhere, and about 37 million young people aged 13-15 use tobacco globally.

World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) 2024 shines a spotlight on the urgent need to shield young people from the predatory marketing tactics of the tobacco industry. This global event, initiated by WHO highlights the dangers of tobacco use and advocates for policies to reduce consumption and prevent the onset of addiction, especially among the youth. In Pakistan, the situation is particularly alarming, with 1,200 to 1,500 young people starting to smoke every day. This year, WHO theme, "Protecting Children

from Tobacco Industry Interference," underscores the critical importance of safeguarding the younger generation from the tobacco industry's reach.

The tobacco industry in Pakistan has become increasingly diversified in its marketing strategies, specifically targeting young people. This shift is not coincidental but a calculated move to cultivate a new generation of lifelong customers. The industry employs a range of tactics, from colorful packaging and flavored products to aggressive advertising campaigns on social media platforms frequented by youth and celebrities. These strategies are designed to make tobacco products appear glamorous, trendy, and desirable.

Flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, are particularly popular among young people. These products, misleadingly propagated by tobacco industry as less harmful than tradi-

tional cigarettes, spread a dangerous misconception. The reality is that all forms of tobacco use carry significant health risks, including addiction, respiratory diseases, and cancer. The tobacco industry exploits this lack of awareness, luring young people into a cycle of addiction with products that are deliberately designed to appeal to them.

The diversification of tobacco products is another alarming trend. The market is now flooded with a variety of tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, and nicotine pouches. These products are often marketed as safer alternatives to traditional cigarettes, but they still pose serious health risks. E-cigarettes, for instance, have been linked to respiratory issues like (EVALI) and contain high levels of nicotine, making them highly addictive.

Every day, between 1,200 to 1,500 young people between ages 6 and 15 in

the country begin smoking. This translates to hundreds of thousands of new smokers each year, many of whom will suffer from tobacco-related illnesses in the future. The widespread availability and marketing of tobacco products to young people are significant factors driving these numbers.

The Tobacco Control Cell at the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination is tirelessly fighting the menace of tobacco. With the dedicated support of provincial tobacco control cells, the ministry is successfully extending its impact to the local level. However, our battle is far from over—much more needs to be done.

The government of Pakistan must take a strong stance against the tobacco industry to protect its young citizens. This includes: plain packaging, banning flavored tobacco products that are particularly attractive to young

people, implementing higher taxes on all tobacco products including smokeless tobacco (SLT) to make them less affordable, especially for young people, launching nationwide public awareness campaigns to educate young people and their families about the dangers of tobacco use and the deceptive marketing tactics of the tobacco industry, providing accessible resources and support for young people who want to quit smoking, including counseling and cessation services and ensuring strict monitoring and enforcement of tobacco control laws, including penalties for violations. By taking decisive action to protect children from smoking, the government can help break the cycle of addiction and ensure a healthier future for all Pakistanis.

The writer works at Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC-Pak)/ Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR).

**Pak-Kuwait
Low Trade
Unfortunate:
Abdul Aleem
Khan**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister of Investment Board, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the low volume of trade between Kuwait and Pakistan is unfortunate and it is necessary to promote bilateral investment. He added that all relevant departments should be on board because there is a huge scope for increasing trade in various sectors between the two countries of Pakistan and Kuwait. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan while presiding over the meeting of the 5th Pak-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission said that it is going to be held in Kuwait after 6 years by Pakistan, in which the establishment of Special Economic Zones in Pakistan will be widely discussed. Federal Minister said that there will be practical developments on investment and trade issues for which all Ministries should attend these meetings in Kuwait with full preparation at the end of this month. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that Kuwait can bring investment in Pakistan in important trade sectors such as Food Security, Live Stock, Telecom, Information Technology, Agriculture, Tourism and Petroleum. He said that we want practical results for the increase in trade, so all the departments should go ahead with proper homework as this important visit to Kuwait should not be limited to signing MOUs and feasibility reports but practical results would be fetched out of it. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan further said that Kuwait should increase the number of manpower from Pakistan, especially doctors and nurses, while the business community and visitors should be made easier to obtain visas and travel for Kuwait. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan also directed the concerned department to take private sector onboard re this Pak Kuwait trade so that they can play their role as well. In this high-level meeting, senior officers of Trade and Commerce, Ministry of Economic Affairs division and all other relevant departments gave a briefing regarding the visit to Kuwait headed by Federal Minister for Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan. The Ambassador of Pakistan in Kuwait gave a video link briefing and highlighted the important features of this visit. He said that this visit in Kuwait will be of great importance after which a high-level delegation of investors from there can visit Pakistan as well. The Ambassador said that this Ministerial Commission can open a new door of Trade Affairs which will ultimately reflect positive effects on Pakistan economy.

Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb meets with the CEO Huawei and Team

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by Huawei Pakistan's Chief Executive Officer Mr. Sun Xiaofei along with his senior management team at Finance Division today.

Mr. Xiaofei briefed the Finance Minister on the various digital and ICT initiatives of Huawei. He highlighted Huawei's significant contribution to the ICT industry in Pakistan over the past 25 years and

emphasized the country's potential to become an IT hub. The delegation also informed about Huawei's Pakistan Global Service Centre (GSC) that provides services to the Huawei's Middle East, Central Asia, and Africa partners. They proposed areas of cooperation in tax digitalization, e-invoicing, revenue automation, and IT applications to evolve Pakistan's digital ecosystem and promote sustainable economic growth.

The Federal Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb appreciated the proposals put forward by

Huawei. He informed the delegation about the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) progress in digitizing the tax system, emphasizing the potential for quick wins through utilization of available data. He appreciated Huawei's interest in collaborating with Government to promote digital economy in Pakistan.

The CEO of Huawei invited the Finance Minister to visit Huawei's Shenzhen headquarters to participate in discussions with Huawei's executive leaders on finance and digital economy cooperation.



Preparation juma prayer

ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling men scarf outside Laal Masjid in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

CBD Punjab successfully conducts third auction of commercial plots, generating Pkr 6.55 billion

PNP

LAHORE: Central Business District (CBD) Punjab is proud to announce the successful conclusion of its third auction of commercial plots, generating a total revenue of PKR 6.55 billion. This event marks yet another milestone for CBD Punjab, following the success of two previous auctions, further solidifying its reputation as a premier business hub in the region.

The auction featured three prime mixed-use commercial plots located in the prestigious CBD Punjab Business Bay. The plots presented at this auction were highly sought after, attracting bidders from all over the country, showcasing the significant interest and demand for these premium properties. The competitive bidding atmosphere highlighted the strategic importance



and investment potential of these plots. Notable participants included some of the most prominent names in the industry such as BSM Developers, Zameen.com, Enrichers Investment Group, Banu Mukhtar, and Grand City.

The first plot, CBD Punjab Business Bay 1, spans 8.73 kanals with a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1:16 and was sold to BSM Developers for a total amount of PKR 2.32 billion. This plot is expected to become a landmark development, given

its strategic location and the reputation of the developer. The second plot, CBD Punjab Business Bay 2, measuring 8.89 kanals, was acquired by Zameen.com for PKR 2.15 billion. As a leading real estate portal. The third plot, CBD Punjab Business Bay 3, measuring 6 kanals, was also sold to BSM Developers for PKR 2.8 billion, indicating their strong interest and belief in the prospects of CBD Punjab.

Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, expressed his satisfaction

with the outcome of the auction, stating, "We are thrilled with the overwhelming response from esteemed developers and investors across the country. The successful auction of these commercial plots underscores the immense potential and trust in CBD Punjab as a prime investment destination. We are committed to transforming the business landscape of Punjab and fostering economic growth through such strategic developments."



Seminar arranged by OGRA on safety of petrol station the focus is to develop new trends to educate people about hazards and prevention, participants ask questions about their concern of training and hse compliance for which Dr. Muhammad Imran Taj endorsed that OMAP is introducing training and building compliance certification which will be available to all OMAP members. OGRA MASROOR AHMAD appreciated the efforts of all stakeholders and premises to promote fire and safety.

2024 K-pop World Festival Regional Preliminary Round in Pakistan

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Korea in Islamabad is pleased to announce that it will be holding the 2024 K-POP Festival on the 28th of June. 2024 K-pop World Festival is the world's largest K-pop festival co-hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea, and KBS (Korean Public Service Media).

The contest would have two categories: K-pop vocal or K-pop cover dance. Applicants who are interested in this contest can apply for the competition by uploading a video file showcasing their talent to the link mentioned down below.

Among the teams selected in each country's regional preliminary round, selected teams will advance to the final, and the final round will be held in Changwon, the Republic of Korea.

Overview of the Regional Preliminary Round

- Date and time: 28th June 2024 (Fri) 6:00 PM
- Venue: PNCA (Pakistan National Council of the Arts), F-5/1, Islamabad

- Qualification: Those who can perform K-pop vocal performance or cover dance.

- Submission Duration for Online Preliminary Round: May 17th (Fri) - May 31st (Fri)

- Online Preliminary Round: June 3rd to June 5th

The Embassy will notice the results of the shortlisted applicants from the online preliminary round individually.

Please note that Korean citizens cannot apply for this event.

