



## Ukrainian President Zelensky invited world leaders to a peace summit

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, in an address to world leaders from Kharkiv on the eve of the peace summit in Switzerland, that there is no nation that can stop the war in Ukraine on its own and that this requires the engagement of the world's highest officials and called on them to join in as many as possible... (Details on Page 5)



## Hamas armed wing says it launched 'big missile' attack on Tel Aviv

Hamas armed wing al-Qassam Brigades said it launched a "big missile" attack on Tel Aviv on Sunday as the Israeli military sounded sirens in the central city warning of possible incoming rockets. In a statement on its Telegram channel on Sunday, al-Qassam Brigades said the rockets were launched in response to what it called "Zionist massacres against civilians". Hamas Al-Aqsa TV said the rockets were launched from the Gaza Strip.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ziq'a'd 18, Monday, May 27, 2024

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily\_spokesman

Daily Spokesman Vol: 18, Issue: 46

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## Call on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Peoples' Party calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday.



Photo: Online

## COAS General Asim extends condolences to Iranian leadership after helicopter crash

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), COAS Pakistan Army had a telephonic call with Major General Mohammad Bagheri, Chief of General Staff of Iranian Armed Forces and extended deep condolences over the sad and unfortunate incident of helicopter crash on 19 May 2024 which led to demise of President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian and other important officials.

COAS expressed that Late President Ebrahim Raisi and Late Foreign Minister Amir Abdollahian were exceptional leaders and true friends of Pakistan.

COAS highlighted that loss of both the leaders and others was truly tragic and irreparable. COAS on behalf of all ranks of Pakistan Army extended prayers for the departed souls and well wishes for the bereaved families.



COAS said that Pakistan has historic, cultural and brotherly ties with Iran and the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Iran have always stood together. General Bagheri thanked COAS for sharing grief and vowed to continue the cooperation between the two militaries.

## PM lauds security forces for successful operation against terrorists

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against

terrorists in the Hasan Khel area of Peshawar, which resulted in killing of five terrorists.

The prime minister also offered his heartfelt condolence to the family members of Pakistan

Army's Captain Hussain Jahangir and Havildar Shafiqullah, who embraced martyrdom during the operation.

In a message, he prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of

the martyrs in paradise.

He said the soldiers of the security forces carried out a successful operation against the terrorists by putting their lives at risk.

Paying tribute to the martyrs,

the prime minister said, "We salute them for their bravery". The entire nation is proud of its brave forces, he added. He resolved to eliminate the menace of terrorism in the country.

## 500 named in FIR for allegedly trying to lynch Christian man in Punjab's Sargodha

Bureau Report

SARGODHA: A combination of still taken from videos on social media shows a charged mob in Punjab's Sargodha area gathered outside the house of a man who allegedly desecrated Quran. The other pictures shows fire erupting from a torched furniture in the same street on May 25, 2024.

Around 500 suspects have been named in the first information report (FIR) for allegedly trying to lynch a Christian man in Punjab's Sargodha over

Continued on Page 8

## Afghan soil used in attack on Chinese nationals: Naqvi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has confirmed that the recent attack on Chinese citizens in Besham, Pakistan, was carried out using Afghan territory.

Speaking to the media alongside officials from the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) in Lahore, Naqvi stated that the attack raised serious concerns for Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of Pakistan-China cooperation, particularly in the context of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

"We are certain that China is working for the betterment of both our countries," Naqvi said.

The minister confirmed that the attackers specifically targeted Chinese security personnel,



Photo: Online

suggesting a planned attack. He revealed that Pakistan has raised the issue with the Afghan interim government but has yet to receive any positive response.

Naqvi further stated that Pakistan has increased security along its borders, acknowledging the involvement of external forces seeking to destabilize Pakistan. He highlighted the exploita-

tion of the Afghan government's weakness by these forces, allowing terrorist groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) to operate in border areas.

Naqvi confirmed that five Chinese citizens and one Pakistani citizen were killed in the Besham attack. He praised the efforts of law enforcement agencies for their swift action in tracing the case, identifying the key perpetrators, and making arrests.

Naqvi stressed the paramount importance of Chinese security for Pakistan, highlighting the upcoming visit of the Prime Minister to China. He emphasized the crucial role of economic cooperation with China for Pakistan's economic progress and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to ensuring the safety of Chinese citizens in the country.

## Veteran actor Talat Hussain passes away in Karachi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Veteran Pakistani actor Talat Hussain passed away in Karachi on Sunday after a prolonged illness, his daughter Tazeen Hussain said. He was 83.

He was under treatment at a private hospital. Hussain is survived by two daughters and one son.

The famous actor would be laid to rest in Karachi's DHA Phase 8 area after Asr prayers.

Hussain was born on September 18, 1940, the Pakistan Television (PTV) said in a social media post on X. He studied at the London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art and began his artistic career in the 1960s.

His popular plays include Bandish, Karvaan, Hawain and Parachaiyan. Popular films include Chirag Jalta Raha, Gumnaam, Baaghi, and Actor in Law.



Photo: Online

## Emirs of Kuwait, Qatar accept PM's invitation to visit Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmed Al-Sabah and Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani have accepted Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's invitation to visit Pakistan, marking a major breakthrough in the country's diplomatic efforts.

In separate meetings of ambassadors of Kuwait and Qatar with the prime minister on Sunday, they presented the letters of their respective leaders, confirming their acceptance of invitation to visit Pakistan.

In a meeting, Ambassador of Kuwait Nassar Abdulrahman Jasser Al-Mutairi handed over the letter of the Emir

of Kuwait to the prime minister which conveyed a message to accept the invitation of the prime minister to visit Pakistan on the mutually agreed dates.

While receiving the letter, the prime minister recalled his recent meeting with the Kuwaiti Emir held on the sidelines of World Economic Forum on April 2028, 2024.

PM Shehbaz expressed his satisfaction that the next meeting of the Pakistan-Kuwait Joint Ministerial Commission was going to be held in Kuwait on May 28-30.

He stressed to fully prepare the upcoming visit of the Kuwaiti Emir to Pakistan to ensure the mutually beneficial outcomes of the meeting.

## Shah Mahmood Qureshi arrested in eight more cases

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Lahore police on Sunday arrested PTI senior vice president incarcerated Shah Mahmood Qureshi in eight more cases.

According to details, a special team of Lahore police reached Adiala Jail, where the former foreign minister is currently incarcerated in May 9 cases, to take him into custody.

The investigation team sought permission from the court to transfer Shah Mahmood Qureshi to Lahore, but the court denied the request due to "security



Photo: Online

concerns".

However, the court granted a three-day physical remand of the PTI leader on the request of the investigation team.

The police team recorded Shah Mahmood's statement at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. He was presented in the Anti-Terrorism Court via video link.

On Jan 30, a special court established under the Official Secrets Act handed both former prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi 10 years in jail in the cipher case.

Continued on Page 8

## Five terrorists killed, captain, soldier martyred in Peshawar gun fight: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 26 May 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in general area Hassan Khel, Peshawar District on reported presence of terrorists.

During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, as result of which five terrorists were sent to hell, while three terrorists got injured.

However, during intense exchange of fire, leading his troops from the front, Captain Hussain Jahangir (age: 25 years, resident of Rahim Yar Khan District) along with

another brave son of soil, Havildar Shafiq Ullah (age: 36 years, resident of District Karak), having fought gallantly, made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat.

Sanitization operation is being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area. Security forces of Pakistan are determined to eliminate the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.



## Govt committed to empower youth through education, skills: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning and Development Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Sunday announced that the government was committed to providing the youth with advanced education, digital training and equal employment opportunities to prepare them for future challenges.

He emphasized that nations with fewer resources have surpassed Pakistan because of their political stability and continuity of policies, said a news release.

In contrast, Pakistan has suffered from internal discord and extremism due to political instability and lack of policy continuity.

The minister highlighted that visionary long-term plans like Vision 2010 and Vision 2025 were never fully implemented.

Addressing a ceremony at University of Narawal where laptops were distributed to students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme, Professor Iqbal criticized the 2018 elections, labeling them as fraudulent and responsible

for imposing an incompetent government on Pakistan.

This government, he said wreaked havoc on the economy, causing immense suffering for the 240 million citizens.

"The present government has realigned the country's direction, bringing stability and improvement across various sectors", Ahsan Iqbal said.

Economic ties with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, Qatar, and China are being restored, and the stock market is reaching new heights, reflecting the confidence of both domestic and international investors in the government's policies.

Professor Iqbal highlighted the government's vision to provide a digital platform to the youth, enabling them to propel Pakistan into the world's top ten economies by its 100th anniversary. The event was attended by students, their parents, National Assembly member Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, Provincial Assembly member Ahmad Iqbal Chaudhry, Pir Syed Azhar-ul-Hassan Gillani, and notable figures from the political, social, and academic spheres.

# Increase tobacco taxes to save lives & strengthen economy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) organized a policy dialogue on tobacco taxation to highlight the contribution of the tobacco industry to Pakistan's economy and the health cost burden due to tobacco use. Speakers have called for an immediate increase for the fiscal year 2024-25 in tobacco taxation. It is a win-win situation for the government and people of Pakistan.

Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Former Caretaker Minister of Information and Broadcasting of Pakistan said that low cigarettes prices are the reason why children and youth initiate smoking. He added, that smoking-related illnesses and deaths incur substantial economic costs in Pakistan's GDP every year. These increasing health cost burdens encompass healthcare expenses, productivity losses due to illness and premature death, as well as other indirect economic impacts.

He further added that the tobacco epidemic requires



comprehensive strategies encompassing public health interventions, strong tobacco control policies and awareness campaigns. By tackling tobacco use, Pakistan can mitigate economic losses associated with smoking-related illnesses, potentially alleviate the burden on its healthcare system and keep young people safe from the harms of tobacco use.

Malik Imran Ahmed, Country head Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids (CTFK), shared in detail that the recent Federal Excise Duty (FED) reforms on tobacco have demonstrated promising results in terms of revenue generation. Collections from July 2023 to January 2024

have already surpassed PKR 122 billion, with projections for the full year exceeding PKR 200 billion, marking a substantial increase compared to previous fiscal years.

