



Xi calls for furthering reform to power modernization in Shandong inspection

Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed comprehensively deepening reform to drive Chinese modernization during an inspection trip to the eastern economic powerhouse of Shandong Province (Details on Page 5).



Ahsan Iqbal hails CPEC as a milestone of Pakistan-China friendship

Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday hailed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a milestone of friendship between Pakistan and China, providing a strong foundation for economic cooperation. Addressing the media after the 13th session of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), the minister highlighted the progress made under CPEC, including the revival of projects in Gwadar... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a meeting with representatives of Chinese companies working in Pakistan.



Photo: PID

PM seeks Chinese expertise to boost exports, promote IT industry

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that Pakistan wanted to benefit from the Chinese experiences to promote its Information Technology sector and boost exports. He was talking to a delegation of the representatives of the Chinese companies which called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister, while welcoming the delegation, said China and Pakistan enjoyed long-standing brotherly relations that were further strengthening with the passage of time. "China has an important role in

Pakistan's development. It has always helped Pakistan in difficult times for which the entire nation, including me, is grateful to the Chinese leadership and the people," he said. He emphasized that the security and protection of the Chinese workers and citizens was the top priority of the government. "The government has taken all possible measures to ensure foolproof security of the Chinese citizens in Pakistan," he said, adding that in that regard a comprehensive plan had been prepared.

"The way China lifted 700 million people out of poverty is a beacon for us." The prime

minister said Pakistan was an agriculture country and it wanted to utilize modern technology in the sector. He informed the delegation that the government was taking measures on priority to increase the foreign direct investment in the country. Reforms were being introduced at the government level to expand the tax net, discourage tax leakages and stop tax theft from the system. He also invited the Chinese companies to invest in Pakistan's electric and hybrid auto sector. The prime minister also directed the authorities concerned to resolve all the issues of the Chinese companies

in Pakistan. During the meeting, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal briefed the prime minister about meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee of CPEC.

He said it was agreed in the meeting that the up-gradation of the Pakistan Railways Main Line 1 (ML-1), realignment of Karakoram Highway, establishment of Special Economic Zones, Gwadar port and Agriculture Demonstration Zones would be the prioritized projects of the second phase of CPEC.

The representatives of the Chinese companies, while terming Pakistan their second

home, expressed their resolve to further expand their businesses and investment in the country. Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan, Economic Affairs Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Industries Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister for Power Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister for Ports and Shipping Musdik Malik, PM's Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi, Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan and other officials concerned also attended the meeting.

Benefits of uplift projects must reach people without delay: Gilani



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Friday directed the local administration to complete the ongoing projects in time so that the people could enjoy the benefits of development without delay. The Acting President was presiding over a meeting at the Circuit House where Deputy Commissioner Multan Captain (Retd) Rizwan Qadeer gave him a detailed briefing about the ongoing development projects.

It was informed that development projects related to health, education, infrastructure and sports were in progress in Multan. Many projects, including Nawabpur Road, Nadirabad Flyover, Matti Tal Road to Kabirwala Road, Shershah Road, hockey stadium, and Women University were nearing

completion. The Acting President was further apprised that the 5-kilometre long Nawabpur Road at the cost of Rs 270 million would be completed by June 15, 2024. Acting President Gilani instructed the officials to ensure that the projects are completed within the stipulated period. He asked them to inform him about any financial or technical hurdles in the way of projects' execution so that he might take them up with the prime minister for redressal. He desired that the projects should be completed timely so that the people could start benefitting from upgraded facilities without any delay. "We have always served the people of Multan and South Punjab," he added. City Police Officer Sadiq Ali also gave a detailed briefing to the Acting President on the overall law and order situation in the district, and the steps being taken to bring the crime ratio down further. Wasa Managing Director Chaudhry Muhammad Danish, Executive Engineer Highways Ghulam Nabi and other officials were present.

IHC summons ISI, MI and IB officials in poet abduction case



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court has ordered live coverage of all missing persons cases, including that of missing poet Ahmed Farhad. The court has also summoned several government officials including intelligence officers on the next hearing.

The court, in a written order issued by Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, summoned the Federal Law Minister, the Sector Commanders of the Inter-Services Intelligence

(ISI) and Military Intelligence (MI), the Director of the Intelligence Bureau (IB), the Defense Secretary, and the Interior Secretary to appear in person on May 29th.

The court's order, spanning eight pages, also mandated that the Sector Commanders of ISI and MI, along with the Director of IB, appear in person on May 29th. The court further summoned the Interior Secretary and the Defense Secretary. Additionally, the Law Minister and the Law Secretary were summoned as court assistants.

The court directed to submit a written report to the Registrar Office if the missing person is found before the next hearing.

Despite the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) restrictions, Justice Kayani allowed electronic media to report on Ahmed Farhad's case.

DPM Dar emphasizes uniform high quality medical education in country

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday underlined the need to improve the regulatory framework for medical education in Pakistan, besides establishing a coordination mechanism between medical institutions, and the public and private sectors to ensure uniform high-quality education. He was chairing the first meeting of the Committee on Medical Education that was constituted by the prime minister earlier this week on May 20.

The deputy prime minister emphasized the important responsibility of the committee to address the gaps in medical education in the country. Highlighting the importance of nurturing a conducive environment for medical students to excel and contribute meaningfully to the healthcare sector, Ishaq Dar stressed that the world-class quality of medical education should be ensured in all the provinces. The committee conducted a comprehensive review of the country's medical education



system, fee structure, and identified key areas for improvement and development of a strategic plan to align medical education with international standards. It specifically focused on devising a plan to solve the issues faced by Pakistani medical students studying abroad. It also discussed strategies to support and empower medical students in their academic and professional endeavours. The meeting was attended by the Minister for Law and Justice, the Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Health, Secretary Health, the Deputy Chairman Planning Commission and Chairman Higher

Education Commission, MNA Dr Nafesa Shah, heads of prominent public and private medical institutions, and eminent experts from the medical community. The committee members include key stakeholders from the medical community, the education sector, and government officials. It aims to reform the medical education across the country. This initiative underscores the government's commitment to improve healthcare standards and ensure the highest quality of medical training for future generations of healthcare professionals. After a detailed discussion in the meeting, a sub-executive committee was constituted with Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmad, National Coordinator for Health as Convener and Tariq Bajwa as Co-Convenor. The sub-committee will deliberate on the existing terms of reference (ToRs) along with additional tasks including synergies among regulatory bodies, streamlining procedures for foreign students in Pakistan and the uniformity in curricula. The committee

Continued on Page 8

Shaza chairs USF Board, Ignite Policy Committee meetings

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Friday chaired the meetings of Universal Service Fund (USF) Board and Ignite Policy Committee. The USF Board meeting approved the release of the 4th quarter budget of Rs. 4.7 billion, a news release said.

The minister was briefed about the ongoing projects of USF. It was told that presently the total ongoing projects were 33, including 23 of 4G and 10 Optical Fiber Cable (OFC). Secretary IT Captain (Retd) Muhammad Mahmood was also present in the meeting. Meanwhile, the 43rd Ignite Policy Committee, chaired by Shaza Fatima, also accorded its approval for release of the 4th quarter budget of Rs. 318.88 million. The Ignite authorities briefed the meeting about their ongoing and future programmes. The minister directed for utilizing funds and completing the projects within their timeline.

Pakistan, Lithuania agree to enhance high-level exchanges in diverse sectors

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Lithuania on Friday agreed to enhance high-level exchanges and cooperation, especially in the spheres of trade and investment, parliamentary exchanges,

education, information technology, labour mobility, connectivity, and cooperation in multilateral forums. The agreement was reached at the 7th Round of Pakistan-Lithuania Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) held here.

The Pakistan side was led by Additional Foreign Secretary (Europe), Ambassador Shafiqat Ali Khan, while the Lithuanian delegation was headed by Lithuanian Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Egidijus Meilunas, a news release issued by the

Foreign Office said. The Lithuanian delegation also included non-resident Ambassador Recardas Degutis and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The consultations provided an important opportunity to review the entire

scope of bilateral relations and regional and global issues of common interest. The Additional Foreign Secretary briefed his Lithuanian counterpart on the broad contours of Pakistan's foreign policy, perspectives on

Continued on Page 8

at building in Islamabad before sealing the premises for allegedly violating building-by-law. The CDA officials arrived with heavy machinery at the PTI office located in a commercial building in the G-8/4 sector late on Thursday night.

They razed two containers parked outside the building and a guard room and removed a fence allegedly erected on the civic body's land.

According to the PTI, the action was taken in the presence of a United Nations delegation. "You cannot do politics by force. You can take away our party symbol, jail our [party] chairman, demolish our offices, raid our homes but cannot erase the affection for Imran Khan from the hearts of the majority of 250 million people of this country," the PTI senator said.

"The fascism, oppression, violence that you have begun and this is all happening under your watch," he said in his speech during the Senate session. On Thursday, police and local authorities partially demolished a part of PTI's central secretariat

AJK Govt establish 10 billion rupees social protection fund: Chaudhry Anwar

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that establishment social protection fund worth 10 billion rupees was an important milestone towards turning AJ&K into a welfare state.

Talking to a delegation of senior Pakistani journalists the AJK premier, while referring to various initiatives his government has taken to serve the masses and raise their standard of living, said that besides setting up a social protection fund, three billion rupees have been earmarked for endowment fund to address the growing unemployment in the region.

The AJK premier hailed the Army Chief for his unwavering commitment to the Kashmir cause. He also expressed his profound gratitude to the political and military leadership of Pakistan for their all out support and cooperation they extended to the coalition government.

Referring to his government's zero tolerance policy against mafias, he said that the government strictly implemented zero tolerance policy to eradicate mafias at all levels. "Today, no



one can ever dare to challenge the writ of the state", the PM said.

The accession to Pakistan, he said, was the ideological basis of our state. To safeguard this ideological foundation, he said, was his duty.

For the settlement of Kashmir dispute, the prime minister said, "There is an urgent need that we redouble our efforts to seek an early settlement of the Kashmir dispute".

He said that there has been tangible progress and overall improvement in road infrastructure, health and education sectors. "Cent percent attendance

has been ensured by introducing biometric system in all the health and education institutions", he added.

The PM also thanked the allied parties for their support and cooperation in running the affairs of the state effectively. Besides dealing with other issues, the PM said that the government has been successful in resolving the issues of Kashmir Council and Neelum Jhelum Hydel project. He said that the government has shown a great degree of political maturity by engaging with members of Action Committees and raising their demands at federal level.

Regarding Indian leaders' provocative statements, the AJK premier said that the government and people of Azad Kashmir won't allow to succeed the Indian Interior Minister's nefarious designs of spreading chaos in Azad Kashmir.

"God willing, Kashmiris will achieve the cherished goal of joining Pakistan", he said.

The delegation was comprised of well-known anchor persons including Absar Alam, Iftikhar Ahmed, Asma Shirazi, Muhammad Adil, Kamran Khan, Amar Masood and others.

Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir says Kashmir ready to sacrifice for sake of Pakistan'

Abdul Majeed Tahir

KOTLI: Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, President of Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir, said that the people of Kashmir have proven through their massive participation in the Pakistan People's Party rallies that their destination is Pakistan and they will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the stability of Pakistan. He said that peaceful protest is the democratic right of the people, and we have also supported legitimate demands, but now that India has announced elections in occupied Kashmir on May 30, there is no justification for strikes in Azad Kashmir, even if the demands are met. He said that the people of Azad Kashmir are being tested again and again, and the attention of the government and people of Pakistan is being diverted from the real issues.

He expressed these views while addressing the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Chaudhry Bar Association. The ceremony was attended by senior lawyers, including Chaudhry Nisar, Chaudhry Nasir, and Raja Zafarullah, as well as senior leaders of the Pakistan People's Party.

Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that the lawyers' community is an important part of society that has played a vital role in the restoration of democracy. He said that the judiciary has a crucial role to play in ensuring justice and upholding the constitution and law. He lamented that politics is now being played out in courts instead of parliament, which is a sign of weakness and failure of politicians.

Naran, Lake Saiful Malook road open after 6 months due to snowfall

Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: The famous tourist place of Mansehra district, Naran and Lake Saiful Malook road was closed for the last six months due to snowfall, which was done a month before the start of work by the district administration as usual.



On a special instruction, the former deputy commissioner Captain Retired Bilal Shahid Rao from Mansehra, opened the Naran road and opened it for tourists, but the most beautiful place of the Naran valley, Lake Saiful Malook road was closed for the last 6 months, while after the opening of Kaghan Naran, tourists seeing the rush, Tourism Adviser Zahid Chan zaib issued instructions to the district administration to open the road immediately, on which the current Deputy Commissioner Adnan Khan Battini started work on Lake Road a few days ago and today Lake Saiful Malook road was also opened. After which the tourists coming to Kaghan Valley from all over the country will be able to see the snow-covered Lake Saiful Malook. From Naran to Lake Saiful Malook, a 4x4 vehicle will be available, which has started the tourist season of Naran regularly. Deputy Commissioner Mansehra Adnan Khan Bitini and DPO Mansehra Shafiqullah Gandapur say that strict security arrangements will be made to protect the tourists so that no untoward incident happens. Under the direction of Tourism Adviser Zahid Chan zaib, a special desk has also been established for the convenience of tourists, where officials will be available for tourists at all times, and management will be available at all times for tourists visiting tourist places so that tourists can get any kind of assistance. Do not face difficulties

Bear attacks on women in Mansehra, no action yet taken: protesters

Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: A mother of three children was attacked by a bear in broad daylight at Jagan place in Tehsil Balakot of District Mansehra of KP Province. In the bear attack, 35-year-old Women were severely injured. During Treatment Mother Of Three Kids Died, after which their relatives protested strongly against the Wildlife Department and the administration by keeping the dead body outside the Balakot police station.



The protesters said that bear attacks have become normal in different areas of Balakot, but no action has been taken by the Wildlife Department and other agencies. They said that immediate action should be taken against those responsible for the crime, on which DSP Cadet Farooq assured them that action will be taken against those responsible according to the law. On this occasion, the protesters said that the officials of the wildlife department are only receiving salary.

There have been hundreds of attacks before, but till date nothing has been done by the department. Protesters said that if a bear or a leopard is touched by local people, an FIR is filed against the citizens.

But these animals tease humans and eat them, but the officials of the wildlife department are missing

The protesters have also demanded the immediate dismissal of the officials posted in Tehsil Balakot

He said that if the demands are not met, they will close Naran Kaghan Road

Journalist Mehr Ashfaq Sial murder case: No progress has been made

Farooq Sheikh

MUZAFFARGARH: Journalist Mehr Ashfaq Sial murder case, despite the passage of 7 days, no progress has been made, press clubs and journalistic organizations across the district have expressed their concern over the delay by the police in tracing the killers of the journalist, delegation of Foreign Media and Pakistan Press Foundation Meet Late Meher Ashfaq Family and District Police Officer Muzaffargarh. According to details, there was no progress in the murder case of Meher Ashfaq, a journalist who was a victim of target killing near Thermal Power Station Bypass Muzaffargarh seven days ago, while the police teams spent seven days. Despite this, the suspects have not yet been traced, due to which journalists including press clubs and journalistic organizations of Muzaffargarh district have expressed their concern. Yesterday, senior journalists Asim Tanveer and Shazia Bhatti, who were part of the representative delegation of Pakistan Press Foundation, identified the slain journalists. He went to the house of Mehr Ashfaq Sial and condoled with his relatives and along with his brother Mehr Ashfaq Sial met District Police Officer Syed Hasnain Haider and insisted on the immediate arrest of the Killers of journalist Mehr Ashfaq Sial, on which DPO Muzaffargarh. Regarding the murder case, he told the delegation that two police teams are currently working on the case. Because it is a case of blind murder which may take some time to trace and police teams are looking at the case from every angle. Apart from this, the delegation of Pakistan Press Foundation met the President of Muzaffargarh Press Club Muzaffargarh A. B Mujahid and General Secretary of District Press Club Muzaffargarh Farooq Sheikh and discussed the case in which General Secretary Farooq Sheikh told the delegation that the deceased Journalist Meher Ashfaq Sial often faced pressure and threats during the execution of journalistic affairs, which he expressed several times.

Hot day

KARACHI: People put a wet towel on the head of citizens alongside a road to avoid heatstroke, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Peer Mazhar Saeed Shah assumes charge of Information Minister

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah, Secretary INFORMATION Yaqoob Khan briefed the Minister on the department's various sections and activities. Addressing the officers of the Information Department, the Minister emphasized the crucial role of the department in the digital age, particularly in providing accurate information to the public about the government's public welfare and development initiatives. He stressed the need to work diligently to counter negative propaganda and misinformation, which has become



a significant challenge in the era of social media. The Minister also highlighted

the importance of promoting unity, harmony, and love among the people.

The All Kashmir News Papers Society (AKNS) has welcomed the appointment of Molana Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah as the Minister of Information, expressing hope that under his leadership, the relations between the Azad Kashmir government and the print media will further improve. The society has also expressed its expectation that the issues related to the timely payment of newspaper industry's outstanding dues and the distribution of advertisement budget will be resolved amicably.

The office bearers of AKNPS, includ-

ing President Amjad Chaudhry, Secretary-General Zahir Ahmed Jugal, Senior Vice President Sher Baz Muneer, Vice President Shafiqat Zia, Tanveer Ahmed Tanoli, Secretary Finance Javed Iqbal Chaudhry, Secretary Information Nisar Ahmed Kiyani, Deputy Secretary-General Mumtaz Ali Khaksar, and members of the Governing Body, including Ejaz Khan, Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, Malik Ameer, Khalid Anjuam, and Abid Abbasi, have assured full cooperation to the Minister in addressing the issues faced by the print media and ensuring transparency in the distribution of advertisements.

All Kashmiris proud of Pakistan: Sardar Attique

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/DHEERKOT: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister, has said that all Kashmiris are united for the stability and survival of Pakistan, and those who want to weaken the unbreakable bond between Pakistan and Kashmir will always fail. We are Pakistanis, and Pakistan is ours. Every child of Kashmir stands like a rock with Pakistan and the armed forces of Pakistan. Muslim Conference workers will participate in the Kashmir will become Pakistan rally to prove that the bond between Kashmiris and Pakistan is unbreakable. He expressed these views while addressing a gathering at a luncheon hosted by Sardar Ata-ur-Re-

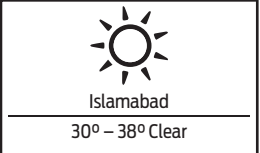
hman, nephew of central leader Sardar Manzoor Chughtai, in Bungay. A large number of senior workers of Muslim Conference were present. The President of Muslim Conference said that the accession of Kashmir to Pakistan is the destination of Kashmiris, and they have made sacrifices for the stability and security of Pakistan's ideological and geographical borders. The presence of Pakistani forces on the Line of Control is a source of comfort and peace for Kashmiris. The services of Pakistani forces for the freedom of Kashmir are unforgettable.

The rally will start at 8 am from the shrine of Majheedabad and will be led by Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, accompanied by Major Retired Nasrullah Khan, Abdul Rashid Chughtai Advocate, members of the District



Council Bagh Raja Tabbassum, Salim Abbasi, Malik Aman, Shaoukat Afzal, and others. The rally will pass through Ghaziabad, Dherkot, Chamiati, Chaman Kot, Salyana, Hill Sarang, and will reach Kohala, where a flag-hoisting ceremony will be held and the Paki-

stani flag will be waved. Central Chief Organizer Raja Saeed Majid, former Minister Shammim Malik, Chairperson Sameya Sajid Raja, Sajjad Anwar Abbasi, Sheikh Maqsood Ahmed, Salim Awan, Arif Abbasi, Syed Yasser Naqvi Advocate, Tasawar Musavi, and Syed Shokat Fida Kazmi will welcome the rally at Kohala, while the President of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Dilwar Wani, will participate in the rally. The rally will enter Muzaffargarh city from Kohala and will conclude at the Central Press Club, where the President of Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, and other leaders will address the rally. Meanwhile, Central Chief Organizer Raja Saeed Majid and Sajjad Anwar Abbasi have reviewed the arrangements for the rally from Kohala to Muzaffargarh.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr 3:22 am
 Zohr 12:05 pm
 Asr 5:02 pm
 Maghrib 7:08 pm
 Isha 8:48 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
 Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
 CDA 9208301-04
 Met Office 9250360-6
 RDA 5555864
 TMA 5770886
 Cantonment Board 9270151-3
 Islamabad Metropolitan
 Corporation 9209224
 Potohar Town 9209224
 Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
 E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
 G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, 9203883
 G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
 Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
 Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249

Islamabad Police distribute water among the citizens in extreme hot weather

PPA

ISLAMABAD: According to the details, following the special directives of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, the Islamabad Police is utilizing all available resources to provide citizens with every possible assistance and travel facilities, a public relations officer said.

He said that, the SSP Traffic Muhammad Sarfraz Virk directed the officials to promote community policing and improve public-police relations.

In this regard, the Islamabad Traffic Police are ensuring the provision of water at various locations in Islamabad for citizens traveling in extreme hot weather. This is to ensure that citizens can travel safely and comfortably to their destinations despite the hot weather.

On this occasion, SSP Traffic said that the purpose of this initiative is to protect the lives and property of citizens, ensure safe travel, promote community policing, and bridge the gap between the police and the public.

Citizens have greatly appreciated this initiative by the Islamabad Traffic Police and have also thanked the IG Islamabad and his team.