Competition Type

- K-pop Vocal (Korean ballade is acceptable) or
- K-pop cover dance
Teuroteu or Gukak (Korean classical music) would not be reviewed.

Application Process

- How to apply: Click the link below and submit your video file
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdGJjFEo4vQjJFa2Cx-HpJ7EKhpO_u2qpBFSF5uGHlgrHPrT_w/viewform?usp=sf_link
- What to submit: a video of K-pop vocal performance or cover dance
The Video should be titled as follows,
[Type, Name, phone number, e-mail]
(Example: Vocal, Umar Khan, 0312-000-0000, aaaabb@gmail.com)

ISSI-NIMA Seminar focuses on 'India's Maritime Buildup: Implications for the Indian Ocean'

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) in collaboration with the Indian Ocean Study Centre (IOSC), National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA), hosted a seminar on "India's Maritime Buildup: Implications for the Indian Ocean," to address crucial geopolitical and security dynamics of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). The speakers at the seminar included: Vice Admiral (R) Ahmed Saeed HI(M), President NIMA; Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique, former Vice Chief of Naval Staff; Brigadier Zahir Kazmi, Director General, Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA), SPD; Mr. Baber Bilal Haider, Vice President NIMA and Director IOSC, NIMA; and Rear Admiral (R) Syed Faisal Ali Shah, Honorary Research Fellow,

NIMA. The seminar was moderated by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director, ACDC-ISSI.

Vice Admiral Ahmed Saeed, in his keynote address, highlighted that the Indian Ocean (IOR) was crucial for global maritime trade, with around 80% of global oil trade passing through its chokepoints. Controlling these passages equates to significant geopolitical influence, underscoring the region's role as a critical axis in global economic and security frameworks. The shift in the global world order post-Cold War, the strategic use of chokepoint diplomacy, and the potentially destabilizing effects of the AUKUS model in the IOR were discussed. The presence of major powers complicates the geopolitical landscape, making the IOR a focal point for economic advancement, strategic competition, and diplomatic engagements. He stressed

that regional cooperation and dialogue are needed to mitigate tensions and promote stability.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, in his welcome remarks, stated that the Indian Ocean plays a critical role as a vital maritime corridor, connecting nations across Africa, Asia, and Australia, and highlights its immense geopolitical significance on a global scale. He also elaborated on the Indian Ocean's role as a crucial arena for diplomatic engagement and regional collaboration. He further pointed out that controlling the Indian Ocean often equates with dominance over Asia, emphasizing its pivotal role in shaping regional dynamics. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted the active involvement of major powers such as the United States, UK and China and countries like Japan and India in the

region, underscoring that the IOR is a focal point for economic advancement, geopolitical competition, and strategic maneuvering. He also dilated on India's expanding naval capabilities, the role of Indian maritime buildup in IOR's militarization, and the impact of these developments on Pakistan's security and economic interests.

Earlier, in his introductory remarks, Malik Qasim Mustafa pointed out that India wants to ensure dominance of the Indian Ocean with the help of extra-regional powers and strives to play the role of 'Net Security Provider.' It militarised the Indian Ocean while rapidly modernizing and building up its blue-water capabilities. It has nuclearized the Indian Ocean. This growing Indian naval presence is endangering the peace and stability of the region. It has heightened Pakistan's threat perception and

security concerns, and it could spark a conventional and nuclear arms race in the region.

Vice Admiral (R) Khan Hasham Bin Saddique elaborated on the great power competition in the IOR. He discussed the strategic significance of the IOR, and the military dimensions shaping the region's environment. He underscored the nontraditional challenges that accompany this competition, including piracy, terrorism, and human trafficking, which complicate the already tense maritime security landscape. His remarks provided a broad overview of geopolitical tensions and underscored the need for cooperative security frameworks to address these multifaceted challenges.

Brigadier Zahir Kazmi shared his insights on the Indian sea-based nuclear capabilities and their impact on deterrence stability.



He elaborated on how India was expanding its nuclear weapons capabilities at sea, and how it could undermine regional deterrence and could potentially lead to an arms race, increasing conflict risk. India's unconstrained military capabilities, including MIRV, hypersonic, and cruise missiles, pose threats to power. Despite bilateral agreements, tensions persist, and India's inadequate safety system warrants consideration.

Mr. Baber Bilal Haider explored India's maritime ambitions and emphasized on India's strategic culture, which was influenced by historical and ideological factors and drives its current politics. His analysis extended beyond security concerns to include regional stability and economic cooperation.

He stressed that India's economic strategy involves importing, managing choke points, recognizing its economic might, and establishing a strong military base in the IOR.

Rear Admiral (R) Syed Faisal Ali Shah discussed Pakistan's ambitions and achievements in enhancing its maritime capabilities and securing its interests amidst regional challenges. His remarks emphasized the strategic importance of the Gwadar port and its potential to transform regional trade dynamics while also addressing the security threats posed by India's naval buildup. He stressed according due cognizance to the importance of maritime domain and shifting the strategic focus accordingly.

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Shift of R&D to Asia, and so does the power...

R&D and publication of research papers are the lifeblood of a nation's prosperity. By fostering innovation, they fuel economic growth through new products, efficient processes, and a competitive edge in the global market. This translates to wealth creation via high-paying jobs, intellectual property, and a reputation for leadership that attracts talent and boosts international standing.

R&D and research publications don't just benefit the economy; they fuel social progress by tackling global challenges and improving lives. In essence, strong R&D, quality research publications are the key to unlocking a nation's full potential on the world stage.

This statement is fully endorsed when one browses through World Bank data (<https://data.worldbank.org/>) can draw two conclusions; a country's wealth, prosperity, power, and global leadership are directly proportional to the amount of spending on R&D as a percentage of GDP and from the 1990s onward, there has been a marked shift in R&D spending from the US and Europe to Asian countries, primarily led by China, South Korea, Singapore, Israel and India.

This shift in R&D became even more significant in the 2010s when China surpassed Japan to become the world's second-largest spender on R&D after the USA, focusing on areas such as artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and renewable energy. Other Asian countries, including Singapore, Taiwan, and Malaysia, contin-

ued to invest in R&D infrastructure and capabilities especially in electronics while also investing in emerging technologies such as 5G and robotics.

In the 2020s, the COVID-19 pandemic countries like China, South Korea, and India made significant contributions to vaccine development and medical research. During this period, China's focus on becoming a global leader in science and technology intensified, with initiatives such as the "Made in China 2025" plan aiming to strengthen domestic innovation and reduce dependence on foreign technology.

The second most important factor pivotal for achieving fast-tracked prosperity and development is the number of research publications a country can produce. The US and Europe dominated this domain for a long time, but after the 1990s, the number and quality of publications began shifting toward Asia, highlighting changes in global academic and scientific output, as well as the power centers. During the 1970s and 1980s, the USA and Europe produced thousands of publications in fields like physics, chemistry, and medicine while Japan followed especially in electronics and automotive research.

In the 1990s, the USA consistently produced over 200,000 scientific papers annually while Japan solidified its position with over 30,000 publications mostly in

engineering and technology. Meanwhile, South Korea and Taiwan began to emerge as players, each producing thousands of publications annually due to increased funding and international collaboration.

During the 2000s the USA produced 300,000 publications and Europe exceeded 500,000 publications annually. But during this period, Asia started challenging their dominance. China increased its publication to 200,000, South Korea reached around 50,000 and India followed closely by increasing its output to 50,000 by the end of the decade but with questionable quality.

In the decade of the 2010s, the USA and Europe produced approximately 400,000 and 600,000 publications, China surpassed the USA by reaching over 500,000 high quality and hi impact publications. India produced around 130,000 publications, particularly in engineering and computer science. South Korea reached around 80,000 annually, primarily focusing on fields like electronics and biotechnology.

In the 2020s, the USA produced around 450,000 publications annually, and Europe produced 700,000 publications annually. However, they were faced with a strong rival in China, which produces 600,000 high-quality publications annually, with significant contributions in fields like AI, biotechnology, and environmental science. India follows

with 150,000 publications in pharmaceuticals, engineering, and IT, and South Korea with 100,000 publications annually in high-impact research, especially in technology and life sciences.

This shift is also translated into a proportional increase in their wealth, prosperity, credibility, international status, and power, transforming the world from unipolar to multipolar and breaking the hegemony of traditional power centers.

It is the time for Pakistan to rise to the occasion and contribute its share to make Asia the powerhouse of R&D and research publications. Pakistan must understand that, without substantially increasing its spending on R&D and promoting the publication of high-quality research, it has no choice but to heavily invest in R&D and higher education and create robust infrastructures for scientific research. It must bring about education reforms to substantially increase the quality and accessibility of education and produce a larger pool of researchers and scientists. Pakistan must also focus on international collaboration with top Western and Asian institutions to facilitate knowledge transfer and boost publication output, while ensuring the presence of vibrant innovation ecosystems. Failing to do so, Pakistan will remain a poor country, and its dream to bring half of the population out of the abject poverty trap and to gain a leadership role in the comity of nations will remain elusive.