Furthermore, these reforms are expected to generate an additional PKR 60 billion in General Sales Tax (GST) on cigarettes for the fiscal year 2023-24. The combined impact of FED and GST is estimated to be around PKR 88 billion, indicating a remarkable relative growth of nearly 49% compared to the previous year.

Imran added that in addition to the financial benefits, these reforms play a crucial



role in promoting public health by reducing tobacco consumption and potentially recovering 17.8% of the total healthcare costs associated with smoking in Pakistan. However, maintaining the current rate could result in a decrease in health cost recovery, highlighting the urgent need for further action.

To achieve similar levels of health cost recovery observed in 2023-24, a 37% increase in the

FED rate for the upcoming year is recommended. This tax proposal presents a clear 'win-win' scenario, benefiting both the government and the people of Pakistan by enhancing revenue and safeguarding public health.

Prof. Dr. Matiur Rehman, Dean Allied healthcare Sciences, Lung diseases and tobacco control, Health Services Academy said, that tobacco-related illnesses also known as non-com-

municable diseases such as cancer, diabetes and heart diseases contribute to over 160,000 deaths annually in Pakistan. These deaths not only affect individuals but also have long-term impacts on families, communities and the healthcare system.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad Dogar, Program Manager of SPARC, said that the children of Pakistan are being targeted by the tobacco industry so that "replace-

ment smokers" could be recruited. Around 1200 Pakistani children between the ages of 6-15 years start smoking every day. Khalil added that all stakeholders must cast their differences aside and unite to protect our children and youth from an industry which is causing billions of loss to the national exchequer. Increasing tobacco taxes is such a step which should be regularly implemented.

## Wheat procurement campaign is going on successfully in Mansehra

Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: One week has been completed since the beginning of the wheat procurement campaign of this season in Mansehra. Under the supervision of Food Controller Miss Uzmi Shah and Assistant Food Controller Shaukat Sultan, wheat procurement is going on. A large quantity of wheat has reached Mansehra from Punjab and local farmers. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Mansehra Dr. Adnan Khan Behntani and DPO Mansehra Shafullah



Gandapur have visited various places and warehouses. Reviewed the traffic arrangements. Wheat purchase

Deputy Commissioner Mansehra has appreciated the efforts of the police for maintaining the flow of traffic and making the best security arrangements for successfully completing one week of the campaign and achieving a quarter of the wheat procurement target.

Special instructions have also been issued to the officers regarding security and traffic management at the time of parking of trucks at different places and parking of trucks on the roadside. At this point District Police Officer Mansehra issued instruc-

tions to SP Traffic and Inspector Traffic to depute additional police force during truck stopping hours so that public does not face any traffic problem.

He further said that one week of wheat buying campaign has been completed successfully, special traffic and security arrangements have been made by Mansehra police to continue the campaign successfully. He also directed the officers to devote all their energies to save them from traffic problems and provide all kinds of relief to the Public.

## Sharaf Ali Khalji demands improved mobile service in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Dr. Sharaf Ali Khalji, the Prominent political figure and founding leader of the Muslim League-N, has said that Mobile users are facing difficulties severely due to the weak mobile network service across Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He said that mobile companies were charged heavy net packages to users in better manners but the network service is not the same respect facility. The required number for the same call has to be dialed over again and again. He expressed these views while speaking to the media here yesterday. Dr. Sharaf Ali Khalji demanded Pakistan Telecommunications Authority to look its the helm of Affairs and urged to provide better quality service for public convenience customers are charged in full but the public is worried about poor mobile service. He added that the mobile network service is completely broken, let alone public welfare. Users have to dial a number over and over again for a call. But still the customers are not getting the number they want and even if they get a number fortunately, the quality of their voice is so bad that no one understands anything. And money from consumers is being cut Whole Which has the public quite concerned he added.



## Mansehra Police Crack Down Against Criminals

Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: Mansehra Police has issued its performance report according to which 3 stolen vehicles have been recovered after arresting a car lifter group consisting of 8 people in Mansehra while tracing the incidents of theft, robbery and banditry worth 3 Millions Rupees. The stolen property has been exported and handed over to the owners in the same way



The police registered 127 drug cases and recovered 161 kilos of hashish, 15.5 kilos of ice, 2.5 kilos of heroin and 60 liters of liquor. The accused who killed Fazal Deen has been arrested in the limits of Khaki police station. The accused who tied the young girl with chains have been arrested and the girl has been recovered. Rs 100,000 had been snatched away and ran away, the police traced the accused and recovered three lakh rupees and handed them over to the owner. On which the citizens have appreciated the performance of District Police Officer (DPO) Mansehra Shafullah Khan Gandapur and appreciated the role of the police for restoring peace Law and order in Mansehra District.

## Pakistan People's Party always worked for the country's security and development: Sania Mehbood

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: City vice-president of Pakistan People's Party Cultural Wing Multan Sania Mehbood Advocate said that People's Party is actually the party of the people and considers the suffering of the people as its own pain and Bhutto Shaheed's party always helped the poor, laborers and widows in bad times. And we have done immense work for destitute women. This is the mission that our leader Hon'ble Benazir Bhutto Shaheed has given us. We are moving forward with the mission of Hon'ble Benazir Bhutto, are moving forward with the vision of which soon the fruits of development will reach the poor people and the poor oppressed people will get a sigh of relief. Pakistan People's Party is the only party which has always worked for the country's security and development of the people, has always supported the downtrodden section of the society and even today Bilawal Bhutto and Acting President Of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani who are the top policy makers. He will introduce many wonderful policies for the Pakistani people and PPP workers, they will work hard morning and evening and in the coming days of comprehensive planning to end inflation and unemployment, they will prove that Asif Zardari, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Son Bilawal Bhutto is very good for the people, will formulate policies which will not only make the people happy but will also give relief to the Pakistani people. She said that the victory of Ali Qasim Gillani in NA 148 is a guarantee of the fact that the people have immense confidence in Pakistan People's Party and that Pakistan People's Party has made a clean sweep in Multan, this is a proof of our success Pakistan People's Party It believes in the ground realities of the country and in fact this is the party that understands the pain and suffering of the people and stands with the poor people in every way.



## Protest

KARACHI: National Trade Union Federation of Pakistan protesting for the arrest of the killers of Nasrullah Gadani.



Photo: Online

## Funeral Prayer of 13 members of a family killed in freak accident in Kot Adu

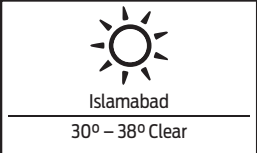
Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Yesterday, 13 members of a family who fled from Laar town of Multan were killed in a terrible accident involving a passenger van and a trailer on Multan Mianwali Road near Kot Adu. 13 of them including 4 women. A girl and 8 men were included in their joint funeral prayers this morning in the suburbs of the town of Laar. Later, 13 members of the same family were buried in the cemetery of the local Graveyard with sighs and sobs. Member Provincial Assembly Punjab Mian Kamran Maral in the funeral prayer. Apart from former Member of Provincial Assembly Mian Abdullah Tariq, members of District Council Multan and other dignitaries of the region and thousands of people participated Funeral Prayer. On this occasion, the relatives of the people



who died in the accident, including Zaheer Ahmed and Salma Begum,

said that 20 members of our family had come from Laar town of Multan to express their condolences on the death of our loved ones and offer the Fatiha and The passengers were going in a van to attend Khatam Sharif when a high-speed uncontrolled trailer crushed their van on Multan Mianwali Road near Kot Adu, killing 13 members of our family, including 8 males. 4 women and a girl died on the spot while 7 members of our family were seriously injured in this traffic accident and were shifted to the hospital by local people and Rescue 1122 teams. Salma Begum said that yesterday our family members were going to condole the death but today unfortunately our relatives. The men and women of the region extend their condolences to our family. Salma Begum cried and said that this traffic accident has destroyed our family.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:21 am  
Zohr ..... 12:05 pm  
Asr ..... 5:02 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:10 pm  
Isha ..... 8:50 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
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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

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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

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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

# Ali Muhammad calls for resolving Kashmir dispute as per wishes of Kashmiris

**Mohammad Amin**

ISLAMABAD: Ali Muhammad Khan president Pakistan's Department of Peace has said, Urges United Nations and European Union to Grant Kashmir Permanent Seat at the United Nations

Majestic Banquets Islamabad Hosts Kashmir Peace Conference 2024 In a bold and historic move, a member of Pakistan's Department of Peace, with recognized status in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), has presented a resolution to the United Nations and the European Union, calling for Kashmir to be granted a permanent seat at the United Nations. This proposal aims to ensure that the voices of the Kashmiri people are heard on the global stage, advocating for their independence and rights.

The resolution criticizes Article 370, asserting that it has inflicted significant harm on the people of Kashmir. According to the Department of Peace, the revocation of Article 370 has led to widespread human rights violations, echoing

the suffering seen in other conflict zones such as Gaza. The resolution equates the situation in Kashmir to a "stealth genocide," drawing parallels to the atrocities committed by Israel in Gaza.

"Article 370 has done more damage than good to the people of Kashmir," stated the spokesperson for Pakistan's Department of Peace. "We believe that the situation in Kashmir, under India's governance, has affected millions of lives in a manner akin to a stealth genocide. It is imperative for the international community to recognize the severity of this crisis and take action."

The Department of Peace's resolution calls upon the United Nations to review the situation in Kashmir and take necessary steps to prevent further escalation of violence and human rights abuses. The appeal highlights the urgent need for global intervention to halt what is described as an ongoing and future potential genocide.

"We appeal to the United Nations to review our resolution with the utmost urgen-



cy," the spokesperson continued. "The world cannot stand idly by as the people of Kashmir suffer. We request worldwide support to prevent this ongoing crisis from perpetuating. It is time for the

international community to take a firm stand for peace, justice, and human rights in Kashmir

We request peace and harmony in Kashmir and the region through peaceful means, Our goal is to see

an end to violence and the establishment of a just and enduring peace for the people of Kashmir.

The resolution submitted to the United Nations and the European Union is a call to action for all

member states and global organizations to acknowledge the plight of the Kashmiri people and to ensure their representation at the highest levels of international governance.