Governor Punjab says I have not studied Punjab defamation law yet

Hussain Raza

ATTOCK: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider while talking to the media in Hasan Abdal said that I have not studied the defamation law which has been passed by the Punjab Assembly yet, taking into account the legal and constitutional requirements for detailed consideration. It will be reviewed if this law conflicts with human rights, freedom of press and the constitution of Pakistan, then a decision will be taken after consulting with journalistic organizations, human rights institutions and technical experts. It is also important to look at the respect of people work-



ing on social media. It is also very important to set moral boundaries for people working on social media. Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan, a long-time worker of Pakistan People's Party Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's confidant colleague Dr. Sardar Sikan-dar Hayat Khan. Hasan visit-

ed his residence in Abdal for a visit. On this occasion, President of Pakistan People's Party Attock district, Sardar Ashar Hayat Khan, Sardar Zulfikar Hayat Khan, Akhtar Hayat Khan known as Jani Khan, a large number of Pakistan People's Party workers and media representatives were present. The governor of Punjab said that the leader of Pakistan People's Party, Attock district, Dr. Sikandar Hayat Khan and his son are the valuable capital of Pakistan People's Party. Therefore, I will take steps that will always be remembered in history. I will give such a gift to Hasan Abdal, it will be a milestone for the development and prosperity of this region. In response to a question, the Governor of Punjab said that as the Governor, fulfilling my constitutional requirements, Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto will reorganize the People's Party in Punjab on the style of Shaheed era. Workers of Pakistan People's Party have love for country and nation. #

Finding Beauty in Sufism

ISLAMABAD: Artists performing traditional dance during Asian African Culture Night at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Zindigi JS Bank & 5th Pillar Family Takaful Signed MoU



PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Digital banking Initiative of JS Bank, Zindigi, has partnered with 5th Pillar Family Takaful, a prominent provider of Takaful products and services, to make Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages more accessible.

This collaboration brings together Zindigi's user-friendly digital platform with 5th

Pillar's established Hajj and Umrah saving plans including the end-to-end value chain. This means customers will be experiencing a hassle-free, pilgrimage saving and traveling plan directly through Zindigi Mobile App.

"We are delighted to partner with 5th Pillar Family Takaful so we can offer one window solution for Hajj and Umrah to our customers," said

Mr. Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer Zindigi JS Bank. Mr. Asim Raja, the Chief Commercial Officer of 5th Pillar Family Takaful added that "This collaboration aligns perfectly with our mission to make Hajj and Umrah accessible to everyone. By combining our expertise with Zindigi's digital capabilities, we can empower more people to embark on these sacred

pilgrimages." The partnership between Zindigi and 5th Pillar Family Takaful represents a significant step towards making Hajj and Umrah pilgrimages more accessible and convenient. This collaboration not only simplifies the process but also reaffirms the commitment of both organizations to support their customers in fulfilling their spiritual journeys.

AIOU commences final exams of Middle Tech program from June 8

PNP

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University will commence examination of Middle Tech program exams offered in Autumn 2023 semester from June 8 and will continue till June 14. The students have already been informed through mobile SMS. It is pertinent to mention here that AIOU had introduced Middle Tech Program under Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) in collaboration with JICA and Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. Many students from the far flung and remote areas took admission into this program.

This program is intended to help those children/youths who could not attend a school or dropped out of school due to any reason and are willing to pursue education. Students enrolled in this program have completed their education in a relatively short time.

No impact of KE's request for supply tariff on customers

PPA

ISLAMABAD: K-Electric reiterates that the company's Supply Tariff petition to NEPRA will not impact customer bills. The request has been submitted under KE's Multi-Year Tariff for the period from FY 2023-24 to FY 2029-30. This petition outlines the various cost components necessary to ensure the reliable and efficient supply of electricity to a growing number of customers.

The price of electricity charged to customers in their monthly bills remains governed by the uniform tariff policy set by the government, which ensures the same charges for each customer category across the country. As a vertically integrated utility responsible for managing generation, transmission, and distribution of electricity, these costs comprise almost 90 percent of KE's request. These are crucial to ensure a steady and reliable supply of electricity to homes and businesses, with minimal disruption and efficient service.

Distribution companies across Pakistan undergo a similar process under their Multi-Year Tariffs. The last determinations announced by NEPRA in this regard were in March 2024.

K-Electric's Multi-Year Tariff petition is currently under deliberation by NEPRA. The company remains committed to driving efficiency and improvement in its business through a combination of innovative technologies and targeted investments.

Punjab Government to Provide Information for CCP's Investigation into Deceptive Housing Schemes

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Punjab Government will provide updated information about the housing schemes in Punjab to the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) to facilitate its ongoing investigation against housing schemes engaged in deceptive marketing practices.

This decision was taken in a meeting held under the chairmanship of Secretary Housing, Urban Development & Public Health Engineering Department, Government of Punjab, Capt. (Retd.) Asad Ullah Khan. The meeting was attended by CCP Member Office of Fair Trade Saeed Ahmad Nawaz, Secretary LG&CD, Shakeel Ahmad Mian, DG Lahore Development Authority Tahir Farooq, and senior officials from LG&CD and CCP.

Member CCP briefed the participants about directions taken by CCP against illegal housing schemes. He informed that CCP is investigating the housing schemes that are violating Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010 by misleading consumers. He decided that updated information about housing schemes may be provided and necessary support for conducting Public Hearings may also be provided.

Secretary HUD&PHED, Secretary LG&CDD and D. G LDA agreed to provide necessary support and venue for public hearing. It was also decided that Proforma No.1 and Proforma No.2 soliciting basic and detailed information about the housing schemes under investigation containing basic information shall be provided.

COMSTECH Webinar on Armed Conflicts, War and Brain Health

PPA

ISLAMABAD: COMSTECH organized a webinar on armed conflicts, war and brain health on Friday.

The webinar was moderated by Prof. Dr. Wasay, Professor Neurology, Aga Khan University. Prof. Wasay said that the topic of today's webinar is most important. He said that this issue is not only affecting the people in the war zones but the entire humanity around the world.

Prof. Dr. Foad Abdallah, past president, African Academy of Neurology, and Professor of Neurology and Stroke Medicine at Cairo University, Egypt. He talked about the genocide and its effect on brain health. He talked about genocide, examples of recent genocide, the brain behind the genocide act, the brain of genocide observers, and the effect of genocide on the brain. He said genocide is an act of evil.

Prof. Dr. Adel Musk from Gaza highlighted the topic of the regional impact of Palestine war. He gave comprehensive account of the genocide impact on Gaza strip. He said Gaza hospitals have been targeted intentionally and many times during the aggression. He said 147 media workers have been killed with the majority being Palestinians.

Prof. Dr. Mian Afzal Javed, past president, World Psychiatry Association talked on the topic of global mental health impact of armed conflicts. He talked about the importance of mental health. He recommended to the countries to expand disaster management system to cope such calamities.

Prof. Dr. Serefnur Ozturk, Environment Neurology Group, World Federation of Neurology, Professor, Department of Neurology, Konya -Turkey discussed the topic of environmental impact of war. The webinar was attended by the participants across OIC member states online.

Unfolding the story of gaming phones: from humble beginnings to high-performance powerhouses

PPA

LAHORE: The rise of gaming phones exemplifies how mobile technology relentlessly innovates to cater to the expanding world of mobile gaming. From their uncertain origins to the cutting-edge devices of today, gaming phones have undergone a remarkable transformation, driven by innovation and the search for immersive gaming experiences. Despite these significant advancements globally, consumers residing in Pakistan have had limited options when it comes to gaming phones.

Tracing back to the humble begin-

nings of gaming phones, characterized by devices featuring monochrome screens and basic processors, to the current era of game-centric devices boasting robust processors and vibrant displays, we've witnessed a paradigm shift in mobile gaming.

The era of gaming phones began in the late 1990s with simple mobile games like Snake and Tetris. In 2000, Nintendo's Game Boy became popular, leading Nokia to release the N-Gage in 2003. However, it failed to meet expectations and sold only 2-3 million units by 2007 due to design flaws and limited game support.

About six months after the N-Gage

launch, Nokia released the N-Gage QD, addressing many of the previous devices' issues. However, it lacked stereo speakers, FM radio, and MP3 playback. These devices provided gaming enthusiasts with brief moments of escape, but they had limitations such as basic graphics, limited gameplay, and other constraints imposed by the hardware capabilities of phones of that era.

In 2007, the debut of the iPhone opened a new era for mobile gaming. Equipped with color screens and more powerful processors, it provided better gaming experiences. Trendy games like Angry Birds and Candy Crush needed touchscreens and more advanced

graphics to engage users. However, these devices were not specifically designed for gaming, leading to issues like battery drain, overheating, and limited game performance.

In 2015, Acer announced the Acer Predator 6, a gaming phone with the latest processor, ample RAM, a sharp HD display, and four front-facing speakers. Although it never launched, it set a precedent for future gaming phones. In 2017 and 2018, notable gaming phones were released, including the Razer Phone, ZTE Nubia Red Magic, Xiaomi Black Shark, and the new Asus ROG. These devices aimed to maximize performance with the best

available processors and RAM, large battery capacities, HD and high refresh rate displays, advanced cooling systems, and substantial internal memory capacities of up to 512GB, as seen in the ROG.

These phones offered smoother gameplay, longer battery life, and improved graphics. However, despite these advancements, challenges such as high costs and the need for continuous hardware upgrades persisted. The availability of these phones was always a concern, as they were only accessible in specific regions worldwide, leaving people in Pakistan unable to purchase them.

One of these features is the dual

gaming chipset, the Dimensity 8200 Ultimate 4nm 5G Processor, and a dedicated gaming display chip. Both designed to effectively address slow hardware issues, and deliver a seamless, lag-free gaming experience. This ensures you can play powerful games like PUBG on your phone without stuttering.

The evolution of gaming phones has been consistent, transforming from simple devices into powerful gaming machines. With continuous advancements on the horizon and groundbreaking devices like the Infinix GT 20 Pro leading the way, the future of mobile gaming promises to be even more exciting and immersive.

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When there is no rule of law

Pakistan's ranking on the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index was 129th out of 140 countries, placing it among nations like Myanmar and Sudan, where the rule of law is severely compromised. The absence of rule of law creates a society marked by instability, injustice, and suffering. It undermines social cohesion, economic development, and human rights, leading to a deteriorating quality of life and widespread despair. The rule of law is essential for creating a stable, just, and prosperous society where individuals can thrive and communities can develop harmoniously.

In a society where laws are trampled, selectively employed, and the government and its institutions become above the law, numerous adverse consequences arise, leading to instability and suffering. Without the rule of law, a society faces chaos as individuals and groups may resort to violence or take matters into their own hands to protect their interests. Crime rates tend to increase, and personal safety becomes a significant concern.

The absence of rule of law erodes trust in institutions and government. People lose faith in their leaders and the fairness of the system, which can lead to social unrest and political instability. Public cynicism and apathy towards civic engagement increase, weakening the social fabric.