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

Pakistan urges UNSC to end foreign occupation & promote self-determination for Palestinians, Kashmiris

Ambassador Munir Akram said the Security Council could contribute by holding the perpetrators of war crimes accountable; halting weapon supplies to the perpetrators; taking action on the States and individuals responsible for these crimes, and, offering protection to the civilians suffering under the yoke of foreign occupation. Ambassador Akram was speaking in a debate on 'Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict' held in connection with the twenty-fifth anniversary of Security Council resolution 1265 (1999), which first established the protection of civilians as a crucial issue of international peace and security, and the seventy-fifth anniversary of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. Voicing outrage over the wanton war being waged by Israel against Palestinian civilians in Gaza resulting in massive death and destruction, he said that this "plausible genocide" – as termed by the world court – "will forever remain a blot on the world's conscience. "It will haunt the perpetrators of this slaughter. It has sullied the reputation of those who were complicit in the Israeli crimes by offering impunity to the extremist Israeli leadership, Ambassador added. Noting that the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has sought arrest warrants, including for two of Israel's leaders—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Defence Minister Yoav Gallant, he said, "This will be a test-case for the credibility of the ICC."

But the Pakistani envoy also said it was difficult to build protections for civilians when their suppression, exclusion and expulsion were the very object of a military campaign. "As in Palestine, a pervasive campaign of oppression has been underway for decades in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, executed by an army of 900,000 troops, acting with complete impunity, to impose what is ominously called a 'Final Solution' for the Kashmir dispute," Ambassador Akram said. "Apart from political actions to resolve disputes; apart from reinforced legal mechanisms to ensure accountability, we must build the UN's capacity together with relevant regional organizations, such as the AU, to enforce peace and uphold the protection of civilians in conflict zones in accordance with the principles and norms of international law, in particular international humanitarian law." Earlier, Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator, told the Council, "The situation of civilians in armed conflict in 2023 was resoundingly dire." Citing conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Sahel, Somalia, Syria and Ukraine, she reported that in total, the United Nations alone recorded more than 33,000 civilian deaths in armed conflict in 2023, up by 72 per cent from 2022. Pointing to incidents of violence against medical workers, facilities, equipment, transport and patients; the record-breaking displacement of 110 million people globally due to conflict and human rights violations; and staggeringly high levels of hunger driven by conflict, she said: "The harm and suffering caused to civilians in 2023 signals an alarming lack of compliance with international humanitarian law and international human rights law." The Council and Member States must demand and ensure compliance with the comprehensive protection framework in place. "And, if it is to have any real meaning for the millions of civilians affected by conflict, it is time to go above and beyond compliance: to strive for the full protection of civilians against the full range of harms they are suffering on our watch," she emphasized.



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

Demand to declare India a Terrorist Country - I

India has consistently engaged in espionage and terrorist activities in foreign territories, with a documented history of interference in the internal affairs of other nations, particularly its neighboring countries such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. The imperative of respecting the sovereignty of other nations and refraining from involvement in their internal matters becomes paramount. International relations comprise a complex web of interactions shaped by distinct values, interests, and governing systems of each country. Within this intricate landscape, the principle of non-interference assumes a central role, necessitating abstention from meddling in the domestic affairs of other nations.

The primary rationale for adopting a non-interference policy lies in the profound respect for a nation's sovereignty. Sovereignty, a fundamental tenet of international law, asserts a nation's right to self-governance free from external interference. Upholding this principle not only conforms to global standards but also fosters a more stable and harmonious global order. Interfering in the internal affairs of another nation can swiftly escalate tensions and precipitate conflicts, perceived as a violation of autonomy, eliciting strong reactions. Thus, a non-interference policy serves as a preemptive measure, reducing the likelihood of diplomatic crises and hostilities. Embracing a non-interference policy nurtures the practice of diplomacy.

By refraining from meddling in internal matters, nations can maintain open channels of communication and seek diplomatic resolutions to global challenges, fostering negotiation and compromise for peace and cooperation. Additionally, a non-interference policy enhances bilateral relations, signaling respect for the autonomy and self-determination of other countries, often leading to more cordial and productive relationships based on shared interests and cooperation.

The alignment with international norms and principles is evident in the United Nations Charter, which underscores the significance of refraining from involvement in the internal matters of other states. Adherence to these norms strengthens the global framework for peaceful and lawful international relations. Furthermore, a non-interference policy upholds the right to self-determination, allowing countries to shape their governance, culture, and policies without external pressures, promoting peaceful coexistence.

Interfering in another country's affairs can result in unintended and adverse consequences, including instability and insecurity, as historical examples demonstrate. Therefore, a non-interference policy helps avert these inadvertent negative outcomes, contributing to global stability. Through the embrace of a non-

interference policy, nations play a pivotal role in fostering a world characterized by peaceful coexistence and diminished potential for international disputes and hostilities. In a globally interconnected environment, peaceful coexistence and non-interference are instrumental in fostering trust and security, thereby reducing the likelihood of international disputes and hostilities.

India has been involved in interventionist endeavors across various nations, utilizing RAW as a tool to extend its influence beyond its borders. RAW, short for the Research and Analysis Wing, India's external intelligence agency, has long been cloaked in secrecy and speculation due to its clandestine operations abroad. The activities of the Indian Spy Agency RAW abroad have raised objections as they infringe upon the sovereignty of other nations. Officially designated as the Research and Analysis Wing, RAW serves as India's primary external intelligence agency, entrusted with the task of gathering intelligence and executing covert operations overseas. Established in 1968, RAW's fundamental objective is to safeguard India's national security by gathering information on external threats, encompassing both military and non-military aspects, and executing operations to protect and advance India's interests globally. However, allegations have surfaced regarding RAW's activities outside India. One of the enduring accusations leveled against RAW is its purported support for insurgent groups and separatist movements in neighboring nations, with Pakistan being a prominent example.

To be continued

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

Education System of Pakistan: Issues, Problems - II

Mahnoor Khan

It spends a lot on education, relative to the resources it has. But when Pakistan's education budget is expressed as a percentage of its GDP, it does poorly. Pakistan has budgeted the equivalent of 2.7 percent of its GDP on education for fiscal year 2016. The international minimum is 4 percent. Many countries are increasing spending to 6 percent. Pakistan is behind other South Asian and sub-Saharan countries when spending is expressed in these terms.

Every 2 out of three children are subjected to child labor due to no affordability of education. The prohibitive costs associated with schooling, including tuition fees, transportation expenses, and the opportunity cost of foregone wages, often render education unattainable for economically marginalized youth. The education standards of a government school would take you nowhere and the cost and expenses of private schools are a call for a heavenly abode.

Pakistan's education challenge is not underspending. It is mispending. Without reforms, new money is likely to end up feeding cronyism and corruption, rather than making a difference that children can feel. Reducing the public discussion to budget numbers and worse, expressed in a way that most people don't understand, as relative to GDP distracts from a more relevant, qualitative discussion about where the budget for education goes. Almost 40 percent of Pakistani students are enrolled in low-cost private schools. These schools charge between \$3 and \$25 per month. Their per child cost is half of what the government spends, but they produce students who are two grades ahead of those in government schools. The mushrooming of private schools suggests that the public is not apathetic; demand for quality education is high. The "double the budget" mantra is overly simplistic, to the point of being misleading. It has probably gotten the education budget to increase to the current level of 17 percent to 28 percent of provincial budgets.

According to UNICEF report 2023, "Pakistan has the world's second-highest number of out-of-school children (OOSC) with an estimated 22.8 million children aged 5-16 not attending school, representing 44 per cent of the total population in this age group. In the 5-9 age group, 5 million children are not enrolled in schools and after primary-school age, the number of OOSC doubles, with 11.4 million adoles-

cents between the ages of 10-14 not receiving formal education. Disparities based on gender, socio-economic status, and geography are significant; in Sindh, 52 percent of the poorest children (58 percent girls) are out of school, and in Balochistan, 78 percent of girls are out of school. Nearly 10.7 million boys and 8.6 million girls are enrolled at the primary level and this drops to 3.6 million boys and 2.8 million girls at the lower secondary level."

To overcome all these inadequacies an extensive methodology tending to different points of views is required most significant of which is an increment in government spending on schooling to guarantee satisfactory assets for a framework, upgrading teacher training programs, and giving continuous expert advancement chances might help in showing quality and adequacy. In addition to this, an improvement in the curriculum to make it more significant and comprehensive, and lined up with cutting-edge globalized society and advance orientation equity in training by eliminating obstructions that keep young ladies from going to class and guaranteeing equivalent open doors for all kids dismantling the gender barriers would lay the foundation of a brighter future. Moreover, in an era marked by digital innovation and the democratization of knowledge, the education system must adapt to meet the evolving needs of students, equipping them with the skills and competencies necessary to thrive in the 21st century. Embracing innovation, promoting creativity, and cultivating a spirit of inquiry are essential if we are to harness the full potential of Pakistan's youth and propel the nation towards a future of prosperity and progress.

In essence, the journey towards improving education in Pakistan is both a challenging yet essential endeavor. By prioritizing education significant strides can be made in enhancing the nation's education system. As Pakistan continues to invest in its human capital through education it will not only cultivate a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce but also foster social cohesion, economic prosperity and a brighter future for generations to come with concentrated efforts and unwavering dedication Pakistan will eventually realize its vision of thriving society built upon a foundation of accessible, equitable and quality education for all.