## Care for birds in hot days

ISLAMABAD: Thirsty birds waiting for water with open mouth at Sector H-9 Sunday Bazaar in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## More trade bodies announce to back PLAF in LCCI polls 2024

**PNP**

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) continued to secure more support as traders of Hafeez Center, Hall Road Khidmat Group and several more associations have announced to back the PIAF-Founders Alliance in the LCCI upcoming elections of 2024. The PIAF leadership also nominated its second expected candidate for Lahore Chamber Election 2024 from the Hafeez Centre trade body during their visit to the PIAF Office.

Speaking on the occasion, PIAF patron-in-chief Mian Anjum Nisar and PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that PIAF-Founders Alliance always raised its voice for early solution of various issues being faced by the business community. He said Alliance would continue its efforts. Hafeez Centre trade body's newly-elected office-bearers paid rich tributes to the PIAF leadership in general and Mian Anjum Nisar in particular. They said that Alliance has honored the traders of Hafeez Centre by giving representation to its chairman.

## PAC organized First Punjab Music Competition in Jhelum

**PNP**

JHELUM: The first Punjab Music Competition was organized by the Punjab Arts Council Rawalpindi at Government Postgraduate College Jhelum. The chief guest of the competition was the Principal Mr. Nasir Mehmood of Government Postgraduate College. Dozens of candidates aged between 14 and 30 participated in the music competition. The chief guest Mr. Nasir Mehmood remarked that music is a universal art that is formed by the harmonious arrangement of sound and silence. It is an important branch of fine arts and a powerful medium for expressing human emotions, feelings, and imagination. Music has a



very ancient history and has evolved in different forms across various cultures and societies. It is an art form that transcends the bounds of time and space. It acts as a bridge between languages, cultures, and nations. The power of music lies in its

ability to captivate listeners, evoke emotions, and touch the depths of human experience. Director Arts Council Sajjad Hussain stated that the primary purpose of the first Punjab Music Competition is to promote the development and proliferation of art and culture. The Punjab Council of the Arts has been playing a significant role in fulfilling this responsibility for decades through various programs and projects. The aim of the first Punjab Music Competition 2024 is to highlight the hidden talents of melodious voices among the youth from across Punjab by organizing a healthy competition. Nawazish Ali Khizravi, Afzal Latif, and Rubina Khanum served as judges for the competition. In the district Jhelum competitions, Haidar Ali secured the first position, Simon the second, and Saman Zahra the third. The winners were awarded prizes of 20, 15, and 10 thousand rupees respectively, along with certificates of appreciation.

## Govt fails to attract new investment as ratio hits 50-year low: BMP

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry's Businessmen Panel (BMP) has lamented that country's investment ratio has fallen to its lowest level in 50 years, reaching mere 13% of the economy in the outgoing fiscal year, reflects the challenges faced by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in attracting investment without addressing fundamental economic issues and achieving political stability.



The BMP Chairman and FPCCI former president Mian Anjum Nisar observed that the failure to meet the investment target of 15 of the GDP has limited the government's ability to address infrastructure and social sector issues, increasing reliance on loans for development projects.

According to the data, the country's economy experienced a low growth rate of 2.38pc compared to population growth of over 2.6pc, while inflation on an average ranges between 25pc and 26pc, portraying persistent stagflation over the last few years. However, the overall size of Pakistan's economy in dollar terms had gone up to \$373 billion in the current fiscal year 2023-24 against revised estimates of \$338 billion for the last financial year.

## Industry's biggest issue is high cost of production: FRIA

**PPA**

LAHORE: The Ferozpur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) has asked the government to work on a fast track plan to address expansive energy issue and priority should be given to the value-added industry in this regard.



The PIAF leader and FRIA Senior Vice Chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that industry's core issue is the high cost of doing business, which the government needed to bring down to bring the local as well as the export industry at par with global competitors. The FRIA leader urged for increasing ease of doing business, lowering cost of production, paying early refunds to solve liquidity crunch, relaxing import policy for industrial raw material, and equalizing the energy tariff across the country.

Shahbaz Aslam said Pakistan was at 147 out of 190 countries on the global ranking of doing business mainly due to bureaucratic hurdles. He said various provincial departments, including EOBI, Social Security, Women Welfare, Environment Department were playing a negative role and treating the manufacturers and exporters like criminals. He called for giving a boost to the export sector by adopting diversified marketing techniques and extending practical support to the industry, and asked the exporters to prepare themselves for meeting the global challenges so that exports could be enhanced by fully exploiting new opportunities. He also stressed the need for adopting new technology so that Pakistan's exports may be able to cope with the emerging challenges in international arena.

# UBL announces winners of the 11th UBL Literature & Arts Awards

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: The 11th UBL Literature and Arts Awards were held in Karachi at a five-star hotel, attended in large numbers by writers, literary and media personalities, socialites, and celebrities. At every event, the celebrated awards recognize and celebrate the best of Pakistani writers and artists, honoring a longstanding commitment to arts and literature.

The various award categories received hundreds of nominations from all over Pakistan. The competition was open to all Pakistani authors who had published their original work in 2021 and 2022. Entries were shortlisted by an esteemed panel of judges. The jury members in the Urdu categories were Dr. Asghar

Nadeem Syed, Dr. Arfa Syeda, Dr. Anwaar Ahmed, Ms. Kishwar Naheed and Dr. Nasir Abbas Nayyar, while jury members for the English categories included Dr. Naazir Mahmood, Dr. Aroosa Kanwal and Mr. Harris Khalique.

The winners in each category as declared at the Awards are:

Childrens Urdu Literature presented to Mr. Ahmed Adnan Tariq for 4Dastaan-e-Ameer Hamza, Childrens English Literature presented to Ms. Marzieh Abbas for 4Nadia and Nadir Series, Translation into Urdu (joint awards) presented to Mr. Inam Nadeem for 4Aaina Si Zindagi and Ms. Yasmeen Hameed for 4Janubi Asia Ki Muntakhib Nazmein, Urdu Poetry award presented to Mr. Mohsin Shakeel for 4Kuch Ishq

Kiya, Pakistani Languages award given to Dr. Syed Waqar Ali Shah for his work 4Abdul Ghani Khan Zhwand Au Zamana in Push-to language, Online Literature award presented to Mr. Nayyar Mustafa for his work 4Rangon Main Sochnay Wali Larki, Song Lyrics Award presented to Mr. Sabir Zafar, Drama Script presented to Mr. Hashim Nadeem for his play 4Parizaad, Urdu Debut presented to Mr. Ahmad Jahangir for 4Shah Darya, English Fiction presented to Mr. Haroon Khalid Akhtar for his work 4Liars Truth, English Non-Fiction award given to Mr. Tariq Rehman for 4Pakistan Wars: An Alternative History, Urdu Fiction Award presented to Dr. Aurangzeb Khan Niazi for his book 4Urdu Abad Maholiyati Tanazur, Urdu

Non-Fiction award given to Mr. Shaheen Abbas for his work 4Leema Yakka Ban

The awards also included a special category to celebrate the wide reaching impact of a celebrated artist who has produced exemplary work across a long distinguished career. The prestigious 'Lifetime Achievement' award was awarded to the exemplary Ms. Zaheda Hina.

The awards were interspersed by light entertainment and ended with a lavish dinner for all the participants. It was hosted by well-known celebrities Mr. Sajjad Hasan and Ms. Faiza Gillani.

Mr. Zia Ijaz, Deputy CEO UBL, in his message during the awards, said "As a responsible Corporate Citizen UBL has played its part in the betterment of society through many of



its own efforts. The UBL Literature & Arts Awards have been a cornerstone of one of our initiatives of giving back to the society through the recognition of indigenous talent across the country." With each iteration of the award, the UBL Literature &

Arts Awards support, motivate and celebrate talented Pakistani writers. The Bank recognizes the importance of arts and literature in helping society feel fulfilled, inspired and proud of its roots. It encourages budding Pakistani artists to continue producing

their works in a variety of different genres, knowing that there are celebrated local platforms where they can be recognized. It is through such ventures that the literary tradition lives on and benefits the current and future generations.

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# A Booming Stock Exchange: A Real Head-Scratcher

**B**ulls have continued their stampede at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) since the start of 2024, reaching a new milestone of 75,983 points on May 26. The market has been rising steadily, breaching psychological and physical barriers almost daily. This boom is causing even the most seasoned economic experts to scratch their heads in bewilderment and amazement. Despite sluggish economic indicators, dismal performance in agriculture, services, SMEs, and large-scale manufacturing, as well as a highly toxic political, law and order, and security situation, the PSX continues to soar.

This surge appears to be occurring in a vacuum or could be likened to a balloon that might burst at any moment, given the country's stagnant GDP growth. Last year, the GDP growth was -1.27%, and the projected GDP growth for 2024 is 1.7%. Exports as a percentage of GDP stand at 9.06%, while imports of goods and services constitute 17.99% of GDP. Foreign exchange reserves are extremely low, around \$8.1 billion. Inflation is at a staggering 38%. The unemployment rate is historically high at 8%.

The car manufacturing industry hit a historic low, producing only 79,513 units in December 2023 compared to 235,454 units in December 2022. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), which peaked at \$4,582 million in 2022, declined to \$1,857 million in 2023, with only \$659 million recorded from July to April 2024.

On top of this, the country is in the grip of a high-intensity political crisis. The legitimacy of the government is under question due to alleged massive rigging in the 2024 elections, wheat

farmers are protesting to get the government to buy their crop, lawyers are protesting against the Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, and the judiciary is struggling against executive interference.

Yet, despite these challenges, the stock market is breaking barrier after barrier and recently touched the highest mark in the country's history. This situation cannot be easily explained by the realities on the ground.

The stock market's robust performance amidst a highly toxic political, economic, and financial environment in Pakistan might be driven by several factors.

The market could be experiencing a speculative bubble fueled by short-term investors seeking quick profits, and an influx of hot money from foreign investors looking for rapid returns in a volatile market. Wealthy domestic investors might perceive stocks as a safer option compared to a weakening currency or real estate.

There is also a possibility of government intervention, with state funds being used to buy back shares of specific companies, artificially inflating their prices. Incomplete information available to investors might be causing investment decisions based on partial data. High-interest rates could be making bonds less attractive, driving investors towards the stock market.

Finally, with a stagnant economy and limited investment opportunities in other sectors, the stock market might appear to be the only viable option for some invest-

tors, despite the underlying risks.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in 2024 has shown a significant divergence between high turnover and market capitalization across different sectors, reflecting complex economic and market dynamics. Sectors like commercial banks, with a turnover of 39,987,618 million and market capitalization of 20,235 million, and oil and gas exploration companies, with a turnover of 18,212,720 million and market capitalization of 1,455 million, exhibit high turnover, indicating active trading.

