



Strong Coordination & Collective approach emphasized to deal with global warming; Romina
PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized on strong coordination and collective approach among Federal Government and all Federating Units to deal with global warming and heat wave effects in the country. (Details on Page 8)



Biden apologizes to Zelenskiy
US President Joe Biden met Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Paris on Friday, apologized for congressional delays in approving the latest US aid package, and announced a fresh \$225 million tranche on the sidelines of D-Day events. The meeting was their first face-to-face encounter since Zelenskiy visited Washington in December, when the two pressed Republicans to overcome opposition in their party to more support for Ukraine. (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

New era

BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with President of People's Republic of China H.E. Xi Jinping on Friday.



Photo: PID

China, Pakistan agree to upgrade CPEC, advance development in second phase

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese President Xi Jinping Friday held a productive meeting, reaffirming the consensus to high-quality development of China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and timely completion of major ongoing projects. The two leaders also affirmed consensus on up-gradation of the CPEC and advancing the development of the mega project in the second phase.

China, Pakistan agree to upgrade CPEC, advance development in second phase. The prime minister briefed President Xi on

Pakistan's policies for economic reform and sustained growth, industrial development, agricultural modernization and regional connectivity and the critical role played by CPEC in Pakistan's development. He asserted Pakistan's commitment to high-quality development of CPEC and to foster synergy between the development strategies of the two countries through close coordination. China, Pakistan agree to upgrade CPEC, advance development in second phase. The meeting between the two leaders was held here at the historic Great Hall of the People. The two leaders were accompanied by the Federal Ministers and senior officials.

This was the first meeting of PM Shehbaz with the President of China since assuming office in 2024. The meeting was marked by traditional warmth reflective of the ironclad friendship and close strategic ties between the two countries. The prime minister thanked President Xi Jinping for the warm and gracious welcome accorded to him and his delegation in China. He recalled the historic visit of the President Xi Jinping to Pakistan in 2015 when the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was formally operationalized marking a new chapter in the bilateral relationship. The two leaders reaffirmed the time-honored 'All-Weather

Strategic Cooperative Partnership' and expressed the resolve to further deepen cooperation across diverse domains ranging from political and security to economic, trade, and people-to-people exchanges. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments including Afghanistan, Palestine and South Asia including the serious human rights situation in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). The two sides reiterated their longstanding support on each other's issues of core interest. Commending President Xi's visionary Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and Global Development Initiative (GDI), the prime minister

underscored that as the flagship project of BRI, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) had significantly contributed to Pakistan's socio-economic development. He underlined Pakistan's commitment and full support for safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects and institutions in Pakistan. He underlined that the government's agenda for people centric, socio-economic development resonates with the concept of 'shared prosperity' embraced by China. President Xi Jinping also hosted a banquet in honour of the prime minister, where another round of discussion on different matters of mutual interests was held.

Pakistan ruling party chief, UAE envoy discuss cooperation in trade and other sectors

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Nawaz Sharif, head of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party, and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Thursday met with United Arab Emirates (UAE) Ambassador Hamad Obaid Al-Zaab in the Pakistani hill station of Murree and discussed with him cooperation in trade and several other sectors, the Punjab CM office said.

The UAE is Pakistan's third-largest trading partner, after China and the United States as well as home to more than a million Pakistani expatriates and the second-largest source of remittances to Pakistan, after Saudi Arabia.

Policy-makers in the South Asian country consider the Gulf state an optimal export destination due to its geographical proximity, which minimizes transportation and freight costs while facilitating commercial transactions.

During the meeting, the two sides shared their views on the promotion of bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries, according to the Punjab CM office.

"Discussions were held on increasing cooperation in various fields, including agricultural research, technology and trade," the Chief Minister's office said in a statement, adding the two sides agreed to cooperate in increasing agricultural productivity and promoting food security.

"They reviewed possibilities in livestock development and dairy farming,



besides considering investment promotion in pharmaceutical and other industrial sectors."

Sharif and the Punjab CM also appreciated the UAE's announcement of \$10 billion investment in the South Asian country and thanked the Gulf nation for the assistance.

UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan made the announcement during a meeting with Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif last month, according to the Pakistani PM's Office.

Sharif met the UAE president in Abu Dhabi on May 23 during a day-long trip to the Gulf country where he arrived with a high-level delegation, amid a concerted push by Pakistan to seek foreign investment as it navigates a challenging path to economic recovery.

The UAE is one of Pakistan's closest allies and has frequently bailed out the South Asian country, joining Saudi Arabia and China in rolling over billions of dollars of loans to Pakistan last year to help it clinch a last-gasp deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and avoid a sovereign debt default.

Pakistan calls for India's accountability over 7,000 custodial deaths in IIOJK

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Friday reiterated its call for India to be held accountable for its unabated human rights abuses in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) where over 7,000 Kashmiris had so far died in the custody of Indian forces during the last three decades.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, highlighted the reported death of a Kashmiri civilian at a police station in IIOJK's Pulwama district.

"This is not the first incident of its kind as over the last three decades the number of custodial deaths in IIOJK has exceeded 7,000. The perpetrators of these crimes should be held accountable," she said reaffirming Pakistan's continuous political, diplomatic and moral support to Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions.

Highlighting Pakistan's election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for the term 2025-2026 with the overwhelming support of 182 members of the UN General Assembly, she thanked the members, particularly Asia Pacific Group for their confidence.

She told the media that at the Council, Pakistan would play its role in the peaceful resolution of disputes, opposing the resort to unilateral force, combating terrorism



in all forms and manifestations, supporting UN peacekeeping efforts, resolution for regional and international crises, and promoting democracy, transparency, and accountability.