Writer is BS IR student in National Defense University, Islamabad. She can be reached atmahnoorlee27@gmail.com

Business community will play its pivotal role to make the city beautiful: Atif Ikram

PPA

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh met Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa along with his delegation and Congratulate him on taking charge of the post. Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa said on this occasion that he is determined to make the federal capital free from encroachments and will create a mechanism that will generate revenue. The powers of the Assistant Commissioner for removal of encroachments will be extended so that he can take decision on the spot. After the shift of the katchety there is a lot of cleaning work in F8 Markaz, it will be improved soon, the parking problems of other centers including I8 center, Blue Area will also be solved. He said that the IT sector will be promoted on a priority basis. Ease of doing business is among my priorities. Give the concerns and difficulties regarding plot auctions in writing. We are working on that before the auction, NOC Will be issued.



On this occasion, President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Shaikh said that the business community will play its pivotal role to make the city of Islamabad beautiful. One window operation is a good initiative for further improvement, weekly meetings should be held and FPCCI should also be represented in the committees.

Atif Ikram, mentioning the problems faced by the business community, said that in CDA auctions, 50 to 70 percent of the payment is made, but the position and location are not clear. The transfer of ownership rights

is greatly hampered, FAR issues should be resolved in industrial area, IT sector is a very important sector and steps should be taken to promote it.

The delegation included Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Mian Akram Farid, Tariq Sadiq, Conveyor Diplomatic Committee Ahmed Waheed, Chairman Coordi-

nation Malik Sohail Hussain, President Rawalpindi Small Chamber Tariq Jadoon, Mian Shaukat Masood, Ijaz Abbasi, Chaudhry Naseer, Arif Jeewa, Sardar Tahir, Mahmood Waraich, Rafaat Farid, Conveyor Police and Administration Committee Yahya Sheikh and others were also present there.

Meeting

Peshawar: H. E Ammad Rasheed—Dean Honorary Consul Corps Peshawar and Honorary Consul General of the Republic of Tunisia Peshawar (KP-Chapter) in a meeting with Faisal Karim Kundi—Governor KP at Governor House.



Who will Nikki Haley vote for in US elections?

Nikki Haley, the former Republican presidential candidate, revealed Wednesday that she'll vote for former United States president Donald Trump with whom she exchanged some sour words during her presidential campaign.

The former governor of South Carolina attended a question and answer session where she was asked who she thinks would do a better job in the White House with national security issues between Trump and Joe Biden, ABC News reported.

The former United Nations ambassador said she prioritizes a president who will hold enemies to account, secure the border and support "capitalism and freedom".

She added that while "Trump has not been perfect on these policies," that "Biden has been a catastrophe." "So I will be voting for Trump," Haley said.

Haley suspended her campaign in March after suffering considerable losses on Super Tuesday.

During a speech announcing her campaign suspension, she said Trump had to "earn the votes".

Engro Fertilizers Recognized Internationally with IFA Green Leaf Award 2024



PPA

KARACHI: Engro Fertilizers, Pakistan's premier seed-to-harvest solutions provider, has been recognized as the winner of the prestigious International Fertilizers Association (IFA) Green Leaf Award 2024 in the Nitrogen Category, for its exceptional performance in health, safety and environmental (HSE) practices.

Presented every two years, the IFA Green Leaf Award is regarded as the gold standard for fertilizer manufacturers globally. In 2024, a record 47 eligible applications from 27 member companies were received by IFA. An independent panel of judges evaluated the award based on performance records in key areas such as lost-time injury, sickness rate, and annual emissions over the previous five years. Previously, Engro Fertilizers secured the first runner up position in nitrogen category at the IFA Green Leaf Award 2020.

Commenting on this achievement, Ali Rathore—CEO of Engro Fertilizers said, "At Engro Fertilizers, safety, health, and environmental management are the cornerstone of our operations. Our steadfast dedication to HSE principles, upheld by every member of our team, has earned us the trust of stakeholders across the value chain. With our initiatives to advance innovation and sustainable practices, we look forward to making continuous impact for all stakeholders and contribute towards enabling the food security of Pakistan."

According to the IFA team, Engro Fertilizers has demonstrated strong dedication to reducing emissions and promoting sustainability, reflected through its HSE programs and the ECO-GREEN project. The 60-day ECO-GREEN project enhanced plant energy efficiency by inspecting and repairing 400 pieces of equipment and installing low NOx burners, and positioned the Company at forefront for their exemplary environmental stewardship practices. In 2023, the Company reported a remarkable TRIR rate of 0.03 across its facilities, with zero loss workday injuries registered at the manufacturing facilities.

Meezan Bank & IBA-CEIF jointly hold a graduation ceremony



PPA

KARACHI: The graduation ceremony for the flagship Islamic Finance Talent development program – Meezan Justuju, was held today at the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) in Karachi. Chairman IBA CEIF (Centre of Excellence in Islamic Finance) and ex-Governor State Bank of Pakistan – Dr. Ishrat Hussain, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. Founding President & CEO Meezan Bank – Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, Deputy CEO Meezan Bank – Syed Amir Ali, Director IBA CEIF & Group Head Shariah Compliance, Meezan Bank – Mr. Ahmed Ali Siddiqui were also present at the ceremony.

Dr. Ishrat Hussain, who played a pivotal role in establishing Islamic banking in Pakistan, extended his best wishes to the program participants and advised them to seize this valuable opportunity. He emphasized the importance of upskilling the youth and expressed appreciation for the collaboration that has facilitated skill-based learning and enhanced the employability of the participants. "There is a growing need for human resources in the Islamic finance industry, especially as the economic system is slated to undergo changes by 2027," he stated.

Founding President and CEO of Meezan Bank, Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, stated, "The initiative of Meezan Justuju with IBA CEIF demonstrates Meezan Bank's strong commitment to nurturing talent and promoting the growth of Islamic finance in Pakistan. By investing in the education and training of young professionals, Meezan, as an industry leader, aims to facilitate the Islamic Finance industry of Pakistan."

Mr. Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, Director of IBA CEIF, remarked, "We are witnessing a remarkable 24% growth in the country's Islamic banking industry, accompanied by a surge in demand for trained resources. With almost 5,000 Islamic banking branches now established, there is an average requirement of nearly 4,000 skilled Islamic bankers to meet industry demands.

Syed Amir Ali, Deputy CEO of Meezan Bank, said, "As the fifth most populous country in the world, Pakistan has a significant opportunity to harness the potential of its youth. However, the country's female workforce participation remains limited, standing at only 22%. I am delighted to witness the enthusiastic participation in Meezan Justuju, which presents an excellent opportunity for upskilling and contributing to the country's GDP." The ceremony celebrated the achievements of the talented participants as they received their certificates. The event also provided a valuable opportunity for recruiters to select graduates for roles in the Islamic financial industry.

Pakistan celebrates first 'International Day of the Markhor'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: This May 24th marks the first-ever celebration of 'International Day of the Markhor', proclaimed by the United Nations earlier this month.



Markhor with mountains in the background ISLAMABAD, May 24th, 2024 – Today Pakistan and the world celebrated 'International Day of the Markhor', Pakistan's iconic national animal, for the first time.

On May 2nd this year, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution, sponsored by Pakistan and

eight other countries, proclaiming May 24th as the International Day of the Markhor. It recognizes that preserving the Markhor, which was categorized as "near threatened" in 2014, and its natural habitat is an ecological imperative, given the animal's role in the overall

ecosystem. "Markhors have long been Pakistan's national treasure. Today, they have also become a world's treasure," said Mr. Mohamed Yahya, the UN Resident Coordinator in Pakistan. "Not only do Markhors play a crucial role in the ecosystem, but they offer a significant opportunity to bolster the economy, foster conservation efforts and promote sustainable tourism and economic growth, in line with the Government's 'Living Indus' initiative which the United Nations supports."

The Markhor population in Pakistan has kept increasing for the past

ten years, reaching between 3,500 and 5,000 today thanks to the country's proactive conservation programmes, and community engagement. Around the world, however, their numbers are declining – there are less than 6,000 mature individuals across the planet today.

Pakistan's 'Living Indus' initiative, which aims to protect and restore the global economy, sending shockwaves through energy markets and supply chains (Halberstam, 2011).

Initially lauded for its potential to spur global trade and development, the BRI has evolved into a geopolitical chessboard where China seeks to expand its influence. While the initiative boasts of building roads, railways, and ports, concerns abound about a hidden agenda: the creation of a strategic springboard for China's global ambitions (Mearsheimer, 2018).

On the surface, BRI projects appear purely economic. Modern ports equipped for massive cargo ships, high-speed rail networks connecting bustling metropolises, and energy pipelines snaking across vast landscapes paint a picture of a bustling global marketplace. However, a closer

look reveals potential for military applications. Ports can readily transform into logistical hubs for troop deployment and equipment movement. Robust transportation networks, once arteries of trade, can become highways for rapid troop mobilization during conflicts (Brzezinski, 2019). This strategic infrastructure network, meticulously planned under the guise of economic development, strengthens China's ability to project power across vast distances, potentially altering the global balance of power (Allison, 2017).