This activity is potentially driven by speculative bubbles, an influx of foreign "hot money," and wealthy domestic investors seeking safer investment options amid a weakening currency and unstable real estate market.

The technology and communication sector, with a turnover of 116,185.825 million and market capitalization of 266 million, also reflects this trend. The high turnover in these sectors, coupled with relatively lower market capitalization, suggests speculative trading and short-term gains rather than genuine economic growth.

Conversely, sectors such as cable and electrical goods, with a turnover of 19,212.720 million but market capitalization of only 8.56 million, and sugar and allied industries, with a turnover of 1,579.653 million and market capitalization of 83.69 million, despite substantial turnover, show low market capitalization, indicating possible undervaluation due to investor concerns about future profit-

ability, structural inefficiencies, or regulatory challenges.

The engineering sector, with a turnover of 18,099.937 million and market capitalization of 126.34 million, and glass and ceramics, with a turnover of 247,045 million and market capitalization of 62.16 million, further illustrate this disparity.

This discrepancy underscores the need for careful analysis to understand the true health and vulnerabilities of Pakistan's economy amidst a backdrop of political instability, high inflation, and low foreign reserves.

To protect small and middle-level investors if the market bursts in the near future, the government should take several measures. These include implementing stricter regulations on speculative trading to prevent bubbles, ensuring greater transparency and accuracy of market information to help investors make informed decisions, and creating safeguards such as investor protection funds to compensate small investors in the event of a market crash. Additionally, the government should promote financial literacy programs to educate the public about the risks and rewards of stock market investments, and provide incentives for long-term investments in stable sectors to reduce market volatility. Strengthening regulatory bodies to oversee market activities and preventing market manipulation can also protect investor interests.

The government should act now to avoid facing severe consequences in the future.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## China ready to boost oil ties with Gulf countries

**C**hina stands ready to deepen cooperation with Gulf countries across the entire oil and gas industry chain, and open up new avenues for collaboration in the renewable energy sector including power batteries and photovoltaic facilities, officials and executives said. By deepening their collaboration, both regions can reap the benefits of their complementary strengths and expertise to ensure a stable and diversified energy supply and foster sustainable development, they said at the ongoing China-GCC Countries Forum on Industrial and Investment Cooperation, which began in Xiamen, Fujian province, China Daily reported on Sunday.

Amid a complex and ever-changing international landscape and energy market dynamics, both China and the Gulf Cooperation Council nations face significant challenges in ensuring energy security and achieving energy transition, said Dong Xiang, deputy director-general of the National Energy Administration's international cooperation department. Headquartered in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the GCC is a political and economic union of six Arab states — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates — that border the Persian Gulf. Some of these are among the world's top fossil fuel exporters. Energy cooperation is a crucial element of the pragmatic collaboration between China and GCC nations, given the abundant energy resources in the GCC countries and China's position as a major global energy consumer, Dong said. In 2023, China imported about 201 million metric tons of crude oil and 18 million tons of liquefied natural gas from the GCC nations, representing around one-third and one-fourth of its total imports, respectively, according to data from the administration. Despite the volatile and uncertain nature of the global energy market in the foreseeable future, oil and gas will continue to play a crucial role as the primary sources of global energy supply, said Zhang Pinxian, deputy director of the development and planning department of China National Petroleum Corp. In response to this scenario, the company will expand oil and gas cooperation with Gulf countries beyond exploration and development into areas such as trade, engineering technology and project construction, to enhance the resilience and security of the oil and gas supply chain, Zhang added. So far, the company has been involved in oil and gas field development in countries such as the UAE, Qatar and Oman, with participation in six oil and gas cooperation projects. The energy cooperation between China and nations in the Gulf region extends far beyond traditional fossil fuels. As China and the GCC states continue to prioritize green transition, both sides are exploring avenues for collaboration in renewable energy, said Yuan Feng, director of the International Cooperation Center of the National Development and Reform Commission. As a front-runner in green energy, China has focused on perfecting its industrial and supply chain to support the advancement of renewable energy technologies. Moreover, the country's large-scale production has helped drive down the costs of renewable energy technologies, making them more accessible and affordable for countries around the world, Yuan said.



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

## Gwadar and Jask Port Espousing Mutually

**Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik**

**G**wadar and Jask are the two ports located in North Arabian Sea close to Strait of Hormuz. Jask Port sits almost at the western entrance of Strait of Hormuz, however Gwadar Port being more secure is situated out of Gulf of Oman and further west at the distance of 500 km from Jask Port. Chabahar another Iranian port lies west of Jask Port at distance of 300 km and 200 km East of Pakistani Gwadar Port. Khor Fakkan, Fujairah, Sohar, Muscat and Sur are port on the southern coast of Gulf of Oman. Geographically Gwadar, Jask and Chabahar are the most important ports in region including Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman, however Gwadar Port remains the most geopolitically dominant port. Before factoring in the Jask Port it will be prudent to understand the geo-political positioning of Gwadar Port with pragmatically reference to global maritime strategy.

### Gwadar as part of Contemporary Blue Diplomacy

Although Chabahar is part of 7200 km long International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) since 2002 however, it still have terrain, financial and geo-political issues. Moreover Apart from terrain, financial and geo-political issues, security of INSTC in Afghanistan and Iran due to regional and extra regional concerns will remain a disquiet for development of Chabahar Port in future. It is pertinent to note that Gwadar Port is more suitable not only for Pakistan-Afghanistan

Trade since 2010 but is also most suitable for Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement members, other Central Asian countries and Russia. Moreover Gwadar is about 500 km and 24 hours more close to world largest Khargos Dry Port; between China and Kazakhstan as compared Chabahar Port. Majority of Ashgabat Agreement (Multimodal Transport Agreement) members are looking forward to join CPEC and BRI hence further diminishing the value of INSTC and prioritising Gwadar.

Beijing Tehran emerging rapprochement revealing an up-coming twenty five years plan for multipurpose cooperation worth US \$ 480 billion will further enhance the regional and Indo-Pacific peace; despite any possible Indian sabotaging efforts. However it may be possible that Beijing may allow Delhi to invest a little in Chabahar to secure Chinese large investment in Iran.

### Iranian Oil Terminal at Jask Port

Considering the limitations like permanent presence of US Fifth Naval Fleet in Persian Gulf, Joining of Israel Navy to US Fleet in Persian Gulf, Location of major Iranian oils and gas terminus at eastern end of Persian Gulf, Dubai Port World, narrow navigational path in of Strait of Hormuz it will be prudent for Tehran to shifts its main oil terminus out of Persian Gulf and East of Strait of Hormuz and the best location for the new oil and gas terminus will be the Jask Port. Although this would entail construction of oil and gas pipeline from various parts of country to Jask Port, Hence with a view to ensure and secure its oil needs Beijing is likely to invest a large some of amount in Iran. Keeping in view the easier and safer linkage of

hydrocarbon pipelines form Gwadar to western China and Central Asian Republics it will be Beijing's priority to import the hydrocarbons from Gwadar, hence linking of Jask and Gwadar Ports will be not only prudent China, Central Asia, Arabian Peninsula but also Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan too.

Such a combination of Gwadar and Jask Ports will not only add to the economy and social development of the regional countries but will also improve the global maritime domain and inter-faith Muslim Harmony. It must be noticed that Muslim Indian Ocean states are majority among the all littoral states of Indian Ocean; it is not only that they are majority but are possessing all the vital choke points in Indian Ocean, hence it will be convenient for the Muslim Indian Ocean littoral states to adopt a common strategy to work in unison for prosperity, peace and stability in Indian Ocean while working with China. Such an opportunity will be beneficial for China too as it will allow Beijing to assert more pragmatically for establishment of 4500 km long Sixth Island from Azores to Trinidad in Atlantic Ocean to further trap the already ocean trapped US.

*Writer is PhD on Gwadar Port, Fellow Research Member with Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transportation (UK), Member Board of Advisor "The Beacon" Research Journal of Pakistan Navy War College, Fellow Research Member with Enviro Monitor, Fellow Research Member with National Foundation for Environment Education & Research, Research Member with ResearchGate and Director Thinkers Forum of Pakistan*

## How Social Media is Shaping and Shaking Pakistani Society

**S**ocieties have always been shaped more by the nature of the media by which men communicate than by the content of the communication. Social media is getting popular day by day among the youth in Pakistan. Social media in Pakistan is used for five purposes; breaking the stories that are ignored by news agencies; gather people for public protest and campaigns; highlight the issues related to humanity from worldwide; campaigner for a social cause and remove the gap between citizens and government. Social media are computer mediated tools that allow people to create, share or exchange information, ideas, pictures/videos in implicit communities and networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram among others. In the proposal, I will be discussing destructive impact of social media on the various aspects of our lives and how it's used to create propagandas. The people from the different domain use it to gain their desire result by creating propaganda, first they create an issue then propagate it through social media to gain their desire result. My primary focus will be on proposing feasible solutions to reduce these challenges and harness the potential of social media for positive social change and community development in our region.

The youth of Pakistan are also vulnerable to cyberbullying, online harassment, and exploitation, which can have devastating effects on their emotional well-being and sense of security. Additionally, the excessive use of social media has been linked to a decline in face-to-face communication skills, deepening the sense of isolation and loneliness among young people. The lack of digital literacy and critical thinking skills among Pakistani youth also makes them susceptible to online scams, phishing, and other forms of cybercrime. Perhaps most alarmingly, social media has become a platform for extremist ideologies and hate speech, which can radicalize and mobilize young people towards violent and destructive causes.

To address the challenges arising from the extensive use of social media among the youth in Pakistan, a comprehensive set of solutions spanning from micro to macro levels is essential. At the micro-level, initiatives such as implementing digital literacy programs in schools and universities can equip young individuals with the skills to critically evaluate

online content, identify misinformation, and safeguard themselves from cyber threats. Additionally, establishing mental health support services tailored to address the psychological impact of social media can provide guidance on managing anxiety, building self-esteem, and coping with online pressures. Moving to the meso-level, community engagement through workshops and seminars can promote responsible social media usage, foster digital citizenship, and create a support network for youth facing online challenges. Advocating for a regulatory framework to govern social media platforms can combat the spread of fake news, cyberbullying, and extremist content, ensuring online safety for users. Collaborating with government agencies to formulate policies that promote responsible social media practices, regulate online content, and support digital literacy in educational curricula is crucial. By integrating these solutions at various levels, it is possible to empower young people in Pakistan to navigate the digital landscape safely, foster critical thinking and resilience, and harness the positive potential of social media for societal development and well-being.