Those in power can govern arbitrarily, making decisions based on personal whims rather than established legal principles. This leads to corruption, favoritism, and abuse of power, as leaders and officials are not held accountable for their actions. In a lawless society, justice is elusive. Victims of crimes and abuses have little hope for redress, and perpetrators often act with impunity. This perpetuates cycles of violence and injustice, as there are no mechanisms to hold wrongdoers accountable.

Countries lacking rule of law often face

international isolation. Other nations may impose sanctions or restrict diplomatic and economic ties, viewing the state as unstable and unpredictable. This further exacerbates economic difficulties and hinders development. Sustainable development is severely hindered without the rule of law. Education, healthcare, infrastructure, and other critical sectors suffer from neglect and corruption, preventing long-term progress and improvement in quality of life for the population.

In a country where there is widespread perception powerful Supra Executive(SE) in a country has co-opted legislatures, intimidate the judiciary, use the civil bureaucracy as tool to perpetuate terror, and where free press is throttled, the country faces serious and far-reaching implications for the democratic fabric and institutional integrity of the country.

Intimidating the judiciary undermines the principle of judicial independence, a cornerstone of democracy. When judges feel threatened or coerced, they may not be able to make impartial decisions based on the law and constitution. This can lead to a lack of fair trials, miscarriages of justice, and an overall erosion of public trust in the legal system. It may also discourage qualified individuals from serving in the judiciary, further weakening the institution.

When a country's legislature is co-opted, it effectively diminishes the checks and balances that are essential to a functioning democracy. Legislatures are meant to represent the will of the people and provide oversight of the executive. If they are co-opted, they may fail to hold the government accountable, pass legislation without proper scrutiny, and ignore the needs and rights of the populace. This can lead to the enactment of laws that

benefit a select few rather than the public at large and erode democratic norms.

A free and independent press is crucial for transparency and accountability in governance. When the government throttles the free press, it limits the flow of information, restricts public discourse, and hampers investigative journalism.

This can prevent the exposure of corruption, abuses of power, and other governmental malfeasance. Without a free press, citizens are left in the dark about the actions of their leaders, undermining informed public participation and eroding trust in democratic institutions.

When there is widespread perception that the government itself is involved in breaking the rule of law, abducting its own people, destroying properties and businesses, attacking its citizens using proxies, torturing individuals, abducting political activists, and undermining political parties while promoting others, the implications for the country, society, and its people are severe and multifaceted.

Trust in leaders and institutions erodes, leading to a breakdown in the social contract and a climate of suspicion and fear. Social and political instability becomes rampant, with protests, strikes, and civil disobedience escalating into violence. Human rights abuses create widespread fear and repression, stifling free speech and democratic engagement. Economic decline follows as instability deters investment, increasing poverty and unemployment. International isolation through sanctions and trade restrictions cripples the economy further, while diplomatic relationships deteriorate. Public disillusionment grows, leading to emigration of skilled individuals and further weakening the country's prospects for recovery. The legal system



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Gaza faces rising disease, aid shortage amid humanitarian crisis

Living conditions in Gaza continue to worsen, with reports of an increase in diarrhea and suspected cases of Hepatitis-A, UN humanitarian officials warned Thursday. The UN agency assisting Palestine refugees (UNRWA) is continuing to provide healthcare as best it can but overcrowded shelters and limited sanitation services, coupled with forced displacement, are posing severe health risks, the agency said in a post on X.

Furthermore, safe water is unaffordable for many, and people are resorting to burning trash to cook with, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) added. There are also serious concerns that humanitarian operations in the enclave "are near collapse". The UN World Food Programme (WFP) warned in a bulletin that if food and humanitarian supplies do not begin to enter Gaza in "massive quantities", desperation and hunger will spread. "The limited functionality of the southern border crossings, key arteries for getting aid in, means that barely any fuel or aid is getting into any part of Gaza. There are currently no food distributions taking place in the south of Gaza except for some limited stocks that are given to community kitchens for hot meals," it noted. All bakeries in Rafah have shut down. However, as of Wednesday, the agency was still able to support six bakeries in central Gaza, four in Gaza City and one in Jabalia. Listen below to an update on the humanitarian situation in Gaza from Shaza Moghraby, WFP Communications Officer: Also on Thursday, a UN independent human rights expert urged the Government of Israel to investigate multiple allegations of torture and other degrading treatment against detained Palestinians since 7 October last year. Alice Jill Edwards, Special Rapporteur on torture, emphasized that anyone deprived of their liberty must always be treated humanely. "They must be provided with all protections required under international human rights and humanitarian law, whatever the circumstances of their detention," she said in a statement. The Human Rights Council-appointed expert said she has received allegations of individuals being beaten, kept in cells blindfolded and handcuffed for excessive periods, deprived of sleep, and threatened with physical and sexual violence. Other reports suggest prisoners have been insulted and exposed to acts of humiliation, such as being photographed and filmed in degrading poses, while prolonged use of zip-tie handcuffs has reportedly caused friction injuries and wounds. "I am particularly concerned that this emerging pattern of violations, coupled with an absence of accountability and transparency, is creating a permissive environment for further abusive and humiliating treatment of Palestinians," Ms. Edwards said. Since 7 October 2023, the Israeli military offensive in Gaza, it is estimated that thousands of Palestinians from Gaza as well as the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, have been detained - including some children.



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

Demand to declare India a Terrorist Country - II

RAW has allegedly provided material and financial assistance to various insurgent factions, thereby fueling regional instability. Additionally, RAW has faced accusations of engaging in espionage in foreign countries, involving the gathering of sensitive intelligence and jeopardizing the national security of other nations. These allegations have strained India's relations with its neighbors on numerous occasions. RAW has been implicated in covert operations aimed at destabilizing governments and promoting political change in neighboring countries, contravening the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of other nations. Furthermore, RAW has been linked to acts of sabotage in foreign countries, including cyberattacks and terrorism, resulting in significant diplomatic repercussions.

India and RAW have been accused of supporting terrorist activities within Pakistan, with notable instances such as the case of Kulbhushan Yadav, a retired Indian Navy officer implicated in espionage and terrorism in Balochistan. Yadav was apprehended by Pakistani Security Forces in 2016 based on information provided by the ISI. RAW has allegedly operated from neighboring countries' territories with the aim of destabilizing and weakening Pakistan. Pakistan has borne the brunt of India's alleged efforts to foment division along ethnic lines,

enduring prolonged unrest and conflict in regions such as Balochistan and KPK.

The Indian media's involvement in what can be labeled as "media terrorism" extends to spreading false propaganda and misinformation about Pakistan, orchestrated by India and its leadership. Attempts to mislead the people of Pakistan and AJK are continuous. The populace of AJK dismisses statements from Indian politicians and media, especially those attempting to draw parallels between IIOK and AJK, as trivial. Recent protests in AJK, misinterpreted as hostility towards Pakistan and its army, have led Indian politicians and media to suggest AJK align with India, citing supposed discontent. Indian Home Minister Amit Shah claimed AJK residents are unhappy with Pakistan, while Indian intellectuals, anchors, and journalists have proposed AJK secede to India. However, AJK residents largely see these statements as jests. In reality, they express considerable satisfaction with Pakistan, appreciating its special autonomous status and close ties. Recent protests in AJK were focused on basic demands, not against Pakistan. AJK residents enjoy full rights within Pakistan, contrasting with India's history of unrest, particularly in Indian-occupied Kashmir. Allegations of human rights abuses and political repression persist in regions like Indian-administered Kashmir, exacerbated since Article 370's revocation. India should address



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

grievances in Kashmir and other parts of the country instead of scapegoating Pakistan. It's crucial for India to address dissent within its own territories, including Indian Punjab, Kashmir, and Ladakh. Recent statements from Indian politicians, intellectuals, anchors, and journalists are condemned by AJK people as unwarranted interference and a disregard for India's internal unrest.

Canada has also experienced the repercussions of Indian involvement in alleged terrorism. Recent disputes between Canada and India have drawn international attention, particularly following Canada's announcement of credible allegations linking Indian government agents to the murder of a Sikh separatist leader in British Columbia. This development significantly strained diplomatic relations between the two countries. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in an emergency statement to the House of Commons, firmly asserted that any foreign government's involvement in the killing of a Canadian citizen constitutes "an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty." The victim, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, aged 45, was fatally shot outside a Sikh temple in Surrey, a Vancouver suburb with a substantial Sikh population. Nijjar was a vocal proponent of a Sikh homeland in the form of an independent Khalistani state and was officially labeled as a "terrorist" by India in July 2020. Trudeau stated that Canadian security agencies have actively pursued credible allegations suggesting a potential connection between Indian government agents and Nijjar's death.

To be continued

Pakistan and the New Dimensions of Public Diplomacy

Hooria Batool

Public diplomacy is an ongoing process of a country's political government, driven by its foreign policy objectives and is based on national interests directly beneficial to the people of the country as a whole. These objectives can truly be based on public interest, only when they are established through democratic process, and derived from the country's geography, history and economics. In contrast to the East, in developed countries, public really matters in the state's affairs, and decision makers, how powerful they may be, always consider the public opinion factor before taking any policy step within the country or abroad. We can see the importance of public opinion in America that compelled the leaders to withdraw their forces from war on terror in Afghanistan. This is because the public in that culture is fully awakened and their opinion is taken as a valuable input in the state's well-being.

Unlike foreign policy, public diplomacy is an open activity of influencing the hearts and minds of the people of countries where our national interests are involved. In today's era of information technology, Pakistan has to focus on building its image as a peaceful and law-abiding state, with a government having an over-riding commitment to democratic norms, and above all, to prove that the public opinion matters a lot. Along with traditional diplomacy in vogue, we need to invest in digital technology not only defending our position as a law friendly nation but also should proactively go ahead with our plans to strengthen our diplomatic relations with other nations utilizing social media platforms by involving millions of Pakistanis abroad, who can prove to be true demonstrators of a friendly nation in the countries they are living or working in. Overseas Pakistanis' role as ambassadors of Pakistani can practically be enhanced with both short and long term measures, like national level motivational campaigns, TV dramas, pre-travel briefings, and introducing mandatory modules in the syllabi of BS and post-graduate degrees, technical and other diploma trainings, and most importantly addition of subjects like character building, health, safety and environment studies,

and above all inculcating the sense and spirit to be a proud Pakistani, right from the school level.

Public advocacy by national leaders is an effective tool to influence international public at large in today's global village. President Musharraf's surprising shake-hand with Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee during the 11th SAARC Summit in 2002, was a friendly gesture that portrayed a peace-seeking image of Pakistan, that too when the conflict between the two countries on Kargil front was just over. The Dawn gave a fascinating headline to this historic event. "The SAARC Handshake that broke the ice between Pakistan, India." Pakistan's PM Imran Khan in his address to the United Nation's Security Council represented Pakistan and Islamic Ummah in the most effective way, and made the world leaders understand the Islamophobia and blasphemy acts by the western world. As a result the UN approved annual day of Islamophobia to be celebrated every year in the world.