The BRI's strategic footprint extends beyond mere infrastructure. China prioritizes securing strategic locations, particularly ports that control vital shipping lanes. The Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea are prime targets with their heavy traffic of oil tankers and cargo vessels. By gaining control over these chokepoints, China can exert significant influence over global trade flows. In the event of a conflict, China's grip on these strategic points could disrupt the global economy, sending shockwaves through energy markets and supply chains (Halberstam, 2011).

The BRI also serves as a resource security blanket for China's booming economy. Regions rich in natural resources like oil and gas in Central Asia and Africa become prime targets for BRI investments. By financing resource extraction projects and building infrastructure to transport these resources, China secures a steady supply for its ever-growing needs. This not only reduces dependence on other sources but also grants China leverage over resource-rich nations (Panda, 2017).

Geopolitical Implications of China's Belt and Road Initiative

Faraz Ahmad

The revival of the ancient Silk Road in the 21st century, through China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has garnered significant global attention. Unveiled in 2013, the BRI promises a modern-day resurgence—a sprawling web of infrastructure projects connecting continents, fostering economic growth and cultural exchange. However, beneath the surface of this ambitious undertaking lies a more intricate narrative, one where economic aspirations intertwine with strategic calculations (Tian, 2021).

China's strategic expansion through BRI raises concerns about potential instability. Strained relations with neighboring countries due to projects in disputed territories, like the South China Sea, are a simmering pot of tension. Resentment towards China from corrupt BRI practices can breed social

unrest and political instability within recipient countries. The risk of debt traps for developing nations further adds to the precariousness of the situation (Brack, 2020).

The success of BRI as a strategic tool rests heavily on China's willingness to foster transparency. Openness in project planning and execution can alleviate concerns about hidden agendas (Tian, 2021). Additionally, ensuring responsible lending practices is crucial for maintaining positive relations with BRI partners. Preventing debt traps by offering sustainable loan terms fosters trust and cooperation (Brack, 2020). Finally, prioritizing sustainable devel-

opment in BRI projects—minimizing environmental damage and upholding social responsibility—is vital for long-term success (Rosenberg, 2019).

The BRI chessboard is a complex and ever-evolving landscape. The international community has a role to play in ensuring fair and transparent practices within BRI and promoting alternative infrastructure development models that prioritize mutual benefit over strategic dominance. Only by navigating these complexities with a focus on transparency, sustainability, and shared prosperity can China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative achieve its full potential for global development.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
75,114.47	74,956.67
Day's High	Day's Low
75,284.74	74,726.06
Index Value	Change
9,907,059,123	+157.80
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	23 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,339.23	-31.10
Percentage	Time
-0.37	23 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,182.55	-488.49
Percentage	Time
-1.23%	23 May, 1:39 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
39,103.22	+486.12
Percentage	Time
+1.26%	23 May, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	184.8
Bahrain Dinar	740.75	748.75
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.47	38.87
Danish Krone	40.52	40.92
Euro	297	300
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.35	3.46
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.57	916.57
Malaysian Ringgit	59.39	59.99
New Zealand \$	170.03	172.03
Norwegians Krone	25.92	26.22
Omani Riyal	723.64	731.64
Qatari Riyal	76.42	77.12
Saudi Riyal	73.4	74.15
Singapore Dollar	203	205
Swedish Korona	26.02	26.32
Swiss Franc	304.75	307.25
Thai Bhat	7.67	7.82
U.A.E Dirham	75.2	75.85
UK Pound Sterling	349.5	353
US Dollar	277.35	280.1

Local auto industry requests govt intervention to control used cars' imports

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chief Executive, Indus Motor Company, Mr. Ali Asghar Jamali in a statement has said that local auto industry expects urgent remedial measures from the current government in the upcoming budget to support the local auto industry and to restore investors' confidence.

The local auto industry has requested for an increase in duties and taxes on used cars in the upcoming budget from the government, to benefit the local auto industry from the slightly improved economic activity, stable currency and a likely cut in interest rates.

"Contradictory to our expectations of improvement in demand from Jan 2024 onwards, this year could not turn a new leaf for Pakistan's Auto Industry due to heavy import of used cars," said Mr. Jamali.

It is worth adding here that local auto-makers witnessed a slight improvement of about 28% in their sales in February 2024 against last year same period (7,953 in Feb '24 vs 3642 in Feb '23). However, on the other hand, the imports of used cars recorded over 711% (3,213 against 396 units) increase in February alone, against same period last year.

If this situation persists, our vendors industry will be forced to close down their businesses due to this unsustainable business environment, with plant utilization capacity levels between 25 to 30% for the past few months. While, on the other hand, huge investments by vendors in order to meet surging demands of the auto industry, are now lying idle and only producing parts for vehicles at approx. 100,000 levels.

Chairman, PAAPAM has recently mentioned that overall, the local auto industry has invested about \$2.5bn and contributed about Rs 400bn in taxes in FY2022 alone, while it creates about 2.5 million direct and indirect jobs within the country, which continues to nullify the potential and magnitude of the industry. The import of 3068 used cars per month on average (taken from July 2023 to April 2024 imports) has been rendering local businesses ineffective, which will result in unemployment and economic loss (in terms of taxes).

CDA anti-encroachment drive lauded

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Shahid Rasheed Butt, the former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), stated on Thursday that the business community supports the Capital Development Authority's (CDA) anti-encroachment drive.

He added that this drive will help clean up encroachments in markets and residential areas, relieving the people living in Islamabad.

In a statement issued here today, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that anti-encroachment operations are being conducted across the city on the instructions of the Chairman, CDA so that the city could be kept free from illegal constructions and encroachments.

The district administration and Islamabad

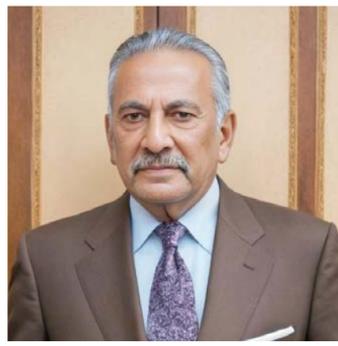
police must fully support the Enforcement Directorate in these operations while commoners should extend full cooperation, he said.

This operation must be conducted throughout the city, demolishing several encroachments and illegal constructions and retrieving government land worth billions of rupees.

He said that removing fruit and vegetables stalls and clearing both sides of the roads are necessary to clear traffic flow of disruption.

The business leader demanded that all foot-paths be cleared during the drive, and illegal fences installed outside the houses should be removed, and the belongings of habitual offenders must be confiscated to teach them a lesson.

He underlined that the encroachment mafia has taken over government land worth billions of rupees, which the CDA must recover.



Shahid Rasheed Butt said that CDA has also

targeted businesses that have been using generators to maintain their electricity supply.

This is a questionable move, as businesses cannot depend on the government's electricity supply, which is unreliable at best.

The CDA has asked all such businesses to remove the generators without realizing that these electricity generators are not hindering traffic or pedestrians.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the CDA chairman should reconsider the decision, as it will not only add to the costs of business but also leave many businesses at the mercy of power distribution companies, which will destroy these businesses.

This will leave thousands of people unemployed at a time of merciless inflation, he warned.

Hard work

KARACHI: An elderly man is busy making clay vases in Kumharwara area of Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

SIEHS Participates in Three-Day Expo Showcasing Technological Innovations in Healthcare



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Karachi is currently abuzz with the prestigious three-day Health Care Expo and Conference, held from May 21st to 23rd. The event, a beacon of innovation and collaboration in the medical sector, showcases an extensive array of cutting-edge machinery and facilities from numerous companies specializing in medical health care.

The exhibition, a cornerstone event in the region's healthcare calendar, has garnered attention from industry leaders, professionals, and enthusiasts alike. The event is a significant step in fostering dialogue and progress within the healthcare community.

During his address, Brig.

Tarique Quadir Lakhair highlighted the active deployment of the Pre-Hospital medical emergency care system in Sindh, with the introduction of state-of-the-art ambulances and robust governmental support. He was honored with a token of appreciation by the management.

The Expo and Conference not only serve as a platform for showcasing advanced medical equipment but also facilitate networking opportunities and knowledge exchange among industry stakeholders.

Attendees have the opportunity to explore a wide range of medical products, surgical instruments, diagnostic devices, and electronic medical equipment utilized in hospitals and healthcare facilities.

Gwadar Port to be pivotal hub in Pakistan's trade network: Qaiser Sheikh

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a continued effort to boost economic growth and streamline trade operations, a follow-up meeting was convened today under the Chairmanship of Federal Minister Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh. As per the directives of the Prime Minister of Pakistan this meeting, second in a series, focused on enhancing measures to increase imports through Gwadar Port and sought proposals from stakeholders.

Held at the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, the session brought together key stakeholders, including representatives from the Ministry of Maritime (KPT, PQA, GPA, KoFHA, PNSC) Commerce, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of National Food Security, Ports and Shipping members of Quetta & Lahore Chamber of Commerce and other stakeholders. The discussions centered around optimizing the port's operational capacity, improving infrastructure, and implementing efficient customs procedures to facilitate smoother import and export processes.