The implementation of these solutions will require a collaborative effort from various stakeholders, including government agencies, educational institutions, community organizations, and social media platforms. A phased rollout approach can be adopted, starting with trials in select regions and gradually scaling up to a national level. To ensure the effectiveness of these initiatives, a monitoring and evaluation framework will be established to track progress, identify areas for improvement, and make data-driven decisions. Furthermore, a dedicated task force comprising representatives from relevant stakeholders will be formed to oversee the implementation process, provide technical assistance, and facilitate knowledge sharing. By working together and adopting a multi-pronged approach, we can create a safer, more responsible, and empowering online environment for the youth of Pakistan, ultimately contributing to the country's social, economic, and cultural development.

*The writer is Student of Political Science in Quaid e Azam University Islamabad*



Analysis

Muhammad Owais Fayaz

# Ukrainian President Zelensky invited world leaders to a peace summit

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, in an address to world leaders from Kharkiv on the eve of the peace summit in Switzerland, that there is no nation that can stop the war in Ukraine on its own and that this requires the engagement of the world's highest officials and called on them to join in as many as possible, join the summit.

Volodymyr Zelensky stated that Russia is governed by people who want the destruction of lives, cities and villages to become the norm, as well as the erasure of national borders through war, according to the Ukrainian president's website.

Zelensky pointed out that he was speaking from Kharkiv, where, as he stated, the third year of constant terror is underway, because Russian forces are shelling the city every night and every day, mostly with S-300 missiles.

According to him, Russia started attacking Kharkiv with guided bombs, which are weapons of indiscriminate destruction.

"And everyone in any city in the world—from Sao Paulo to Harbin—understands this in the same way—as terror. Like all other Russian attacks on hundreds of our other cities and villages. Some of them, which were once bursting with life, now they are burned to ashes, without people," Zelenski said.

Zelensky claims that Russia does not want peace and that it is the only country that has seized a nuclear power plant and is openly using it for radiation blackmail, as well as that it is constantly trying to expand the war.

"Right now, these days, we are defending ourselves 60 kilometers northeast of this place against another attempt of a Russian attack," Zelensky said, stressing that Russia does not want dialogue and that this is why a peace summit of world leaders is needed, which Russia, as he said, "he will not be able to deceive".



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"A summit that will show who in the world really wants to end the war, and not just ask for a cease-fire that will inevitably be interrupted by Russian missiles and artillery, as has happened dozens of times before," Zelenski points out, stating that Ukraine together with Switzerland is preparing such a summit that will begin on June 15 and that more than eighty countries have confirmed their participation.

Zelensky appealed to world leaders who are still on the sidelines of the global peace summit, to US President Joe Biden and Chinese leader Xi Jinping, to join the summit because, as he stated, the efforts of the global majority are the best guarantee that all obligations will be fulfilled.

Zelensky said that Ukraine did not

want war and did not cause it, but to defend itself against Russian attempts to seize Ukrainian resources and territories and destroy national identity, noting that the world can see it.

Zelensky said that Russian missiles burned the books when they hit a publishing house in Kharkiv, which was one of the largest publishing houses in Ukraine. On that occasion, there were also victims, there were dead and wounded at that place, said Zelenski.

"The burning temperature here failed to fully reach four hundred and fifty-one degrees Fahrenheit," Zelensky said, alluding to the dystopian novel "Fahrenheit 451" by American writer Ray Bradbury, which describes a world in which all books are ordered to be burned.

Zelensky pointed out that Ukraine does not want the UN Charter to be

burned like those books were burned in Kharkiv.

Zelensky said that Russia does not only threaten Ukraine, but almost all of its neighboring countries.

The Ukrainian president spoke from Kharkiv on May 24 from the printing house "Faktor-Druk" of the Ukrainian publishing house "Vivat", which was destroyed in the Russian attack on May 23, when about 50,000 books were burned.

One third of all books published in Ukraine are printed in that largest printing house in Ukraine.

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Books printed for the largest book fair in Ukraine, which should be held in the coming days, were also burned.

In that Russian air attack, seven people were killed and 21 were wounded.

Russia has recently begun bombing Kharkiv with huge Soviet-era guided aerial bombs weighing 500 to 1,500 kilograms.

## RCCI delegation visits Iranian Embassy, offer condolence with Envoy

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) visited the Embassy of Iran to condole the tragic death of Iranian President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Amir Hossain Abdollahian, and other senior Iranian officials.

The delegation was headed by President RCCI, Saqib Rafiq along with

Sohail Altaf Group Leader RCCI, and offered condolences to Dr. Reza Amiri Moghaddam, the Honorable Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan.

During the visit, Mr. Saqib Rafiq also signed a condolence book at the Iranian Embassy on this solemn occasion and expressed his thoughts and heartfelt

sympathies and support on behalf of RCCI, acknowledging the significant loss and the impact of President Raisi's passing on the Iranian nation.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Mr. Faisal Shahzad & Former President Mr. Zahid Latif Khan were also present in the meeting.



## PIDE 3rd EconFest Concluded with strong call for rapid urban regeneration

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Sunday was the second and last day of 3rd EconFest by the PIDE. This economic festival was jointly organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), Research for Social Transformation and Advancement (RASTA), and the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE).

At EconFest 2024, the panel noted that the original vision for Islamabad as a "Garden City" has faded, with a notable decline in gardens and public spaces. They stressed that urban regeneration is crucial for all Pakistani cities and must adhere to proper rules and regulations, which should be publicized. The panel also emphasized that political will is essential for successful urban regeneration, as politicians play a key role in city development. Additionally, they pointed out that unlike many foreign cities, Pakistani cities lack efficient public transport systems, which are vital for urban regeneration.

In another session, experts stressed the urgent need for deregulation to foster economic growth, citing PIDE Sludge audit reports that identify excessive regulations as barriers to GDP growth. Led by anchor Muhammad Malik, the session featured Mukarram Ansari, Ahmad Waqar Qasim, and M Ahsan Malik, who highlighted how Pakistan's 122 federal regulatory authorities impose unnecessary licenses, excessive tax burdens, and redundant requirements that stifle business operations and deter investment. The speakers called for the removal of these impediments, advocating for modernized regulations that facilitate rather than hinder business activities, thereby enhancing economic productivity and fostering investor confidence.

At EconFest 2024, experts discussed the future of Pakistan's bureaucracy, focusing on making it more efficient and affordable. Hamza Haroon

emphasized reducing bureaucratic roles in city governance, aligning incentives with economic performance, and fostering competition within civil services. Namra Awais highlighted the colonial roots of the current system and advocated for downsizing and modernizing the bureaucracy to better suit Pakistan's complex society. She pointed out inefficiencies in the hiring and skills of Grade 1-16 officers and the lack of job descriptions for Grade 17-22 officers. Rana Muhammad addressed pension system leakages and stressed the need for aligning job responsibilities with perks. The speakers agreed on the necessity of monetizing non-monetary benefits but noted that salaries must first be competitive.

Mukarram Ansari, the first speaker, highlighted that while regulatory authorities worldwide are meant to facilitate businesses, in Pakistan, they often create obstacles through unnecessary licenses and excessive tax burdens, stunting business growth. He pointed out that resistance to reforms, such as those attempted by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), exacerbates the issue. Ansari stressed that deregulation does not mean eliminating all regulations but rather removing unnecessary ones that hinder business operations, citing India's "End of License Raj" as a successful example. He shared an instance where an oil importer in Pakistan must obtain permissions from two authorities for the same laboratory test, illustrating redundant regulatory requirements.

Ahmad Waqar Qasim, the second speaker, explained that Pakistan's regulatory burden, termed RLCOs (registrations, licensing, certifications, and other obstacles) by PIDE, significantly hampers GDP growth. He noted that the cost of regulation in Pakistan is disproportionately high in an environment with a 65% government footprint. Qasim emphasized that local perspectives are often over-



looked in favor of foreign aid directives, and academic involvement in deregulation debates is lacking. He argued that regulations should be based on established rules rather than ad-hoc hurdles, as seen in other market economies. The lack of a regulatory impact assessment and outdated regulatory frameworks, like the 1890 Company Act, further impede economic progress. The session concluded with a call for modernizing regulations to facilitate business operations and enhance economic growth.

The session "Revisiting Government Jobs" focused on the cost of living for government servants and the justification for new employee expenses. Moin ul Haque highlighted the repeated failures of civil service reforms in Pakistan, emphasizing that success-

ful reforms should identify weaknesses and promote good governance. He contrasted Pakistan's system with merit-based civil services in foreign countries, which ensure competence and accountability. Nargis Sethi stressed the need to reevaluate government jobs, suggesting that technological advancements should lead to fewer government positions. She pointed out that the public sector struggles with accountability as the population grows, making it crucial to promote the private sector and discourage over-reliance on government jobs.

Moin ul Haque dispelled the misconception that the foreign office is overly involved abroad, explaining that 70% of its employees are engaged in essential tasks such as economics and policy formation. He advocated

for merit-based, centralized systems in education and accountability, with fixed tenures for positions. Nargis Sethi also noted the significant challenge of implementing identified reforms. The session concluded with concerns about political promises to increase government jobs, questioning how to balance this with the need to reduce such positions to ensure a leaner, more effective public sector.

During a compelling session at EconFest 2024, experts discussed the challenges of media and image building, specifically focusing on the limited coverage of business reports. Faseeh pointed out that within the five segments per hour typically allocated in news programming, business reports rarely receive any attention. He emphasized that media outlets lack

the incentive to create business-related content due to its traditionally low viewership.

Mehtab, addressing the issue from a journalist's perspective, acknowledged the difficulty in creating content that captures public interest. He argued that while business content is crucial, politics also plays a vital role in people's lives and naturally garners more attention. According to Mehtab, politics should be discussed extensively because it directly impacts people's lives and aligns with what the audience wants to hear. The session underscored the need for innovative approaches to engage the public with business content, balancing it with political discourse to ensure comprehensive news coverage.