Not only the activities conducted abroad but also at home certain measures of public interest are instrumental in image building of Pakistan. Opening of historical Kartarpur Corridor, in 2019, is a popular step towards inter-faith harmony between the people of Pakistan and the India. Similarly, e-visa facility for the people from 175 countries, and on-arrival visa for 50 countries was opened. Internal peace was reinstated with a decline of casualties in terrorist attacks by 64% within the years of war on terror. Women in professional sectors were given national awards. Moreover, through social media initiative V-Loggers and Travel Bloggers were permitted to play their role in attracting the international tourists. The visit of Prince William and Kate Middleton to Pakistan was also a sign of peace in the country.

Traditionally, foreign missions work consistently in culture, education, sports, arts and literature, and inter-faith harmony. However, in today's world usage of digital means of communication have an utmost importance. Pakistan should switch over to digital means of communication to compete with other nations. In recent past, hiring third party professional firm for diplomatic purpose is also a good example adaptability and flexibility of Pakistani leadership.

The author is a BS student in Defense and Diplomatic Studies at Fatima Fynnah Women University

Xi calls for furthering reform to power modernization in Shandong inspection

Xinhua

JINAN: Chinese President Xi Jinping has stressed comprehensively deepening reform to drive Chinese modernization during an inspection trip to the eastern economic powerhouse of Shandong Province.

Xi, also general secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, urged the coastal province to pursue reform-driven high-quality development and build itself into "a hub of high-level opening up."

Shandong, a frontier of China's reform and opening up, is now an industrial base and a major grain producer. With a population of 100 million, the province ranked third in GDP last year among all provincial-level regions in China. Shandong is also the birthplace of Confucius.

Xi's trip to Shandong, lasting from Wednesday to Friday, is the first local inspection he has made since the CPC Central Committee Political Bureau held a meeting on April 30.

It was decided at the meeting that the third plenary session of the 20th CPC Central Committee will be held in Beijing in July, and that the session will primarily examine issues related to further comprehensively deepening reform and advancing Chinese modernization.



"Strive for excellence in comprehensively deepening reform and advancing high-level opening up," Xi told local officials during the tour.

On Wednesday afternoon, Xi first visited Rizhao Port, where he observed automated container terminal operations.

The port, constructed after China launched the reform and opening-up drive in the late 1970s, has evolved into a modern facility over the decades, gaining

valuable experience in upgrading and transforming traditional industries to foster new quality productive forces.

Later, Xi toured a coastal greenway in Rizhao to learn about local efforts in ecological restoration.

"The goal of advancing Chinese modernization is to make people's lives better and better," Xi said.

On Friday morning, he attended a meeting in Jinan, the provincial capital, to hear reports on the

work of the province's Party and government authorities.

Xi underscored the need to fully unleash the potential of integrating the real economy with the digital economy and to develop new quality productive forces based on local conditions.

It was imperative to push ahead with the transition to the model of green and low-carbon development, boost sci-tech innovation in green and environmental protection sectors



and spur the development of such industries, as well as build a world-class cluster of seaports to set the pace for modern marine economy development, he said.

Xi said Shandong should work actively to build international logistics corridors, be innovative in promoting the coordination of free trade zones, deeply integrate itself into the high-quality development of the Belt and Road Initiative, build competent platforms for significant international exchanges and cooperation, and play an important role in facilitating the dual circula-

tion of domestic and international markets.

He urged efforts to vigorously promote the development of modern agriculture, develop the region into a higher-level "granary," and expand the paths toward common prosperity.

Xi stressed the need to facilitate dialogue and mutual understanding between civilizations and amplify Chinese culture's global reach and influence through platforms such as the International Confucius Cultural Festival.

He also highlighted the pivot-

al role of upholding the Party's leadership and strengthening work related to Party building in advancing Chinese modernization.

Senior officials including Cai Qi, a member of the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee and director of the General Office of the CPC Central Committee, accompanied Xi on the inspection tour.

On Thursday morning, Xi met with senior officers of the Chinese People's Liberation Army troops stationed in Jinan.

Chairman PRCS Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari visits Kuwait Red Crescent Society headquarters

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, visited the Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) headquarters in Kuwait on Thursday. He was warmly welcomed by esteemed Chairman Kuwait Red Crescent Society H. E. Dr. Hilal Musaed Al-Sayer along with Deputy Chairman Dr. Anwar Abdullah Al Hasawi, Secretary General Ms. Maha Barjas Hamoud Al Barjas, Director General KRCS Mr. Abdul Rehman Al Aoun and board members.

During the visit, Chairman Laghari engaged in discussions with the senior officials of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS), focusing on strengthening bilateral humanitarian relations and addressing the current humanitarian challenges in the region.

In his remarks, Chairman Laghari highlighted Kuwait's steadfast support during times of peace and crises. He emphasized the historic and enduring partnership with KRCS, acknowledging its crucial role in joint humanitarian efforts in Pakistan. Specifically, he praised the significant assistance provided by KRCS, especially during the 2005 earthquake, 2010 and 2022 monsoon floods, which greatly benefited affected communities across the country.

Chairman Laghari noted the impor-



ance of this visit, emphasizing the shared bond between the two Muslim countries and the entire muslim ummah. He is visiting national societies in the Middle East and Gulf states, recognizing KRCS as a particularly strong and historic partner. The aim is to further strengthen this relationship.

Dr Hilal Musaed Al-Sayer, Chairman of KRCS, praised the long-standing and resilient relationship between Pakistan and Kuwait. He highlighted the historical collaboration between PRCS and KRCS and commended the exemplary services of PRCS under Chairman Laghari's leadership. He

reaffirmed KRCS's commitment to extending all possible cooperation.

On this occasion, KRCS and PRCS signed a cooperation agreement to enhance relief collaboration and support humanitarian efforts. The agreement was signed by Dr. Hilal Al-Sayer for KRCS and Chairman Laghari for PRCS. The focus areas of this collaboration include Disaster Management, Health, Climate Change, Youth Engagement, Resource Mobilization, Organizational Development, and Migration. He also emphasized PRCS's commitment to strengthening ties with national societies in the Gulf States and seeking meaningful engagements with affluent nations to explore collaborative opportunities that support Pakistan's vulnerable populations.

Chairman Laghari expressed his desire for KRCS to open a delegation office in Pakistan and invited the Chairman and Secretary General of Kuwait Red Crescent Society (KRCS) to visit Pakistan and the PRCS National Headquarters. Both dignitaries accepted the invitation and assured that for the implementation of the agreed MoU, they will soon visit to PRCS National Headquarters in Pakistan.

The visit concluded with an exchange of commemorative shields and souvenirs between PRCS and KRCS.

26th Hortifloorexpo China opens in Beijing



Spokesman Report

BELJING: Nearly 700 exhibitors from 20 countries and regions including China, Netherlands, Germany, South Korea, Italy, Sri Lanka, Spain, Poland, America, and an expected number of 60,000 visitors in total are gathering at this blooming event. At this year's expo, more than 500 new flower and plant varieties are being displayed. State-of-the-art fertilizers, greenhouse equipment, gardening tools, etc. are also being exhibited, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Friday.

Scale production, intelligentization, and reducing cost while increasing efficiency are enterprises three core needs at present. Increasingly more horticulture companies in China are using advanced

greenhouse control system, automatic irrigation equipment, intelligent fertilization system, etc. to improve the growth speed and quality of flowers and then minimize labor costs and management difficulties. Experts and enterprise representatives are sharing future prospects of greenhouse gardening industry via use of artificial intelligence, Internet of things, etc. It's learned that from May 23 to 25, a variety of seminars, flower arrangement shows, salons will also be held at the expo.

Data indicates that in 2023, China's flower imports reached nearly \$272 million, with an increase of 15.95% year-on-year, showcasing boundless market potential. Specifically, bulbs and fresh cut flowers accounts for more than 80% of the total.

ISSI to celebrate 'Africa Day 2024'

'Pakistan's Contribution to Peace, Security, and Prosperity in Africa'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies (ISSI) organized a special event to celebrate "Africa Day 2024." The theme was "Pakistan's Contribution to Peace, Security, and Prosperity in Africa."

The Speakers included: Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood; Dean of African Corps/Ambassador of Morocco, H. E. Mohammed Karmoune; Additional Secretary (Africa), Mr. Shehryar Akbar Khan; Sector Commander West MINUS-CA, Central African Republic (CAR), Brig. Fahad Ayub; President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Mr. Saqib Rafiq; Senior Research Fellow at Institute of Policy Studies (IPS), Dr. Tughral Yamin; Senior Vice President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, and Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan.

The Heads of African Missions in Pakistan and Heads of Pakistan Missions in Africa also

spoke on the occasion. Academics and members of the business community and students participated in the celebratory event. Stalls exhibiting African products and art work depicting African culture were also set up by African Missions in Islamabad.

During his welcome remarks, Director General Amb. Sohail Mahmood acknowledged contributions from partners including the Africa Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MO Directorate at GHQ, RCCI, African Missions in Islamabad, African students, and Pakistan's Envoys in Africa. He highlighted Africa's progress and the AFCFTA's impact, reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Africa's development, and emphasized the role of Pakistani peacekeeping. Amb. Mahmood detailed Pakistan's 'Engage Africa' policy, which helps strengthen and expand diplomatic and economic ties through new missions and joint initiatives. He stressed the strategic imperative of deepening Pakistan's partnership with Africa and underscored the importance of a clear vision, consistent policy, and long-term strategy in this

regard.

Director CAMEA, Ms. Amina Khan highlighted the opening of new diplomatic missions in Rwanda, Djibouti, Ghana, Uganda, and Ivory Coast, and Ethiopia's mission in Islamabad, signifying strengthened bilateral relations. Ms. Khan also commended Pakistan's UN peacekeeping efforts and stressed the importance of cultural and educational exchanges for lasting partnerships and shared prosperity.

Ambassador Mohammed Karmoune discussed Morocco's significant role in African peace and development, highlighting its contribution of personnel to UN peacekeeping and involvement in stabilizing regions like Somalia and the DRC. He also emphasized Morocco's major investments in African infrastructure, banking, and telecommunications, including the Morocco-Nigeria Gas Pipeline, enhancing integration across 30 countries.

Mr. Shehryar Akbar Khan commended Africa's advancements and Pakistan's support, noting over 230,000 personnel deployed in UN peacekeeping over



six decades, with 4,300 currently active. He highlighted the "Engage Africa" policy that fosters ties through training programs, reaffirming Pakistan's dedication to Africa's peace and development.

Brig. Fahad Ayub and Dr. Tughral Yamin praised the dedication

and significant role of Pakistani peacekeepers in Africa. Brig. Ayub noted the deployment of 4,000 troops, efforts to increase female participation, and initiatives like agricultural support, highlighting their impartiality and trust earned.