The Minister of Maritime Affairs said that we are gathered to work out a comprehensive plan to making Gwadar Port a pivotal hub in Pakistan's trade network according to the vision of Prime Minister. By addressing the challenges and implementing strategic improvements, we are poised to enhance our import and export capabilities, which will have far-reaching benefits for the entire country.

Federal Minister expressed that the



blue economy initiatives aim to create job opportunities, enhance food security, and promote economic diversification, positioning Pakistan as a key player in the regional maritime economy moreover, he added, as Gwadar evolves into a major trade hub, it is anticipated to spur additional businesses and attract foreign investments.

Under the direction of the Prime Minister, another meeting has also been convened under the Chairmanship of Federal Minister Maritime Affairs, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh to engage stakeholders and business sectors, ensuring their valuable input is considered in finalizing the budget proposals. Federal Secretary

Maritime Affairs, Dr. Iram Khan, heads of all attached departments of the Ministry, representatives from line Ministries attended the meeting.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh while chairing the meeting emphasized that as we look to the future, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs is dedicated to advancing our nation's maritime capabilities. In the upcoming budget, we aim to prioritize sustainable growth, innovation, and the preservation of our precious marine resources. Our vision is to create a resilient and thriving maritime sector that supports economic prosperity and environmental safekeeping for the benefit of all citizens.

Country would perish if elite privileges were not abolished

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Thursday that the biggest threat to the country's integrity is not terrorism or climate change but ruthless elites.

The elites have been looting the country's resources with both hands for decades and transferring capital out of the country, he said.

He added that the elites responsible for the destruction of the economy pose the greatest obstacle to its recovery.

In a statement issued here, Dr. Murtaza Mughal said that the economy would have fully recovered due to the pressure put on the people in the shape of utility prices and inflation.

However, the limping economy still needs to recover due to the theft

of a significant amount of public capital. Therefore, the situation is only slowly improving, resulting in frustration.

He observed that the masses would continue to suffer due to the elite's unabated corruption, and the people's anger would continue to increase.

Murtaza Mughal asserted that party workers had transformed nearly every department in the country into a recruitment center. Now, the politicians were bringing important departments under their control that were previously safe from their loot.

He said that a complete ban on new recruitment is part of the solution to political interference in government departments. The federation should stop giving unnecessary funds to provinces that receive more than they need. It is an open secret that many provinces receive funds

and later waste them.

He said that the process of decorating the offices and houses of top officials and purchasing new vehicles should be stopped. Free housing, free electricity and gas, telephone, overseas treatment, foreign visits, and an army of staff should not be given to anyone.

Infrastructure projects should be initiated through a public-private partnership. A voluntary pension scheme should be introduced, and national and provincial assembly members should not receive funds for development schemes that end up in the pockets of the corrupt.

He noted that politicians who do not receive development funds will resort to other means to enrich themselves instead of using politics.

Mughal stated that ending the privileges of elites is more important



than any of the measures mentioned above.

The United Nations has reported that the Pakistani elites enjoy privileges worth seventeen and a half billion dollars annually, and the removal of these privileges could lead to a significant reduction in hardship

for the populace.

On the one hand, elitism seems limitless. Yet, the masses must endure escalating electricity costs, gas bills, children's fees, daily necessities, and rising inflation.

Pakistanis have accumulated assets worth trillions of rupees abroad with no fear of accountability. Recently, the disclosure of properties worth billions of dollars to thousands of Pakistanis in Dubai is the latest incident in this regard.

This practice would continue unless some people involved in plunder were punished according to the law.

He said the situation would persist as long as a significant portion of our national resources were lost to corruption. He added that we would continue to beg if action was not taken to improve things.

TikTok enhances community safety with updated guidelines and new features for creators

PPA

ISLAMABAD: TikTok announced significant updates to its Community Guidelines and the introduction of new features aimed at empowering creators and ensuring a safe and enjoyable environment for the global community. Effective from May 17, these updates include clearer definitions, new features for understanding policies, and improved tools for monitoring account status.

TikTok has refined its Community Guidelines to provide clearer definitions and more detailed information on policies related to hate speech, health misinformation, and content moderation. These enhancements are designed to improve user understanding and transpar-

ency regarding TikTok's rules and enforcement processes.

To ensure a safer experience on the For You feed, TikTok is implementing new eligibility standards. Creators who repeatedly post content that violates these standards will see their accounts temporarily ineligible for recommendation in the For You feed. Additionally, their content will be less visible in search results. Affected creators will receive notifications and have the opportunity to appeal these decisions.

In an effort to assist creators in understanding TikTok's rules, the platform is introducing a warning strike system. When a creator violates Community Guidelines for the first time, they will receive a warning that does not count toward their account's strike tally.

We will do our best to promote softball in Pakistan, Japanese CG Karachi Hattori Masaru

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Japan's Consul General Karachi, Hattori Masaru, has said that sportsmen are the community that can establish unity among the nations individually and collectively. Athletes send a message of hope and confidence to the world through mutual respect, harmony and friendship.

He expressed these views on the occasion of a meeting with a delegation led by Softball Federation of Pakistan President Asif Azeem at the Japanese Consulate.

On this occasion, Vice Consul Saito Machi, Senior Vice President of Softball Federation Dr. Farhan Essa, Chairperson Yasmin Hyder and Secretary Finance Zeeshan Merchant were also present.

Japanese Consul General Hattori Masaru said that softball is played by more than 65 million people from 140 countries around the world.



In terms of sports, the Olympic Games have an authentic and prominent place around the world and softball is part of the 2028 Olympic Games to be held in the city of Los Angeles, USA.

His Excellency, Hattori Masaru further

said that he is very happy to see the growing popularity of softball among the Pakistani youth.

We will do our best to develop this game in a modern way in Pakistan. The Softball Federation of Pakistan will

organize the women's inter-provincial softball championship to be played in Karachi this month. Such events give young players plenty of opportunities to express their talents.

Federation President Asif Azeem said that Japan is one of the leading countries playing softball. Japan Consulate Karachi has always provided us with its full support for the development of softball.

Dr. Farhan Essa said that we wish qualified coaches and umpires from Japan to come to Pakistan to train our players and coaches.

Yasmin Hyder said that very soon they will organize a series of matches between the Japanese Consulate and the Pakistan Softball team.

On this occasion, the Softball Federation of Pakistan presented a softball memento bats and souvenirs to Japanese Consul General Hattori Masaru and Vice Consul Saito Machi.

Atalanta end Leverkusen's unbeaten run to win Europa League title

Sports Desk

DUBLIN: Ademola Lookman scored a stunning hat-trick as Atalanta ended the 51-match unbeaten run of Bayer Leverkusen to win the Europa League final 3-0 at Aviva Stadium here on Wednesday.

With this victory, Atalanta claimed their first trophy in 61 years, meanwhile, Lookman became the first player to score a hat-trick in a European final since 1975.

The side from Bergamo have long lived in the shadow of nearby giants AC and Inter Milan.

However, they have enjoyed a golden era under Gian Piero Gasperini, reaching the Champions League on four occasions, and now have silverware to show for it.

"To win it with Atalanta is perhaps one of the football fairytales that rarely gives scope for meritocracy," said Gasperini.

"It doesn't always come down to cold hard numbers or super leagues but shows teams without huge budgets can achieve big things."

Leverkusen have made a habit of late fightbacks in their remarkable run to winning a first-ever Bundesliga title without tasting defeat. But this time they failed to dig themselves out of a hole created by a slow start.

"It's a shame that the time it didn't work out for us was in a final," said Leverkusen midfielder Granit Xhaka.

"It's bitter, definitely, we lost a final today but we go on and we'll make up for



it on Saturday (in the German Cup final).

Atalanta's more purposeful play in the opening stages was rewarded after just 12 minutes.

Davide Zappacosta got to the by-line and Lookman caught Exequiel Palacios napping to fire into the top corner at the back post.

The Nigerian has at times endured a nomadic career, bouncing around the lower reaches of the Premier League on loan spells at Fulham and Leicester after being discarded by RB Leipzig.

But Lookman has found a home in Bergamo, where he will now forever be a hero.

"In the past few years I've been able to take my game to a new level and show

that on a more consistent basis," said Lookman.

"I'm pleased with the progress I've made but this is just the beginning. I hope for more nights like this."

The 26-year-old's second goal was fit to win any final as he nutmegged Xhaka before curling a powerful shot into the far corner.

For the fourth time in seven Europa League knockout matches, Xabi Alonso's men found themselves 2-0 down.

Alonso has enjoyed a rapid rise to become one of Europe's hottest coaching properties.

The Spaniard has rejected the advances of former clubs Liverpool and Bayern Munich to remain at the BayArena next

season.

However, Alonso's decision to start without a recognised striker did not work and he threw on Victor Boniface at half-time to give his side a focal point up front.

The damage, though, was already done as the German champions looked a side drained by their record run across three competitions.

"Normally it happens earlier but it is the first (defeat) in such a big game, it hurts for sure. We have to deal with this pain in a positive way," said Alonso.

"It didn't go as planned. We were not on our best level, so we will learn from today."

Atalanta were happy to soak up the Leverkusen pressure after the break and hit on the counter-attack.