Over the course of two days, attendees were treated to a vibrant Festival of Creative & Independent Thinking, featuring engaging talks and debates, fascinating exhibitions, captivating cultural shows, and a lively fun zone. The event also included a diverse food court, a platform for youth voices, and an open mic, fostering a space for open dialogue and community engagement. PIDE's EconFest continues to be a pivotal event in celebrating and promoting innovative ideas and independent thinking in the realm of economics and policy.

In the 3rd Economy Festival, various organizations collaborated with us as partners, including The Bank of Punjab, Atlas Honda, IUMS, National Defense University, Pir Mehr Ali Shah ARID Agriculture University, Rawalpindi Women University, The Urban Unit, Chaudhry Nazir Muhammad Department of Economics, National University of Modern Languages, SECP, IM Sciences, Riphah International University, SZABIST, The Millennium Universal College, Oxford University Press, Mr. Books, Paramount Books, and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad.

**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

**Gas theft crackdown**

**SNGPL disconnects another 143 connections; Rs 2.9 million fine imposed**

**PPA**

LAHORE: During the ongoing crackdown against gas pilferers, SNGPL continued raids in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, disconnecting another 143 connections; Rs 2.9 million fine imposed.

The UFG Task Force for the Lahore West Region successfully conducted a raid at Shah Kamal Road in Kamboh Colony, where they dismantled a direct bypass installed on the main gas line. The stolen gas was being used by a tandoor and hotel. The owner had also installed two gas compressors to siphon gas. The bypass was removed, and a request for an FIR against the culprit has been filed at Wahdat Colony Police Station. In Lahore, the team disconnected 12 connections on illegal use of gas while another 3 on use of compressor and imposed fine of Rs 1.31 million against gas theft cases. The team also lodged 2 FIRs against gas pilferers. In Multan the team disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas while another 04 on use of compressor. In Karak the company disconnected 67 connections on account of direct use and illegal use of gas. In Peshawar the team disconnected 32 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 0.07 million against gas theft cases. The regional team of Shiekhupura disconnected 04 connections on illegal use of gas and also booked an amount of Rs 0.2 million against gas theft cases. In Faisalabad the team disconnected 03 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed a fine of Rs 0.04 million against gas theft cases. In Sahiwal the team disconnected 01 connection on illegal use of gas. The regional team of Bahawalpur disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas. In Gujarat the team disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas. The regional team of Gujranwala disconnected one connection on illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 0.30 million against gas theft cases. In Mardan the team disconnected 10 connections on illegal use of gas and also imposed fine of Rs 1 million against gas pilferers.

**1990s marked beginning of Pakistan's decline and India's rise**

**PPA**

Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that India started the journey of development in the early 1990s. In contrast, Pakistan began the journey of economic decline in the same decade. He said India went almost bankrupt in 1991 and borrowed against the entire country's gold to start a serious economic development effort. However, Pakistan, which was much better than India in many respects by then, began a downward journey as politicians were more interested in corruption and hiding stolen funds than economic development. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here that good laws were made in India to promote industry, agriculture, and services

sectors and to lure investments, while in Pakistan, legislation was enacted to protect the stolen funds. Such laws were made in Pakistan to safeguard the corrupt, which shocked the civilized world, he underlined. He said that our politicians made laws prohibiting investigation about the source of the capital coming to Pakistan under various pretexts, including investment. The movement of capital into and out of the country was made very easy, and money changers were given a free hand, which resulted in a massive flight of capital. Shahid Rashid Butt said that the politicians in Pakistan continued to dig the foundations of the country for their interests. At the same time, the various institutions that have to keep an eye on such important matters also



remained surprisingly silent spectators, which encouraged the corrupt elements. In contrast, the debt-driven Pakistani econ-

omy is barely three hundred billion dollars and shrinking rapidly. Due to continued corruption, Pakistan has become so weak that international institutions and investors dictate it, and despite its desire, it cannot import even gas from Iran, he observed. On the other hand, India has become so important that it buys oil from Russia and Iran and has now taken control of an important port in Iran. Still, the United States cannot even think of imposing sanctions on New Delhi. Pakistan cannot compete with India in any field other than raising slogans and issuing useless statements. Still, our policymakers rely on misleading claims to deceive the masses while avoiding reforms leading to rapid economic development.

**King of fruits**

ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging mangoes at weekly Sector H-9 Sunday Bazaar in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**ICCI President inaugurates water filtration plant in G-10 Markaz**

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari inaugurated a water filtration plant in G-10 Markaz. The entire cost of the facility has been borne by himself, earlier he has also provided the same facility in G-11 Markaz. Work is underway to provide this facility in other centers in Islamabad, which will be inaugurated in the next few days.

In the opening ceremony of the plant, Director General CDA Sardar Khan Zamri, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch, former President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General of United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, Group Leader of Blue Area Traders Welfare Association Yusuf Rajput, President of G-10 Center, Akhlaq Abbasi, General Secretary Azhar Amin and Rana Abdul Qadeer addressed a large number of traders on this occasion. In his address President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the development work in different sectors of Islamabad has been started along with CDA, MCI and other institutions. He said he has decided to bear the cost of such projects by himself when CDA intimidated them about the paucity of funds. ICCI President said that provision of drinking water is a great service to humanity therefore he himself is overseeing these projects and that after G-11 and G-10, this project will be implemented in other commercial centers of Islamabad and our correspondence for NOCs from CDA for the purpose is underway.



Secretary General of the United Business Group, Zafar Bakhtawari, said that the business community does not need to look to any government agency to meet their needs, nor do they lack funds. President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Ahsan Bakhtawari, has set an example in this regard, and this process will continue in other centers of Islamabad. They are trying their best for the completion of these projects as soon as possible. Director General CDA Sardar Khan Zamri paid tribute to President ICCI for the installation of water filtration plants in various centers from his personal fund by saying that he has set an example for the business community. He added that a request of NOC for the installation of filtration plants has been received by the President ICCI which will be approved in

due course of time. President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan, Ajmal Baloch said that the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry is fulfilling the basic need by installing water filtration plants in different centers at his own expense which is a high example of fulfilment of commitment. Speaking at the meeting, President Traders Welfare Association G-10 markaz Akhlaq Abbasi said that he wants to pay tribute to President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, who has spent millions of rupees from his own pocket. He said that the President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce made promises to the businessmen at the time of his election. Group leader Blue Area Yousuf Rajput also commended the services of Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for the community.

**Oil and Gas Conference Pakistan (OGCP-2024) set for May 29th**

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The highly anticipated Oil and Gas Conference Pakistan (OGCP-2024) is set to take place on May 29th at the Serena Hotel in Islamabad. The event, organized by Energy Update in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) and Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) promises to be a landmark gathering for Pakistan's energy sector. Mr. M. Naeem Qureshi, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, provided a detailed briefing on the event, emphasizing its significance in shaping the future of the industry.

Keynote speakers, panelists, and distinguished guests at OGCP-2024 will include: Masroor Khan, Chairman of OGRA, Iqbal Z. Ahmed, Chairman, Adil Khattak, MD-ARL, Shahzad Safdar, OGDCL, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Former Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Barrister Sarah Kazmi, Partner at Energy Resource Management, Sarmad Hassan Shareef, PEPL, Razi Uddin Razi, Dr. Saeed Jadoon, Shahbaz Tahir Naadeem, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division), Bilal Jabbar, CEO of Noor LPG/LPG Marketing Association. The chief guests for the occasion will be Dr. Musaddiq Malik, Minister of Energy (Petroleum Division), and Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and

Special Initiatives. Mr. Qureshi highlighted that OGCP-2024 aims to showcase Pakistan's potential in the energy sector, focusing on advancements in domestic production, exploration, and sustainable practices. The conference will explore strategies for enhancing energy security, reducing import reliance, and promoting local energy resources. The event will feature a diverse range of sessions covering key themes such as exploration and production strategies, renewable energy integration, regulatory frameworks, technological advancements, and investment opportunities. Attendees can expect engaging discussions, networking opportunities, and access to cutting-edge technologies shaping the future of energy in Pakistan. Mr. Qureshi encouraged industry stakeholders, investors, government officials, and energy enthusiasts to participate actively in OGCP-2024. Registration details, sponsorship opportunities, and event updates can be found on the official OGCP-2024 website or by contacting Energy Update www.energyupdate.com.pk. OGCP-2024 is poised to be a catalyst for transformative discussions, strategic collaborations, and innovative solutions that will shape the future of Pakistan's energy industry. Join us on May 29th to be part of this exciting journey towards a more resilient and sustainable energy sector.

**18,371 retailers register under FBR's Tajir Dost Scheme**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Sunday informed that a total of 18,371 retailers have been registered under the Tajir Dost Scheme by 25 May.

According to the FBR data, around 14,472 retailers registered through Tajir Dost scheme and 3,899 registered other than this scheme. The data revealed that 5,303 retailers from Karachi, 5,112 from Lahore and



1,567 from Islamabad have registered under the scheme. Similarly, 2,138 traders from Rawalpindi, 1,534 from Peshawar and 980 from Quetta and 1,737 from other cities have also been registered.

**Those who ruined Neelum Jhelum project should be punished**

**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said on Sunday that using higher tariffs to eliminate circular debt has not worked. He said continued tariff hikes have worsened theft, lowered power use, and compromised national development therefore failed policy should be reversed and a new workable plan should be prepared. He demanded that officials who messed up the Neelum Jhelum project be dealt with according to law, not pardoned. In a statement issued today, Dr.

Murtaza Mughal said that the continuously increasing price of electricity is strangulating the masses and the economy therefore it should be reconsidered. He said that consumers should not be made to pay the price of the power bureaucracy's incompetence and corruption, which is unacceptable. He informed the IMF was assured to keep the circular debt below Rs2.31 trillion, which reached 2.7 trillion in November last year and may now reach around 3 trillion. The increase in circular debt includes insufficient collection of bills, rampant theft, line losses, high production costs, capacity payments,

and other issues that need to be addressed on priority. Mughal said that residential consumers are the most affected by rampant corruption in the power sector. They have to pay for pilferage, system losses, subsidies to influential manufacturers, and similar charges for each unit of electricity they consume. At present, the majority of people are unable to afford the electricity. Starting in July, the general public will not only have to pay higher base tariffs but also bear the costs that will result from a significant reduction in tariffs for influential industries. Dr. Mughal said that in July 2022,



The Neelum Jhelum Hydropower Project (NJHP) was shut down for thirteen months due to technical problems. If those responsible for this incompetence had been punished, this problem would not have arisen again in the current month.