Dr. Yamin emphasized the peace-

keepers' professionalism and the challenging conditions they face, underlining the importance of continued support and recognition for their efforts.

Mr. Saqib Rafiq and Mr. Hamza Sarosh emphasized RCCI's commitment to boosting Paki-

stan-Africa trade. Mr. Rafiq highlighted successful initiatives like the Pak-Africa Forum and a Cairo business event that led to several MoUs, ongoing capacity-building efforts, and proposed a Trade Help Desk. Mr. Sarosh noted the nearly \$4 billion in trade, potential for growth through the AfCFTA, and underscored Pakistan's strengths in textiles and agriculture as crucial for entering African markets.

An interactive discussion followed, where representatives from the African Missions based in Pakistan shared their views. Representatives from the Pakistani Missions based in Africa also joined virtually and reiterated the importance of closer ties with Africa and offered their suggestions. At the end, the guests visited all the stalls established by African Missions in Islamabad, displaying African food and other products, which were introduced by the concerned Heads of Missions.

The event was attended by diplomats, practitioners, academics, students, and members of the business community, civil society, and the media.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
75,983.03	75,114.47
Day's High	Day's Low
76,248.75	75,263.05
Index Value	Change
16,776,119,160	+868.56
Percentage	Time
+1.16%	24 May, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,317.59	-21.64
Percentage	Time
-0.26%	24 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,124.74	+59.48
Percentage	Time
+0.15%	24 May, 1:59 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
38,646.11	-457.11
Percentage	Time
-1.17%	24 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	73.35	74.1
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	75.15	75.8
UK Pound Sterling	349.5	353
US Dollar	277.25	280

Expansion in unregistered economy is failure of FBR

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Sunday that the size of the undocumented economy is increasing rapidly in Pakistan, which is the failure of FBR.

He said the business community and the masses use all possible methods to avoid FBR because they do not trust this institution.

On the other hand, the tax authorities have never tried to reduce the distance from the taxpayers but have caused it to increase, which has hindered tax collection.

In a statement issued here today, Dr. Hanif Mughal said that many former finance ministers had described FBR as a hub of corruption. According to a former chairman of FBR, 70% of the employees in this institution are unnecessary because they come to office for the sake of corruption.

The former chairman of FBR was optimistic that reducing the number of FBR employees would save a lot of funds, reduce corruption, and increase the organization's efficiency.

He said that whenever lenders pressure the



government to raise revenue, the FBR targets existing taxpayers instead of expanding the tax net, which upsets investors.

As a result, many investors leave the country, and those who stay turn to the courts to avoid the harassment of government officials. As a

result, billions of rupees are stuck in the courts.

He said that if taxes are collected from the non-paying sectors, the government's income can increase by several hundred billion rupees. Still, tax officials are the main obstacle to tax collection.

He said some black sheep in the FBR do not want to improve the investment environment in Pakistan, adding that as long as our tax structure remains complex, the informal sector will continue to flourish.

One of the main reasons for the expanding undocumented economy is the tax authorities' dependence on indirect taxes. Instead of taxing income and assets, the tax bureaucracy relies on taxation of transactions.

Abiding by the current tax regime is a complex process for businesses. Traders and industrialists who need to register their businesses have to obtain various licenses, permits, and approvals from multiple federal and provincial departments, which wastes their time and increases the cost of doing business.

He observed that business in the formal sector is getting tough and very expensive, which hinders business growth.

He said that relevant rules and regulations should be simplified, the prevailing tax structure for documented businesses should be changed, and dependence on indirect taxes should be reduced as it is triggering poverty in the country.

He noted that if the process of becoming a part of the document economy is simplified, the situation may improve.

Policy makers should understand that the purpose of government machinery is to improve the lives of citizens and make it easier for them to follow the country's laws. However, this needs to be done in Pakistan, which has stalled the development of the economy for years, he said.

Hanif Mughal noted that due to the country's rapidly shrinking fiscal capacity, the government should realize that if it wants to collect billions of rupees in tax revenue from entrepreneurs, reforms in the tax structure leading to compliance are required. Reforms should be prioritized as, for a long time, the enormous potential of Pakistani business people has been limited by working in the undocumented sector.

Group photo

ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif with Chinese Ambassador in Pakistan and representatives of Chinese companies working Pakistan.



Photo: 3

Sajada Nasheen Ajmair Sharif Pir Syed Sarwar Chisthi visits Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry

PPA

ISLAMABAD: Islam is a religion of peace and religious scholars are promoting inter-faith harmony, tolerance and brotherhood in the society. Their role to educate people about religious matters is of prime significance. This has been stated by President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari while addressing a ceremony held in honour of Pir Syed Sarwar Chisthi, custodian of the shrine of Khawaja Ghareeb Nawaz, Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti (R. A), Ajmeir Sharif, India here at Chamber House.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari further said that peace and tranquility are prerequisites for the progress and prosperity of a country especially for the growth of businesses and that Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with its responsibility of provision of congenial atmosphere for the business community is equally paying attention on creating awareness about the teachings of Quran and Sunnah for the promotion of tolerance and love in the society by organizing religious gatherings on



regular basis.

Addressing the ceremony, Pir Syed Sarwar Chisthi said that interfaith harmony is the best way of promoting Islamic teachings especially in times of disharmony and internal conflicts. He said that Sufi saints associated with shrines always preach love, compassion, tolerance and people from various faiths visit these shrines to seek blessings, healing, and solace.

Pir Syed Mohammad Ali Gilani asserted that for successes in this world and the world hereafter we have to strengthen our connection with the religion, adding that business community also has to run their

businesses as per the teachings of Islam.

In his vote of thanks Vice President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Engr. Azhar ul Islam Zafar expressed gratitude to Pir Syed Sarwar Chisthi for visiting Chamber House and divulging important information about the propagation of Islamic wisdoms.

Those present from ICCI side also include Raja Hassan Akhtar, Yousuf Rajput, Ch. Mohammad Ali, Tehmas Butt, Zulqurnan Abbasi, Khalid Ch. Faizan Shahzad, Syed Haider Assad, Ch. Waseem. Executive member Ashfaq Chat-tah performed the role of coordinator.

L'Oréal Luxe Partners with Eleganz Luxury to Redefine Pakistan's Luxury Retail with AL-Fatah Hcl Store Launch



PPA

LAHORE: L'Oréal Luxe, has transformed the Luxury retail landscape of Pakistan with a partnership with Eleganz Luxury by bringing Loreal Luxe brands into the local market. This collaboration made a significant impact by shifting traditional outlets into modern retail luxury experiences. AL-Fatah Hcl stands as a testament to being the first modern luxury retail store transformation by Loreal Luxe.

Boasting an unparalleled selection of Luxury perfume brands like Armani, Yves Saint Laurent (YSL), Lancome, Ralph Lauren and many more, this flagship store promises to redefine the art of fragrance shopping in Pakistan.

This great initiative was taken by Sadia Shah, who is the Business Director at Loreal Luxe for Middle East, North Africa, and West Asia.

Sadia Shah quoted at the event "We are proud and delighted to launch the L'Oréal Luxe division in Pakistan at the flagship store of AL-Fatah chain of stores.

Mr. Muhammed Sheikh Director of AL-FATAH also inaugurated the event and said "We are immensely grateful to the L'Oréal Luxe team for sharing their vision of this magnitude in Pakistan. Their

dedication and passion have been tremendous in bringing this dream to life. This launch represents our commitment to offering Pakistani consumers access to the finest fragrances in a luxurious setting, reflective of the L'Oréal Luxe brand."

The grand opening of the L'Oréal Luxe beauty retail category was a star-studded event, with the presence of celebrities, influencers, and industry insiders.

Attendees explored the exclusive opportunity to an extensive collection of exquisite fragrances from some of the world's most prestigious luxury brands, carefully curated to cater to the discerning tastes of fragrance enthusiasts.

In addition to offering an extensive range of Luxury perfume brands, the store features interactive displays and knowledgeable fragrance experts to guide customers through their fragrance journey.

Attendees at the grand opening event enjoyed immersive experiences such as exclusive perfume testing sessions and personalized consultations, ensuring a memorable and indulgent experience for all.

L'Oréal Luxe and Eleganz Luxury set a new standard for luxury retail in Pakistan, promising consumers unparalleled access to the world's most prestigious beauty brands and experiences.

Secretary General urges business community to support SAARC in advancing regional agenda

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: "I urge the business community of SAARC member states to support and cooperate in advancing the mandate of SAARC and its initiatives," said Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General, SAARC

This was stated by Ambassador Golam Sarwar, Secretary General SAARC during his maiden visit to Pakistan after assuming the Chair of SG, SAARC in SAARC Secretariat Kathmandu Nepal. Excellency, lauded the commendable efforts of the SAARC Apex and recognized bodies in taking regional agenda forward. He pledged relen-

less efforts to fortify cooperation among Member States, striving to unlock the full potential of SAARC. Expressing concern, Mr. Sarwar stated that since the last SAARC summit held in 2014, no major events at the government level have taken place to overcome the procedural issues of SAARC Apex bodies. This lack of activity has impacted all the Apex and recognized bodies of SAARC.

Excellency, called for a renewed and dedicated effort to overcome the longstanding challenges that have impeded SAARC's progress. He emphasized that the organization's future success hinges on

member states putting aside political differences and focusing on regional cooperation. The Secretary General noted the recent positive signals from both India and Pakistan regarding SAARC, expressing hope that these gestures could serve as a potential 'icebreaker' for future collaboration.

The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) hosted a networking reception in honor of His Excellency Mr. Md. Golam Sarwar, Secretary General of SAARC, which was attended by the business elites of Pakistan.

Hon'ble Rana Iqbal Hussain,

Federal Minister for Industries and Production, grace the occasion as Chief Guest. In his address, he said that SAARC's primary objective is to promote the welfare of the peoples of South Asia, improve their quality of life, and accelerate economic growth, social progress, and cultural development.

He expressed his desire for prosperous South Asia wherein collaboration prevails over conflict, and the collective dreams of our people become a vibrant reality.

Earlier, Mr. Atif Ikram, President, FPCCI highlighted the critical role of regional cooperation in achieving prosperity across South

Asia. "The prosperity of the region is highly dependent on regional cooperation, especially regional economic and commercial cooperation," stated Mr. Ikram. "We, the business community of South Asia, believe that business remains the most important partner in this path towards meaningful cooperation. We are not only an association that is open for business, but today we are also committed to being open to business across the region without any biases."

Mian Anjum Nisar, Vice President, SAARC CCI, emphasized that nature has endowed South Asia with every opportunity and



resource necessary for development. However, to fully harness these opportunities, the political will for deeper integration is pre-requisite.