The final blow was another fabulous finish from Lookman as he skipped past Edmond Tapsoba and this time blasted into the top corner on his weaker left foot.

Atalanta had lost all three of their previous finals under Gasperini, most recently in last week's Coppa Italia defeat to Juventus.

But this time they were not to be denied their shot at history as they were roared across the finishing line by the thousands clad in blue and black that had made the trip from northern Italy to the Irish capital.

In doing so they became the first Italian side to win the competition since Parma lifted the UEFA Cup in 1999.

Ecclestone stars as England down Pakistan in ODI series opener

A Sports

DERBY: Sophie Ecclestone's economical bowling figures of 3/26 powered England women to a comfortable 37-run victory over Pakistan women in the first ODI of the three-match series here at County Ground on Thursday.

England went 1-0 up in the three-match series against Pakistan, part of the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's Championship.

Put into bat first, England notched up a commendable total of 243/9 in the allotted 50 overs despite Nida Dar's three wickets.



In-form Alice Capsey top-scored for the home side with a gutsy 44-run knock with the help of three boundaries.

Besides her, wicketkeeper Amy Jones made a notable contribution with her 38-ball 37. Jones was closely followed by

opener Tammy Beaumont (33), Nat Sciver-Brunt (31) and skipper Heather Knight (29).

For Pakistan, Nida Dar picked up three wickets, followed by Aliya Riaz, Nashra Sandhu and Umm-e-Hani, who bagged two wickets each.

Set to chase 244, Pakistan women only managed 206/9 despite a decent start to the pursuit.

Pakistan women's batters had trouble scoring freely against a disciplined England bowling attack.

Muneeba Ali top-scored for the touring side with a 34 but conceded 60 deliveries in the process and struck only one

boundary.

Besides her, opening batter Sadaf Shams (28 off 48) and wicketkeeper batter Najiba Alive (26 off 57) were the other batters, who scored at a dismal strike rate.

Skipper Nida Dar (26) and all-rounder Aliya Riaz (21) also chipped in but their efforts too, were not enough to steer Pakistan to victory.

Sophie Ecclestone picked up three wickets while Kate Cross, Lauren Bell and Charlie Dean took two wickets apiece.

England women and Pakistan women will now compete in the second ODI of the three-match series in Taunton on May 26.

Pakistan squad reaches Birmingham for second T20I against England

A Sports

LAHORE: The Pakistan men's cricket team on Thursday, reached Birmingham from Leeds to participate in the second T20I of the four-match series against England, scheduled on May 25.



Upon their arrival in Birmingham, the Green Shirts will rest today before partaking in a three-hour-long training session at Edgbaston on Friday.

For the unversed, the first T20I of the four-match series between Pakistan and England was called off due to persistent rain in Leeds on Wednesday.

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.

Notably, 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 Jinks, 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:

2nd T20I: Sat, May 25th

3rd T20I: Tue, May 28th

4th T20I: Thu, May 30th

CM's Adviser on Sports gives over Rs. 1 million to hockey player

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Adviser to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jahan handed over a cheque of Rs one million to Zakaria Hayat of Mardan who performed well in recently concluded Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Cup held in Malaysia. Pakistan won silver medal. Secretary Sports Muttullah was also present in the ceremony.



Speaking at the ceremony, the Sports Adviser appreciated Zakaria Hayat's performance and said that all possible support would be given to the players of the province, as they were our valuable assets. He said that the players were playing their role in highlighting positive image of the country before the outside world and in this regard the provincial government should patronize them at all levels. He expressed the hope that Zakaria Hayat would perform well in the future and bring laurels to the country and province.

Pak team qualifies for ATF Team Competition final

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD:

Pakistan team has displayed top notch performance qualifying for the ATF 12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia at Kathmandu, Nepal. According to details, Pakistan team defeated Bangladesh in the semifinal to secure a spot in the final.



This victory not only propels Pakistan to the championship match but also qualifies them for the prestigious ITF Asia 12 & under finals to be held in Kazakhstan later this year. The semifinal match showcased Pakistan's dominance, with outstanding performances in the singles and doubles. This win has set the stage for an electrifying final where Pakistan will face their arch-rival India, on Friday. The historic rivalry between Pakistan and India adds another layer of excitement and anticipation to the clash, as both teams vie for the championship title. In addition to the immediate glory of the final, Pakistan's qualification for the Asia finals in Kazakhstan marks a significant milestone. This achievement highlights the team's hard work, dedication, and talent at the international stage. In 1st singles, Rashid Ali Bachani beat Muhammad Haider by 6-1, 6-1 while M. Shayan Afridi outplayed Jobair Islam by 6-1, 6-0 in 2nd singles. In doubles, Rashid Ali Bachani, M. Junaid Khan dished Faheem Surov Hossain, Jobair Islam by 6-1, 6-1.

USA stun Bangladesh to seal historic T20I series win

A Sports

HOUSTON: Skipper Monank Patel's anchoring 42-run knock, followed by Ali Khan's three-wickets led the United States of America (USA) to edge past Bangladesh in the second T20I of the three-match series here on Thursday.

The victory marked USA's first bilateral T20I series win over a Test-playing nation as they went 2-0 up with a game to spare.

The home side, one of the hosts of the ICC Men's World Cup 2024, scheduled to commence on June 2, registered an upset victory over Bangladesh in the series opener on Tuesday.

Put into bat first, USA registered a formidable total of 144/6 on the board, courtesy of Patel's sensible knock.

Opening batter Steven Taylor

and Patel gave the home side a decent start as the pair added 44 runs for the first wicket before the former perished in the seventh over.

Taylor remained a notable run-getter for the USA with a 28-ball 31, peppered with three boundaries and two sixes.

The home side then sustained another blow to their batting expedition as Andries Gous fell for a golden duck. Patel then received subtle support in the form of Aaron Jones and the duo pulled the home side out of trouble.

Patel and Jones added 60 runs in 9.2 overs before Mustafizur Rahman got rid of the former, who scored a scratchy 35 off 34 deliveries. Patel then put together a brief 17-run partnership with Corey Anderson (11) before both perished in the penultimate over.

Monank Patel remained the top-scorer for the USA with a 38-ball 42, which featured four boundaries and a six.

For Bangladesh, Rishad Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman and Shoriful Islam bagged two wickets each. Set to chase 145, Bangladesh fell narrowly short of a series-leveling victory as they bowled out for 138 in 19.3 overs.

The touring side had a shaky start to the pursuit as Soumya Sarkar perished for a golden duck on the fourth delivery of the innings.

Captain Najmul Hossain Shan-to joined Tanzid Hasan for a brief 29-run partnership until Jasdeep Singh cleaned up the opener in the fifth over with 30 runs on the board.

Shanto then joined forces with Towhid Hridoy and knitted a

crucial partnership for Bangladesh.

They added 48 runs for the third wicket before Shanto had an agonizing end to his fighting knock, getting run out in the 11th over.

The Bangladesh captain remained the top-scorer for his side with a gutsy 36 off 34 deliveries, laced up with two fours and a six.

Hridoy followed in Shanto's footsteps two overs later, falling victim to Anderson after scoring 25.

Veteran all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan then took the reigns of Bangladesh run-chase and he had brought the touring side in touching distance of a must-win victory as they needed 21 runs off 18 deliveries with four wickets in hand.

But, Shakib fell victim to Ali Khan on the first delivery of the 18th over after playing an impor-



tant 30-run knock.

His dismissal opened the floodgates for Bangladesh and the USA bowlers banked on the opportuni-

ty to run through the touring side's

batting tail to seal a narrow six-run

victory.

Ali Khan led the bowling charge

for the USA with three wickets,

followed by Saurabh Netravalkar

and Shadley van Schalkwyk, who

bagged two wickets each.

Visit to Germany

COAS General Syed Asim Munir meets German military officers during an official visit to Germany.



Photo: ISPR

COAS General Asim Munir on brief visit to Germany as part of regional defence reforms

City Desk

RAWALPIND: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff is on an official visit to the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the visit he was received at the Federal Ministry of Defence by General Carsten Breuer, Chief of Defence where he was presented with Honour Guard by the contingent of German Armed Forces.

Chief of Army Staff also met Lieutenant General Alfons Mais, Chief of the German Army and visited the Army Combat Training Centre, Gardelegen along with the German Army Chief. The COAS was briefed on various facets of the centre and the training being imparted to the German Army and contingents of other Armies. He also witnessed a demonstration on urban warfare and visited different training facilities.

COAS also met Mr Jens Plötner, Foreign Policy and Security advisor to Federal Chancellor; Mr Tobias Linder, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Mr Nils Hilmner, State Secretary at the Ministry of Defence. During meetings with the civilian and military leadership matters of mutual interest came under discussion.

German leadership acknowledged Pakistan Army's role in fight against Terrorism and for maintaining peace and stability in the region.

COAS will also be visiting the German Armed Forces Command & Staff College, Hamburg where he will address the students attending the course from various countries to dilate upon Pakistan's Regional and International Security Perspective and contributions of Pakistan Armed Forces in the United Nations Missions.