Those who damage this multi-billion dollar project should not only be punished but also have their losses recovered to the greatest possible extent so that no one would think of ruining the country's assets in the future. People will ultimately have to pay for these losses, and their patience has already been strained by high unemployment, record inflation, and rising energy bills, among other issues. Breakdowns like the NJHP not only push the system further towards collapse, but they also bring people one step closer to taking matters into their own hands, he warned.

# Australian volleyball team arrives in Pakistan for three-match series

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Australian men's volleyball team arrived in Pakistan for the first time ever on Sunday to play a three-match series against the greenshirts.

The team was welcomed at the Islamabad International Airport by Pakistan Volleyball Federation officials.

Nehemiah Mote is leading Australian Squad along with Luke Perry, Arshdeep Dosanjh, Jackson Holland, Trent O'Lea, Matthew Aubrey, Max Senica, Beau Graham, Thomas Heptinstall, Sam Flowerday, Nicholas Butler, Ethan Garrett, William Darcy Miles, Jacob Baird members of the playing squad while Daniel Iloit will act as head coach, James Begley, Alec Walker, Brendan Garlick will be coaches with team.

The first match of the three-match series will be held on May 28 at Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, while the second match will be played on May 29 and the third match of the series will be held on May 30.

The team will also hold a press conference on Monday followed by a practice session. Chairman Pakistan Volley-



ball Federation Chaudhry Muhammad Yaqoob said on Sunday that tickets to all

matches will be free. He appealed to supporters to show up

in large numbers and back the team in their matches.

# 1st PNSC Inter-Provincial Women Softball Championship kits unveiled

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The kits of the teams participating in the first PNSC Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship were unveiled in a prestigious ceremony organized.

Special Olympics Pakistan Chairperson Ronak Lakhani, Patron of Softball Federation Pakistan Fatima Lakhani, President Asif Azeem, SVP Professor Dr. Farhan Essa, Chairperson Yasmin Haider, Vice President Tehmina Asif Individual Member of POA Syed Waseem Hashmi, PNSC Assistant Manager Admin Ayesha Leena and other personalities were also present.

On this occasion, the Chairperson of Special Olympics Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani said that Pakistani women athletes are not less in sports as well as in other fields. By empowering women, we can also shine in sports. It is a great opportunity for female players participating in the softball championship to show their full potential so that they can get an



opportunity to represent Pakistan at the international level as well. I thank all the sponsors of the event including PNSC and Combaxx Sports for their patronage to the Softball Federation of Pakistan.

Patron of SFP Fatima Lakhani urged the players of all the teams participating in the championship to become the

ambassador of their respective province and make the name of their province known through their sport.

Softball Federation of Pakistan President, Asif Azeem and his entire team are to be congratulated for organizing the women's softball championship.

Federation President Asif Azeem said



that players will convey the message of a strong Pakistan to the entire nation. We are hopeful for the successful organization of the inter-provincial championship. In honor of the players of all the provinces, reception ceremonies will be organized by the Municipality of Karachi and Essa Lab. Chairman Organizing Committee Dr. Farhan Essa said that it is an honor for Sindh to host the Inter-Provincial Women's Softball Championship for which the arrangements are being finalized.

Ayesha Leena said that PNSC will continue to collaborate with Softball Federation of Pakistan for more such events in the future as well.

# Roston Chase powers West Indies to T20I series win over South Africa

A Sports

KINGSTON: Roston Chase played a blistering 67-run knock from 38 balls, helping West Indies defeat South Africa by 16 runs at Sabina Park on Sunday.

West Indies achieved an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match T20I series.

Before Chase, West Indies captain Brandon King (36) and Kyle Mayers (32) powered the home team to 51-1 in the first six overs.

Chase came down to bat in the next over, after King fell with 54 runs on the board, and took South African bowlers apart with his aggressive batting.

He constructed a 56-run stand in 36 balls with Andre Fletcher (29) before Andile Phehlukwayo broke the partnership in the 15th over.

Romario Shepherd (26) joined Chase with 139 runs on the board and together they launched an onslaught, scoring 63 runs in 25 balls for the sixth wicket.



Chase remained unbeaten at 67, hitting seven boundaries and two sixes to propel West Indies to 207/7 in their allocated 20 overs.

For South Africa, debutant Nqabayomzi Peter, Phehlukwayo and Lungi Ngidi picked two wickets each.

South Africa made a lightning start to

their chase, with openers Reeza Hendricks and Quinton de Kock rattling up 81 in 4.5 overs before De Kock was bowled by Akeal Hosein having made 41 off just 17 balls.

De Kock top-scored for South Africa with 41 from 17 balls, featuring four fours and four sixes.

Hendricks went in the next over, bowled by the off-spin of Chase having made 34 off 18 balls with three sixes.

South Africa couldn't build any real momentum after that as skipper Rassie van der Dussen remained the only notable contributor after the openers with 30 off 22. The tourists' tail was unable to keep up with the run-rate in the final overs as West Indies secured the series win, restricting South Africa to 191/7 in 20 overs.

"It's an amazing feeling. Chase is very valuable. Very happy with his performance. They had a good start but it finished well for us. Play really good cricket - that's what we are focussing," said West Indies skipper.

# PSG win French Cup final on Kylian Mbappe's farewell appearance



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Paris Saint-Germain (PSG) coach Luis Enrique said he had been lucky to work with Kylian Mbappe after the superstar forward played his last game for the club in Saturday's 2-1 French Cup final win over Lyon.

Mbappe made his farewell appearance for PSG before an expected move to Real Madrid but he was unable to add to his club-record tally of 256 goals with Ousmane Dembele and Fabian Ruiz scoring on the night.

Dembele and Ruiz netted in the first half and PSG then withstood a Lyon comeback attempt after the break following a Jake O'Brien goal which reduced the deficit.

The most successful side in the history of the French Cup, PSG have now won the trophy 15 times, including seven times in the last decade and four since Mbappe signed from Monaco as a teenager in 2017.

The victory allowed PSG to complete a domestic league and cup double in Luis Enrique's first season as coach, although the campaign remains overshadowed by their exit from the Champions League in the semi-finals against Borussia Dortmund.

"We played the final very well. We played with great intensity and were great on the ball," said Luis Enrique.

"I think we have had a very good season. We would have liked to stay around for another week and not go on holiday yet but that is life," he said, referring to next weekend's Champions League final.

"Nobody said football was fair, but it doesn't matter. Next season we will come back stronger and will look to sign even hungrier players, who have even more desire to win."

Of the departing Mbappe he added: "I think I have been lucky to coach Kylian but it has been a difficult season for him because after seven years and all he has achieved it is always hard to say goodbye."

"But he was always prepared to help the team and tonight was the cherry on the cake even if he didn't score."

Mbappe was making his 308th and final appearance for his hometown club, for whom he signed in August 2017 from Monaco in a 180 million euro deal.

Victory means he leaves PSG with four French Cup winners' medals to go with six Ligue 1 titles and two victories in the now-defunct League Cup.

Mbappe finished his last season in Paris with 44 goals in all competitions, eight on PSG's run to the Cup final.

He was centimetres away from giving PSG an early lead at Lille's Stade Pierre-Mauroy, which was hosting the game with the usual venue the Stade de France being prepared to host the Olympics.

A second-minute corner was headed on by Lucas Beraldo and Mbappe, diving in at the far post, narrowly failed to connect with the ball.

Lyon survived an early onslaught but fell behind midway through the first half when Dembele was left completely unmarked at the back post to head in a cross.

Dembele turned provider as PSG scored again in the 34th minute when his ball to the back post was converted at the second attempt by Spain midfielder Ruiz.

Lyon, who enjoyed a remarkable revival in Ligue 1 to go from the bottom of the table in December to finish sixth and qualify for Europe, appeared down and out.

They did attempt a comeback, with Irish defender O'Brien heading in a corner 10 minutes after the break to give them hope.

But PSG goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma produced a brilliant save to tip a Nicolas Tagliafico header over the bar, and Alexandre Lacazette had a shot deflected wide as Mbappe and PSG held on.

"We have mixed feelings tonight," said Lyon coach Pierre Sage. "If you had told us at the start of December that we would qualify for Europe through the league and get to the Cup final, I don't think anyone would have believed it."

# Selection committee decides not to appoint anyone as vice-captain

KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has confirmed that the selection committee has decided not to appoint a vice-captain of the Green Shirts.

PCB's response came after it was revealed that pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi wasn't interested in taking up the role of vice-captain that was offered to him a day earlier.

"During Friday's selection committee meeting, discussions on vice-captaincy took place. However, it was unanimously decided not to appoint anyone," said the PCB statement.

"As such no offer was made to anyone," the statement added.

A day earlier, multiple sources claimed that selectors had approached Shaheen, asking if he would be interested in the role of vice-captain. However, the discussion couldn't proceed further after the pacer expressed no interest.

Sources close to Shaheen confirmed that the selection committee had offered the pacer to become the team's vice-captain and skipper Babar Azam's second-in-command, which he refused to accept.

# Pakistan-England 2nd Women's ODI abandoned due to rain

Sports Desk

TAUNTON: The second ODI between Pakistan and England's women's teams was abandoned due to persistent rain here on Sunday.

Pakistan women's team opted to bat first after winning the toss and scored 29 runs in 6.5 overs before the rain halted the play.

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

As a result of the wash-out, both teams got one point each after the second match. England are placed third, while Pakistan are sitting in fifth position in the ICC Women's Championship points table.

England defeated the visitors

by 37 runs in the series opener in Derby on Thursday, thanks to Sophie Ecclestone's economical bowling figures of 3/26.

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

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

Besides her, wicketkeeper Amy Jones made a notable contribution with her 38-ball 37. Jones was closely followed by opener Tammy Beaumont (33), Nat Sciver-Brunt (31) and skipper Heather Knight (29).

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sophie Ecclestone picked up

three wickets while Kate Cross, Lauren Bell and Charlie Dean took two wickets apiece.