Chairman Capital Office Kareem Aziz Malik and Mr. Sohail Malik, Chairman Coordination, FPCCI Capital Office, Islamabad presided over the event, extending a warm welcome to the distinguished dignitaries and representatives from the business community of Pakistan. The event also witnessed the distinguished presence of diplomatic missions from

Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives. In addition to that VP FPCCI zaki ijaz, Former president Zubair Malik, Former President Abdul Rauf Alam, Zafar Bakhtawari, Tariq Sadiq, Arif Jeewa, Mian Shokat, ijaz Abbasi, Ch Masood, Saqib Rafiq, Faad Waheed, Azhar ul Islam, Dr Afshan, Rizwana Asif, Hina Mansib, Sameena Fazil, Director General, SAARC, MoFA, Director Pakistan, in SAARC Secretariat, Secretary General, SAARC Chamber, and FPCCI office bearers also grace the occasion with their presence.

USA's Ali Khan sends warning after Bangladesh series win

A Sports

HOUSTON: The United States of America (USA) pacer Ali Khan stated that his team will "eat whoever comes in their way" in the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The USA shocked the world when they beat a balanced Bangladesh side in the first two T20Is of the ongoing three-match series a few days before the commencement of this year's mega event.

Bangladesh needed 12 runs in the final over of the second T20I to keep the series alive but Ali Khan displayed nerves of steel and steered the hosts to a historic victory.

Speaking to the media after the victory, Ali stated that the team is hungry. He also termed the USA a balanced side, asserting it can make a difference at the T20 World Cup 2024.

"We are hungry, we're just hungry. And



we're gonna try to eat whoever comes in our way. Especially, this is the time where we can make some changes and try to

adjust what we can small little things," Ali said after the match.

"But I think the team looks really

balanced. All the guys are hungry, as I said, and we are really looking forward to the World Cup, and I'm sure USA will be there to do an upset."

He dismissed the notion that the USA's victory against Bangladesh was a fluke by reiterating their back-to-back victories over the Asian side.

"It's massive because as I said, we need to put USA out there on the world cricket map, and this is a pure example. It's not just that we earned it," said Ali.

"Sometimes you get a win against a big side, they say, Oh, it's a fluke. But beating them twice, back-to-back, winning the series, it's not a fluke and that means we have talent, we have skills, and we have the ability if we have given the opportunities."

For the unversed, co-host USA are placed in Group A of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 alongside Pakistan, India, Canada and Ireland.

Novak Djokovic falls to Machac in Geneva semis before French Open

Sports Desk

LAHORE: World number one Novak Djokovic fell to 44th-ranked Czech Tomas Machac, 6-4, 0-6, 6-1, in the semi-finals in Geneva on Friday ahead of his French Open title defence.

Djokovic, 37, took a wild card to the Swiss clay-court tournament in a bid to reverse an alarming dip in form ahead of Roland Garros where the 24-time Grand Slam champion has won three times.

"I have no reaction right now, I just fought for every ball," said 23-year-old Machac.

"When you play against Novak you just hope. You just try to play your best and see what it looks like."

Novak Djokovic, bidding to reach his first final of the season, received a medical timeout at the end of the first set.



The Serb will head to Roland Garros where he faces Frenchman Pierre-Hugues Herbert in the first round having won no titles this year.

Machac, competing in his maiden tour-level semi-final,

rallied from a break down in the first set and after failing to win a game in the second powered back in the third set.

"I'm looking forward to playing in a final for the first time," said Machac who will face two-time champi-

on Casper Ruud or Italian Flavio Cobolli in the title match on Saturday.

Ruud, the world number seven, was the runner-up in the last two French Open finals, including a defeat to Novak Djokovic last year.

Pakistan announce squad for T20 World Cup 2024

A Sports

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Friday, announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, scheduled to commence on June 1.

The much-awaited Pakistan squad was announced in a unique way as cricket fans, in a video released by the PCB, revealed the players' names selected for the mega event.

The side was confirmed on Friday afternoon (UK time) following a two-hour selection committee meeting, which was attended by Abdul Razaq, Asad Shafiq, Babar Azam, Bilal Afzal, Gary Kirsten, Mohammad Yousuf and Wahab Riaz.

Of the 15 players, Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Saim Ayub and Usman Khan have been picked for their maiden T20



World Cup, while Mohammad Amir and Imad Wasim last appeared in the 2016 and 2021 tournaments, respectively. The other eight players participated

in the 2022 event in Australia. "This is an extremely talented and balanced side that has a mixture of youth and experience. These players have been playing

together for some time and look well prepared and settled for next month's event," stated PCB. "Harris Rauf is fully fit and bowling well in the nets. It

would have been nice if he had gotten an outing at Headingley, but we remain confident that he will continue to maintain an upward trajectory in the upcoming matches, as he will have an important role to play along with other strike bowlers in the T20 World Cup," the statement added.

Pakistan, who lifted the title in the 2009 edition will start their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign against the United States of America (USA) on June 6 before taking on arch-rivals India on June 9.

Pakistan Squad for T20 World Cup 2024: Babar Azam (c), Saim Ayub, Mohammad Rizwan, Fakhar Zaman, Azam Khan, Usman Khan, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Abbas Afridi, Naseem Shah, Harris Rauf, Abrar Ahmed.

Shahid Afridi named among famous athletes as T20 World Cup 2024 ambassador

As the countdown began for the electrifying event of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, the organisers chose former Pakistan captain and flamboyant all-rounder Shahid Afridi among renowned athletes as an ambassador of the much-anticipated global tournament.

He joins India's Yuvraj Singh, 'Universe Boss' Chris Gayle, and the fastest man on Earth Usain Bolt as ambassadors for the mega event.

Afridi led Pakistan to T20 World Cup title in 2009 while also playing a key role in their run to the final in 2007.

"The ICC Men's T20 World Cup is an event that is very close to my heart," said Afridi. "From being Player of the Tournament in the inaugural edition to lifting the trophy in 2009, some of my favourite career highlights have come from competing on this stage."

"T20 World Cups have gone from strength to strength in recent years, and I'm thrilled to be part of this edition, where we will see more teams, more matches and even more drama than ever before."

"I am particularly excited to witness the India v Pakistan fixture on 9 June. It is one of the great rivalries in sport and New York will be a fitting stage for this unmissable encounter between two great teams."

1st PNSC Inter-Provincial Women Softball Championship to commence from May 30 at KPT Sports Complex

Sports Desk

KARACHI: First PNSC Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship will be played at the Football Stadium KPT Sports complex, Karachi, from 30th May to 1st June 2024. Teams from Punjab, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and host Sindh will participate in the championship.

Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC) is the title sponsors of the championship & Combaxx Sports are co-sponsors in collaboration with Palmolive, Dr. Essa Lab, KPT and others included. Sindh Softball Association has been given the hosting of the championship.

While addressing the meeting held to finalize the arrangements of the event, President of Softball Federation of Pakistan Asif Azeem said that in October this year, Pakistan has to participate in the 4th Asian Universities Women's Softball Championship to be played in Taiwan, in which the age limit for participation by Softball Asia has been set from 18 to 28 years.

The PNSC Inter-Provincial Softball Championship is an excellent platform for the women players of the four provinces in which they can become a part of the national team camp by showing outstanding performance, especially the students of the colleges and universities participating in the teams of the provinces can get full opportunity from this event to make it to the national team.

Asif Azeem also said that the sponsorship of the softball game from the private sectors is welcome, and we are grateful to PNSC, the title sponsor of the event, Combaxx Sports CEO Omar Saeed, Palmolive, KPT, the event's venue partner, and Healthcare Partner Dr. Essa Lab for their cooperation.

The chairman of the organizing committee of the championship, Dr. Farhan Essa, said that providing an ideal environment to the players in the sports field is our first priority. A refresher course will also be conducted during the championship. The Federation's Qualified Coaches Unit will educate participating players, umpires, coaches and technical officials on the new rules and regulations of the game of softball, he concluded.

Volleyball trials for upcoming Summer Games 2024 will be conducted today

Sports Desk

Lahore Division volleyball trials for upcoming Summer Games 2024 will be conducted on May 25 under the direction of Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal

The trials for the selection of Lahore Division volleyball team for upcoming Summer Games 2024 will be conducted at the Nishtar Park Sports Complex Gymnasium Hall on May 25 (Saturday) at 11.00am under the direction of Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal.

Divisional Sports Officer Lahore Rana Nadeem Anjum will supervise the trials in which the players from all districts of Lahore division including Nankana Sahib, Kasur, Sheikhupura and Lahore will participate. All under-30 players with their ID cards will be able to participate in the trials.

Similarly, the trials of all the divisional teams of Punjab will be held on May 25 and 26 in their respective divisions.

Pakistan name squad for historic Volleyball Series against Australia

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) on Friday had named a 14-member squad for the upcoming three-match volleyball series against Australia, marking the Australian team's first visit to Pakistan.



According to PVF Chairman Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob, the Pakistani squad, led by Murad Jehan and vice-captained by Muhammad Kashif Naveed, would compete at full strength against the strong Australian team. The series promises to be a thrilling competition for both teams and the entry for fans and supporters was free.

The Australian team, comprising 20 members, would arrive in Islamabad on Sunday, May 26. The matches would be held at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex on May 28, 29, and 30, starting at 6:30pm.

Yaqoob encouraged fans to come and cheer for the Pakistani team, which recently won the Central Asian Volleyball League. He also emphasized the need for government support to promote volleyball in Pakistan, despite the lack of resources.

The Pakistani squad includes Waleed Khan, Murad Khan, Aimal Khan, Usman Faryad Ali, Fakhar Ud Din, Afaq Khan, Abdul Zaheer, Musawer Khan, Muhammad Hamad, Haider Ali, Nasir Ali, and Muhammad Yaseen. Argentine Ruben Wolochin would be the head coach, assisted by Saeed Ahmed Khan Sady and Ehsan Iqbal. Brazilian Lucas Rodrigues would serve as the physical trainer, and Muhammad Ismail Khan, Muhammad Sulaiman Amin, and Juan Cobucci will join as assistant scout man.

Schedule- First Match: Pakistan vs Australia, May 28, 6:30pm; Second Match: Pakistan vs Australia, May 29, 6:30pm; Third Match: Pakistan vs Australia, May 30, 6:30pm.

Moeen Ali ready to lead England in Jos Buttler's absence

Sports Desk

BIRMINGHAM: Spin all-rounder Moeen Ali stated Friday that he is ready to lead England in the absence of white-ball captain Jos Buttler.

England's white-ball captain Buttler and his wife Louise are expecting the birth of their third child soon. As a result, the wicketkeeper batter may miss a part of the ongoing four-match series against Pakistan or the upcoming ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Meanwhile, England's vice-captain Moeen Ali, who has led the side in 12 ODIs and T20Is, stated that nothing will change if he assumes the England captaincy role in Buttler's absence.

"I feel I've captained enough for England," Moeen said.

"I'll be fine. Nothing will change too much, it's just taking over from what he's doing and then when he comes back, he takes over."

"Hopefully, the baby comes at the right time where he doesn't miss too many games."