Confronting Terrorism: Strategies for Pakistan in 2024

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Lahore, hosted a seminar titled "Confronting Terrorism: Strategies for Pakistan in 2024" on Thursday, 23 May 2024. The event focused on examining the multifaceted challenges posed by terrorism to Pakistan's national security and exploring effective strategies to combat this menace. In his introductory remarks Air Commodore Khalid Iqbal (Retd), Director at CASS Lahore, identified three streams of terrorism confronting Pakistan: anti-China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) disruptive assaults, sporadic activities

of separatist terrorists, and ethno-sectarian clashes.

The keynote speaker, Dr Syed Kaleem Imam, former Federal Secretary and former Inspector General of Police, spoke about mapping Pakistan's terrorism landscape and its impact on national security and development. He examined the origin, motivation, and impact of terrorism in the country, highlighting how it stems from both internal and external factors, including political, ideological, and religious motivations.

Dr Muhammad Feyyaz, an academic on counterterrorism, spoke about the need for countering terrorism through combative measures. He stated that terrorism is an enduring



phenomenon, which requires a nuanced understanding through the identification of three interconnected factors. Ambassador Syed Abrar Hussain, a former envoy to Afghanistan, underscored the need for bilateral and region-

al diplomatic engagement with neighbouring countries to mitigate terrorist threats. He proposed a three-pronged strategy: direct action against terrorists, addressing root causes, and diplomatic engagement.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS Lahore, stated that terrorism continues to impede Pakistan's progress despite decades of efforts to counter it. He noted that the recent surge in terrorist attacks has affected both civilians and security personnel, besides fuelling sectarian strife.

The seminar highlighted the need for national harmony, unwavering resolve and iron-clad political will for the across-the-board implementation of the rule of law to choke the terrorists financially and logistically. It was urged that flawless border management be ensured and informal monetary transactions be stopped.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb was called on by a delegation of Suzuki Motors Corporation (SMC) led by its Japanese Global Vice President Mr. Kenichi Ayukawa at Finance Division today. Japanese CEO & MD of Pak Suzuki Motor Company Limited (PSMCL) Mr. Hiroshi Kawamura, and officers from Finance Division and FBR were also present in the meeting.

The Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed the delegation and expressed his appreci-

ation for Suzuki's longstanding contributions in the development of Pakistan's Automobile Industry. Mr. Ayukawa informed the Finance Minister that PSMCL has been present in Pakistan since 1983 and briefed the Minister on their long term investment proposals in Pakistan. The delegation also suggested certain policy interventions to increase volume base in Pakistan to enhance their regional competitiveness.

The delegation thanked the Finance Minister and committed to collaborate with the Government to further mutual goals and enhance Pakistan's economic development.

Kyrgyz envoy says unrest in Kyrgyzstan was deliberately exacerbated by external forces

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kyrgyz Ambassador to Pakistan Totuyev Ulanbek Asankulovich has stated that the recent unrest in Kyrgyzstan was deliberately exacerbated by external forces and that the situation is now peaceful.

Speaking on the news program "Rubaroo" today, Ambassador Totuyev explained that the violent incidents on May 13th began with a misunderstanding between Kyrgyz and Egyptian students, which escalated into a fight.

He alleged that on the night of May 13th and into May 14th, certain groups spread misinformation on social media claiming that Egyptian students had

killed three Kyrgyz students. This sparked outrage online, with people demanding justice for the alleged victims. The resulting protests on May 18th, according to the ambassador, were based on this false information.

When asked about the cause of the incident, the ambassador stated that Kyrgyz police and intelligence agencies are investigating the matter to determine the root cause. He expressed hope that an official conclusion will be reached, but maintained that the incident was a misunderstanding between young people, a common occurrence in any society.

Addressing the question of how a seemingly minor altercation between students esca-

lated to such a large scale, the ambassador reiterated his belief that external forces deliberately amplified the situation. He accused these forces of using their connections in the media, social media, and universities to spread misinformation and incite unrest.

Over 200 students return to Pakistan from Kyrgyzstan

Dar says situation in Kyrgyzstan 'normal', one Pakistani still under treatment.

Regarding the perceived lack of timely action by authorities, Ambassador Totuyev explained that the police and intelligence agencies were initially unaware of the seriousness of the situation. This delayed response, he admitted, contributed to the escalation of the violence. He

believes that if local authorities had acted swiftly, the situation wouldn't have reached such a critical point.

When questioned about the absence of police during the attacks on foreign students, the ambassador stated that police were present in the area but were unable to intervene due to the chaotic nature of the events. He alleged that the attackers, who he described as "malicious and disruptive," targeted foreign students in the hostels, preventing police from reaching them.

Ambassador Totuyev further stated that the President had previously warned of intelligence reports suggesting attempts by external forces to destabilize the situation. He emphasized that the authorities

did not resort to force against the protesters on the day of the incident.

He acknowledged the presence of armed civilians among the protesters who, he claimed, were intent on instigating violence. He argued that if the police had used force to disperse the crowd, it would have played into the hands of these elements, who would have used the incident to further their agenda. The ambassador concluded by reiterating his belief that the situation was deliberately exacerbated by external forces. He also confirmed that law enforcement agencies have arrested over 20 individuals in connection with the incidents, with more arrests expected in the coming days.

Imran Khan finalises names for meeting: PTI Spokesperson

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Spokesperson clarified that the party leadership submitted a list of proposed leaders for a meeting with PTI Founding Chairman Imran Khan, who subsequently approved the final names, adding that the party officials had no involvement in the selection process.

Reacting to PTI leader Salar Khan Kakar's tweet, PTI Spokesperson said that only a handful of people could meet with PTI Founding Chairman in jail at a time on the designated days only after following due process.

PTI Spokesperson stated that the party leadership

explained the procedure of meeting with Imran Khan a number of times.

He said that the party leadership was only possible with the approval of PTI founder under the coordinated procedure.

PTI Spokesperson stated that it was not possible for everyone to meet Imran Khan at the same time because the jail administration allowed only handful of people.

He clarified that the party's official had no role in the selection process of people for the meeting with PTI Founding Chairman.

PTI Spokesperson said that the list of the proposed persons for the meeting was presented to Imran Khan, who finalised the names.

Chairman FBR inaugurates new building of Regional Tax Office Islamabad

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman FBR, Malik Amjed Zubair Tiwana inaugurated the new building of Regional Tax Office, Islamabad on Thursday.

While addressing the inauguration ceremony, Chairman FBR said that this new state-of-the-art building of RTO Islamabad reflects our commitment to modernise FBR and making our tax system more efficient, transparent and taxpayer-friendly. He stated that establishment of this office underscores our dedication to promote a culture of tax compliance and trust between the tax authorities and the citizens.

Chairman FBR added that the new facility is fully equipped with modern technology to provide better facilitation to taxpayers and to streamline the process of tax collection.



Chairman FBR emphasized that in these difficult economic times, our task is extremely challenging, but we are committed to maximizing revenue collection for economic prosperity. He urged all the

officers to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professional commitment in discharging their duties.

Chairman FBR appreciated Member Admin/HR and Chief Projects, along with their teams, for successfully completing this challenging project. He also thanked Pak PWD and other stakeholders for their continuous support.

Earlier Ms. Sadia Sadaf Gilani, Member Admin/HR and Chief Commissioner RTO Islamabad Mr. Abid Mehmood also addressed the gathering. On the occasion, Chief Projects Mr. Shahid Soomro gave a brief presentation on the planning and designing of this new facility.

Law minister meets Canadian High Commissioner

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar had a meeting with High Commissioner of Canada to Pakistan Leslie Scanlon here on Thursday at the Ministry of Law and Justice. They discussed the Human Rights Commission and policies related to minorities and Canadian support for Judicial and Police trainings.

Senator Tarar reiterated the government's commitment to protecting and upholding human rights. The honorable Minister emphasized that national development is Govt's top priority. He highlighted the collaborative roles of both the government and the opposition within the democratic system. Talking about Climate Justice, Tarar also detailed the government's

proactive measures for environmental sustainability, addressing climate change, and promoting eco-friendly practices. This dialogue reflects the strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada, focusing on mutual understanding and cooper-



ation on critical issues. Both parties agreed on the importance of continued collaboration to promote human rights, social inclusion, and sustainable development.

PTI's central office in Islamabad...

Continued from Page 1

Authority said that an operation was being carried out to remove the encroachments from the office.

In addition to encroaching on adjoining plots, the office had also added an additional storey in violation of building laws, the statement said.

According to the statement, show-cause notices were issued to the office

four times in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023. After no reply, an order to seal the building was issued on May 10.

The statement added that an operation against encroachments was underway across the city without any discrimination.

Heavy machinery was used to remove the encroachments around the building, while the building itself was sealed for 'non-conforming' use.

Police nabs RAW agents working...

Continued from Page 1

and were working for the Indian intelligence agency RAW, and were also involved in targeted killings on the directions of Indian agency.

The suspects had obtained illegal identity cards and passports, and worked as drivers and AC technicians to hide their identities. They

revealed that the Indian agency RAW is operating a network of terrorism in different countries.

It is pertinent to mention that a few days ago, the police had arrested two other RAW operatives, Khawar and Jabbar, from Korangi, while two more suspects with links to RAW were arrested from Islamabad.