The third ODI is scheduled to be played on 29 May in Chelmsford.

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

England women ODI squad: Heather Knight (c), Alice Capsey, Amy Jones, Charlie Dean, Danielle Wyatt, Kate Cross, Lauren Bell, Lauren Filer, Maia Bouchier, Nat Sciver-Brunt, Sarah Glenn, Sophie Ecclestone and Tammy Beaumont.



## Funeral prayers

PESHAWAR: Funeral prayers for Captain Hussain Jahangir and Sergeant Shafiqullah were held at the Peshawar Garrison. The prayers were attended by the Corps Commander Peshawar, Pakistan Army officers, civil authorities, local residents, and soldiers.



Photo: ISPR

## Funeral Prayer of Pakistan Army's martyred soldiers offered in Peshawar

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The funeral prayer of Captain Hussain Jahangir Shaheed, age; 25 years, resident of District Rahim Yar Khan and Havaldar Shafiqullah Shaheed, age; 35 years, resident of District Karak, who embraced martyrdom during an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Hasan Khel area of Peshawar District was offered at Peshawar Garrison on Sunday. According to the Inter

Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release, the Corps Commander Peshawar along with the Pakistan Army officers, civil authorities, public and soldiers attended the funeral prayer.

The bodies of the martyrs have been sent to their native areas where they will be buried with full military honours. "The armed forces of Pakistan are committed to eradicating terrorism alongside the nation," the ISPR said.

## Kashmiri delegation meets with President PTI chief in Islamabad to press for end of Indian rule



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Kashmiri global diaspora, including Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Mr. Nazir Qureshi, Mohammad Ghalib, Sardar Zulfiqar Roshan Khan, Ms. Nabila Irshad met with Barrister Goher, President of PTI at PTI headquarters in Islamabad. PTI spokesman Roff Hassan Roff is also seen in the photo. They apprised Barrister Sahib about the sinister design of Modi administration. Dr. Fai said that if Pakistan would like to initiate trade relations

with India, it must be linked with the resolution of Kashmir.

Trade and state sponsored terrorism in Indian occupied Kashmir cannot go together. Dr. Fai said that PTI should issue a statement about the release of politics prisoners, including Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Masarat Aalam, Aasia Andrabi, Dr. Fayaz Akbar, Khurram Parvaiz and many others. The stand taken by PTI that no talks with India unless it revokes Article 35A is the approach that the people of Kashmir have appreciated.

# PM hopes countries to follow Norway, Spain, Ireland decision to recognize Palestine

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday appreciated Norway's decision to recognize the State of Palestine in wake of Israel's atrocious military aggression and expressed the hope that this bold and principled decision by Norway, Spain and Ireland would encourage other countries to follow suit in recognizing the statehood of Palestine.

The prime minister on his X account said that he had an



excellent telephone call with the Prime Minister of Norway Jonas Gahr Store.

"Welcomed the recent ICJ decision ordering Israel to halt its heinous actions in Gaza &

Rafah. Both Norway and Pakistan firmly believe that the UN backed two-state solution offers the best path to lasting peace in the Middle East," the prime minister further added.

The prime minister also hoped the international community pay similar attention to the plight of brave, innocent Kashmiris who were also facing brutal occupation and oppression for the past 76 years.

In a related post on X, the prime minister further said that in conversation with

the Norwegian counterpart, they also exchanged views on Pakistan-Norway ties and expressed a shared desire to further strengthen their friendly and cordial relations, especially in trade and investment.

"Grateful to Norwegian PM for complimenting the Pakistani diaspora in Norway who are a bridge between both countries.

Extended a warm invitation to PM Jonas Gahr Store to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience," he added.

## Pakistan Business and Trade Delegation arrives in Addis Ababa for business engagements

Spokesman Report

ADDIS ABABA: A 80-Member Business and Trade Delegation from the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has arrived in Addis Ababa early on Sunday to explore business, trade and investment opportunities in the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) for the five days.

Upon arrival, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula along with Industrial Park Development Corporation and senior



officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received the trade delegation and accorded warm welcome in a splendid way at the Bole International Airport.

This is the second Business and Trade Delegation organized, coordinated and facilitated by the Ethiopian Embassy

Islamabad within one and half year of its establishment in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

A large number of giant business people including industrialists and investors are the part of this Business and Trade Delegation and will stay in Addis Ababa from May 26th to May 31st, 2024 for business engage-

ments including participation in the 6th International Manufacturing Trade Fair, Ethio-Pakistan Business Forum, B2B and B2G meetings, industrial parks visits, and cultural nights.

The composition of the 2nd Business and Trade Delegation to Ethiopia is from across-sector that included agriculture

and agro-processing, manufacturing, mining, tourism, ICT, fertilizer, chemicals, construction, pharmaceutical, surgical and other.

E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the FDR Ethiopia in Pakistan, led the mobilization campaign and personally visited the Business Chambers and Trade Associations in all the major cities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan including Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Sheikhupura and others.

## Going against PTI founder can never become reality: Zulfi Bukhari

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Zulfi Bukhari on Sunday stated that going against party founder can never become a reality.

In his statement on social media platform X, Bukhari stated that, "Alhamdulillah, my family is completely safe at this time, they are under no pressure and no danger over them." Bukhari termed the Al-Qadir Trust case 'fabricated', saying that attempts were being made to convict the former prime minister in this case.

Without naming anyone, the PTI leader said that some individuals want him to 'testify' against PTI founder Imran Khan, but it will never happen. He highlighted that the former prime minister remains the only truth in the country, and those who opposed him were disgraced and 'erased' from existence.

## 'Over my body': Malik Riaz says he won't surrender to any 'pressure tactics'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Property tycoon Malik Riaz said on Sunday he would not surrender to any "pressure tactics", alleging that he had been under pressure to compromise.

"For over a year now, I've been under immense pressure to compromise, but I'll never allow anyone to use me as a pawn for political motives," he said in a social media post on X.

Last year, the Supreme Court ordered that Rs65 billion - which includes the amount remitted from the UK by Bahria Town and money deposited by Bahria Town in a SC account locally - be transferred to the Central and the Sindh governments.

The Rs35 billion to go to the federal government was remitted from abroad in 2019 after a British court lifted a freezing order against a bank account held by the Malik Riaz family. This remittance came to be known as a '£190 million case' being investigated by the National Accountability Bureau.

His name started making rounds when the £190 million case started against incarcerated former prime



minister Imran Khan.

On November 27, 2023, PTI chief's legal aide Naeem Haider Panjutha said that Khan does not deny receiving land for the Al-Qadir trust from Riaz.

"Khan accepts the fact that £190 million came in the Supreme Court account and he and his wife Bushra Bibi are trustees in Al-Qadir trust. He [Khan] says that he is not getting any benefit from all of this," Panjutha had told Aaj News.

In the long social media post, the business tycoon claimed that he had not taken any political sides or was being used by one party against the other.

While speaking about the alleged pressure, he claimed that it has been a recurring pattern of victimisation against him and his business for introducing state-of-the-art projects in Paki-

stan.

"From 1996 till today, I've been punished for contributing towards the progress of the country. Even today, in a personal capacity, I can say with utmost certainty, 'over my dead body,'" Riaz said.

Amid rumours of Bahria Town's default last year, Riaz said that such reports were a "lie" and he had apparently been chased by different people.

In a detailed press conference on January 09, 2023, the Pakistan Democratic Movement's federal cabinet announced its decision to investigate the alleged corruption of the preceding PTI-led government, which they said did not submit the recovered amount of Rs50 billion from Riaz to the national exchequer.

"The PTI government returned the confiscated money back to the person (Malik Riaz) who was fined. This is the reality," Rana Sanaulah had said.

According to the business tycoon, he was bearing financial business loss daily and being "pushed to the wall completely". He vowed to fight back.

"But will not surrender to any pressure tactics," Riaz said.

## Fast Track to Central Asia, Asia & Europe, to be Focused: Aleem Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan will visit Tajikistan where he will represent Pakistan in a Two-Day International Regional Conference under "Road to Tien Shan". In addition to Pakistan, China, India, Armenia, Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan countries are included in this international conference on May 29 and 30, while the heads of important international financial and investment institutions will also participate. Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan is participating in this conference on the invitation of Tajikistan's Transport Minister Azim Ibrahim. It is mentioned that this International Regional Conference is being held under the agreement between the Central Asian countries held on September 24, 2023.

## China, Nepal reopen traditional border trade points

News Desk

BEIJING: China and Nepal reopened their traditional border trade points on Saturday, marking a step forward in enhancing bilateral economic and trade ties.

The reopening ceremony took place in Zhentang Township on the China-Nepal border in the city of Xigaze, southwest China's Xizang Autonomous Region.

At the Zhentang trade point, 110 Chinese merchants and 47 Nepalese merchants engaged in transactions involving over 50 types of goods, including daily necessities, building materials, food and beverages, agricultural products and Nepalese handicrafts, Xinhua reported.

Trade activities also resumed at other traditional sites in counties such as Zhongba, Saga, Gyirong and Nyalam.

Xigaze is a pivotal city for China's opening-up to South Asia, bordering India, Nepal and Bhutan, and hosting five trade land ports.

## 500 named in FIR for allegedly ...

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alleged desecration of the Holy Quran on Saturday.

The FIR, registered at the Urban Area Police Station, was registered under sections 324 (attempt to commit qatl-i-amd), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 436 (mischief by fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc), 440 (mischief committed

after preparation made for causing death or hurt), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), and 149 (every member of unlawful assembly guilty of offence committed in prosecution of common object).

The complaint also invoked Section 7 (punishment for acts of terrorism) of the Anti-Terrorism Act.

It added that the size of the mob increased with time after they failed to resolve the issue through dialogue with the police. Video clips showed police personnel standing between the angry mob and private properties.

## Shah Mahmood Qureshi arrested...

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The cipher case pertains to a diplomatic document that the Federal Investigation Agency's charge sheet alleges was never returned by Imran. The PTI claimed the document contained a threat from the United States to oust Imran as prime

minister. Imran Khan and Qureshi were facing trial in cipher case in Adiala Jail from last year for 'distorting' the facts of the diplomatic cipher.

Both the PTI leaders were accused of conspiracy to misuse the contents of the cipher to fulfill nefarious purposes.