"For me, it's just whatever will happen, will happen. It's not really difficult, to be honest with you, because we speak often, me and Jos. We talk about other things, the team and all that. We're on the same page anyway."

Moeen further expressed his disappointment with the first T20I against Pakistan being washed out but asserted that the upcoming three matches would be enough for the reigning champions to gear up for the title defence.

"It was obviously disappoint-

ing (on Wednesday) because Leeds is a great place to go and play."

"Playing cricket is always the best preparation. I know most of the guys have been playing. A few guys have been training but it's not the same, so hopefully they'll get some game time."

"These three games should be enough for the guys to get going and there's a bit of time in the West Indies, a few training sessions. We'll be fine. There's no real excuses from our side."

Notably, the four-match T20I series between Pakistan and England, scheduled to run from May 22 to 30, will serve as a final opportunity for both teams to gear up for 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, Harris Rauf, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Usman Khan.

England squad:

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

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



Group photo

LAHORE: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo with course participants on the occasion of 53rd PN Staff Course convocation at PN War College Lahore.



Photo: ISPR

Ahsan Iqbal hails CPEC as a milestone of Pakistan-China friendship

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday hailed the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a milestone of friendship between Pakistan and China, providing a strong foundation for economic cooperation. Addressing the media after the 13th session of the Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC), the minister highlighted the progress made under CPEC, including the revival of projects in Gwadar and the identification of five new corridors for Phase 2 of CPEC.

He also acknowledged the challenges faced by CPEC, including the slowdown in progress after 2018 and the impact of climate change, floods, and the corona virus pandemic on Pakistan's economy. He said CPEC has provided this friendship with a strong foundation for economic and economic cooperation, from 2013 to 2018, 25 billion dollars were invested in Paki-

stan under CPEC. Ahsan Iqbal said that the journey of CPEC slowed down after 2018 due to change of government. Criticism of CPEC during this period caused big investors to leave Pakistan, as a result of which Pakistan suffered huge losses in investment. Further damage to Pakistan's economy was caused by severe climate changes, floods and corona virus. While highlighting the projects in Gwadar, the minister said that during the 16-months government tenure in Gwadar, water, electricity projects and dredging projects of Gwadar port were reactivated. Owing to the lack of dredging of Gwadar port, the depth of Gwadar port was reduced by one and a half meters due to which big ships could not anchor. The government completed this work in 6 months. Similarly, the transmission line from Iran was brought to Gwadar. Gwadar was also got connected to the National Grid through a transmission line for the first



time. Pipeline connection from Gwadar dam to supply more brackish water. With these steps, China has regained its confidence in Pakistan to continue CPEC with renewed rigour. He also said that the Deputy Prime Minister of China visited Pakistan on the completion of 10 years of CPEC.

Furthermore, the minister said that the decision to use local coal instead of imported coal will help promote the vision of incorporating green economy, 300 Megawatt Gwadar coal will fulfill

local demand for fuel along the Makran coast region and 1800 MGW will fulfill remaining demand through Kohala and Azad Pattan projects. These two projects will take 6-8 years until completion, he added. He shared that National Energy Administration of China will visit Pakistan to prepare recommendations to reduce power losses during project construction phases. They will also make solutions to convert regular energy efficiently into green energy.

One questioner raised concern over the fact that

previous government had halted construction of road from Thakot onwards and 3000 workers in Kohistan had lost lives.

The minister assured that no progress on any CPEC project will be halted by present government. He also stressed that strict security measures have been taken to protect all labourers in collaboration with Interior ministry. While summarizing priority areas under CPEC phase 2, he said that the new phase will focus on advancement of agriculture, science and technology, and IT. As a result of 13th JCC, two new working groups had been added:

Working Group on Water Resources, and a Working Group on Climate change. Considering that Pakistan is the world's 7th most vulnerable country due to impact brought by climate change, the inclusion of these new working groups will help devise innovative solutions to combat adverse effects of climate.

Pakistan leading world in community-based conservation of Markhor: Romina

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday announced that Pakistan was the leading world in community-based conservation of Markhor and other wild goats and sheep that were thriving in population across the northern region of the country.

Addressing a press conference, flanked by Inspector General of Forest, Ministry of Climate Change and Environ-



mental Coordination, Ghulam Qadir Shah on the occasion of International Markhor Day, the PM's Coordinator

mentioned that the country along with the rest of the world was celebrating its national animal's day under the ambit

of the United Nations to raise awareness on its conservation and significance in the ecology.

Romina Khurshid said the United Nations General Assembly on May 2nd approved the resolution to celebrate global Markhor Day to highlight that it was an important member of the natural ecosystem facing existential threats due to irresponsible attitude and anthropogenic activities of mankind.

The mountainous region of the country particularly Gilgit

Baltistan, Chitral, Kohistan, Swat, Dir, and Balochistan were the habitats of more than a dozen of wild goats and sheep including Ibex, Markhor, Urial, Himalayan Goral, Blue Sheep and Marcopolo Sheep, she added.

"Markhor is an enchanting tough and highly impressive wild Capra that resides in the harsh mountainous terrain and its not only important part of the natural food chain but also a major source of livelihood for the local populace," she said.

PIA flight carrying 171 students reached Quetta

Bureau Report

QUETTA: PIA special flight PK 6264 carrying 50 female students among 171 students reached Quetta from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan here on Friday.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, Provincial Minister for Livestock and Development Bakht Mohammad Kakar, Member Provincial Assembly Mir Zareen Khan Magsi and Director General of Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) Manzoor Hussain welcomed the students along with their staff upon their arrival at Quetta Airport.

On this occasion, the OPF staff presented Pakistani flag, flowers and lunch boxes to the students and transport was also provided by OPF to return to Quetta city. Director General OPF informed the Chief Minister that OPF was providing full support and assistance to the students who have returned to their homeland including Quetta.

PTI top brass summoned in intra-party elections case

PPA

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has summoned Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) top leadership after raising further objections to recently-held intra-party elections.

The electoral watchdog has issued a notice to Imran Khan-founded party and summoned PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Raouf Hasan, who was the election commissioner in party's intra-party polls, on May 30.

The notice seeks PTI's response to the commission's inquiry into

the internal electoral process. The election commission had already sent a detailed questionnaire to PTI, seeking information about



the party's intra-party elections. Earlier in May, the ECP raised further objections to PTI intra-party elections, questioning the party's status after 'losing organisational structure'.

On December 22, 2023, the ECP stripped the PTI of its election symbol due to irregularities in its intra-party elections. The Supreme Court later upheld the ECP order, forcing the party to field its candidates as independents in the Feb 8 general elections.

After the general elections, the party once again conducted its intra-party elections on March 3. The party now demands that the ECP issue its notification.

However, the ECP has once again raised objections to the new party polls and sent a two-page questionnaire to the Imran-founded party.

Jam Kamal invites Korean companies to invest in Pakistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Republic of Korea's Ambassador to Pakistan, Park Kijun Friday called on Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan and discussed strategize on boosting bilateral trade and investment. Jam Kamal Khan extended an open invitation to Korean companies, urging them to explore and invest in Pakistan's commercial and strategic projects.

He emphasized that over the past three months, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's top priorities have focused on enhancing business connectivity and simplifying the process of doing business in Pakistan, said a press release issued here. He briefed the Korean envoy on government's proactive measures in stabilizing the economy, which he believes are making Pakistan an increasingly attractive destination for foreign investment. Ambassador Park Kijun expressed a strong desire to collaborate closely with Pakistan to enhance trade volumes and explore new business opportunities. Minister Khan assured the ambassador that the government stands ready to promptly resolve any problems to ensure smooth and efficient operations for foreign businesses in Pakistan. Additionally, Jam Kamal

Khan invited Korean investors to capitalize on upcoming privatization opportunities within various government departments. This move aligns with the Prime Minister's vision of increasing private sector involvement in the economy to improve efficiency and service delivery. Key sectors highlighted for potential investment included energy, port and shipping, fisheries, and agriculture—areas deemed critical for Pakistan's economic development and offering substantial opportunities for international investors. During the meeting, the minister also briefed the ambassador on the successful holding of the recent Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Forum 2024 which was attended by the top investors from Saudi Arabia. He informed the ambassador that Pakistan can organise a similar match-making event for the big Korean conglomerates and investors wishing to invest in Pakistan. In conclusion, Jam Kamal Khan reiterated the government's commitment to making business operations in Pakistan more accessible and reliable. He expressed optimism Pakistan is now progressing towards a phase of prosperity and growth.

Each passing month, he noted, brings new opportunities and a more favourable business climate.

Israel must halt its military offensive in Rafah-Int'l Court of Justice

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: International Court of Justice's near unanimous Order of another set of binding provisional measures, including that Israel to halt its military offensive and any other action in Rafah.

Israel is bound by the provisional measures, including allowing all commissions of inquiry, fact-finding mission or other investigative body mandated by the United Nations, to enter Gaza.

Equally, all states are legally obliged to respect and ensure the implementation of these and previous provisional measures. The State of Palestine calls on the inter-

national community to assume its responsibilities in this regard, namely protecting the rules-based order and standing of the Court by ensuring Israel's immediate compliance. Palestine will work with all law-abiding states to serve these binding obligations.

Palestine reiterates its gratitude to the people and government of South Africa for their moral and legal leadership in defending humanity and pushing for an end to the genocide.

The existence of the Palestinian people and by extension the survival of an entire nation is under threat. The International Court of Justice has spoken. States must listen and comply.

SAARC Secretary-General's visit to Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Secretary-General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), Md. Golam Sarwar, visited Pakistan from 20 to 24 May 2024. This was his first visit to Pakistan since assuming office in October 2023.

The Secretary-General called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and met with Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi. SAARC's potential for regional cooperation and the possibility of the Organization's reinvigoration were discussed during these meetings.

The Secretary-General visited the SAARC Energy Centre and the SAARC Arbitration Council, where he received briefings on the activities of these bodies. He interacted with intelligentsia at the Institute of Regional Studies and the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad. The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry also organized an event in honour of the Secretary-General.

As a founding member, Pakistan considers SAARC an important platform for regional cooperation and remains committed to the objectives and principles of the SAARC Charter.

DPM Dar emphasizes uniform ...

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will prepare its report with the objective to ensure that medical graduates in Pakistan are equipped with the knowledge and skills required to meet contemporary healthcare challenges and to provide the highest

level of care to all Pakistani nationals. This initiative is part of the government's continuing efforts to elevate the standards of healthcare services in Pakistan and to prepare medical professionals to effectively serve in both domestic and global healthcare.

Pakistan, Lithuania agree to...

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regional and global issues, and the challenges related to geopolitical developments. The two sides also expressed satisfaction at the engagement and cooperation at international forums, including at the United Nations, and agreed to continue supporting each other. Vice Minis-

ter Meilunas also called on Foreign Secretary, Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi. They expressed satisfaction at the trajectory of bilateral relations and reaffirmed commitment to further expand and diversify mutually beneficial cooperation. The two countries are commemorating the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.