Spokesperson Baloch strongly condemned the horrific bombing of Israeli forces on the UN-run school sheltering Palestinian refugees that led to multiple deaths of mostly women and children.

"This attack is another crime in a series of attacks against civilians including an IDP Camp last week that resulted in the deaths of 45 Palestinians. The deliberate targeting of civilian population and facilities is a grave violation of international law and constitutes war crimes," she added.

Prince Rahim Aga Khan awarded Pakistan's highest civilian honour



Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

ISLAMABAD: The prestigious accolade was presented during a formal ceremony held at the Presidential Palace in Islamabad, attended by numerous prominent figures and dignitaries.

President Asif Ali Zardari conferring the award of Nishan-i-Pakistan upon Prince Rahim Aga Khan in recognition of his services for Pakistan, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

The honour was bestowed upon Prince Rahim for his visionary leadership in pioneering transformative initiatives across various sectors in Pakistan. Through the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), he has played a crucial role in enhancing commercial banking, microfinance, insurance, sustainable tourism, and renewable energy landscapes. His efforts have advanced economic development and promoted environmental stewardship by establishing policies and practices to combat climate change.

The Aga Khan family has played a critical role in shaping the destiny of the Muslims of India. It was with the untiring efforts of Aga Khan III that the

Muslims of India gained a voice in 1906, with the founding of the All India Muslim League, of which Aga Khan III was the first president.

The part played by the Aga Khan family, the struggle and creation of Pakistan as a great friend of the Quaid-e-Azam and the Muslims of the subcontinent has been honored by history. Today, the Aga Khan family continues to work for the welfare of the people of Pakistan in the same selfless and altruistic spirit.

Following the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Prince Rahim Aga Khan, Through his many leadership roles within the Aga Khan development network has for more than a quarter of a century Dedicated his untiring efforts to improving the quality of life of the people of the resource constrained regions of Asia and Africa His personal contributions in the initiatives being undertaken in the fields of the economic health education and cultural well being of the poor and marginalized communities Respond to the evolving and contemporary needs.

This award recognizes Prince Rahim Aga Khan's enduring impact on Pakistan's socio-economic fabric.

FIA interrogates ex-PM Khan for an hour over 'anti-state' post

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency's team interrogated former prime minister Imran Khan in connection with posting "anti-state" social media posts on his X account.

Sources told that Khan appeared before the FIA's Cyber Crime team with his lawyers. They asked him 16 questions and also showed him the controversial video.

The case is related to a May 26 post on Khan's account in which he shared a video and urged people to study the Hamoodur Rahman Commission report. The video showed former Bangladesh president

Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rehman.

In reaction, the FIA Cyber Crime Wing launched an investigation into the controversial post sought permission from the judicial magistrate to interrogate the Adiala Jail inmate for sharing "anti-state activities" and "anti-state narratives" on social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter.

The institution has claimed the content was allegedly shared from Khan's profile.

Khan is serving out his sentences in the cypher and the iddat cases at the Punjab's jail. On May 30, he appeared through a video link in the Supreme Court in the National Accountability Bureau law amendment case.

Judicial Commission recommends three names for elevation to SC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Judicial Commission of Pakistan (JCP) has recommended three judges for appointment to the Supreme Court, following a meeting chaired by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa.

The commission considered nine candidates for the three vacant positions on the apex court. These included six judges from the Lahore High Court, including Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed, and three judges from the Sindh High

Court, including Chief Justice Aqil Abbasi.

The JCP ultimately recommended the following three judges for appointment, Chief Justice Lahore High Court Malik Shahzad Ahmed, Chief Justice Sindh High Court Aqil Abbasi and Lahore High Court's Justice Shahid Bilal.

The commission has forwarded the recommendations to the Parliamentary Committee for final approval.

Currently, 14 out of 17 Supreme Court judges are serving, leaving three vacancies.

Kashmir rally: PPP, Muslim Conference have same stand on Kashmir: Ex-PM

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Under the auspices of the Muslim Conference, Kashmir Banega Pakistan rally Rapid contacts are being made regarding full participation in the Pakistan Rally. Former Prime Minister Sardar Yaqoob Khan declared full support and assured full participation in the rally.

Earlier ex Prime Minister and President Pakistan Istahkame Party Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan assured and support of his Party for full participation in Kashmir Banega Pakistan rally. Yesterday, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan met the leader of Pakistan People's Party and former President and Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Yaqoob Khan.

In the meeting, Sardar Yaqub Khan said that PPP and Muslim Conference have the same position regard-



ing the issue of Kashmir. On June 13, under the auspices of Muslim Conference, Kashmir will be created Pakistan is organizing a rally that

Pakistan People's Party and Muslim Conference have the same stand on the issue of Kashmir. The Kashmiri people stand with Pakistan in the

support they are getting. All people should join this rally.

A good message will be sent from the rally. The public is requested to participate in this rally, God willing, I myself will participate in this rally. President Muslim Conference said that we are grateful to Sardar Yaqoob Khan who has assured participation by supporting the Kashmir Banega Pakistan Rally.

The stability of the Pakistan Rally in the Kashmir Banega Pakistan Rally to be held on June 13 in Poonch Division. After the chairman of Sardar Tanvir Alias Khan, former Prime Minister Sardar Yaqub Khan, the leader of the People's Party, has also announced his support.

On June 13, the people of Poonch came out of their homes and made the rally a success. In the context of the current situation, Kashmir will become Pakistan.

Nishtar Medical University director discusses ways to further expand research in Multan



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Mehnaaz Khakwani presided over the meeting of Nishtar Medical University Office of Research Innovation and Commercialization (ORC) held in the Committee Room VC Office in which Registrar Nishtar Medical University Professor Dr. Ghulam Abbas, Director ORK Professor Dr. Kamran Siddiqui, Additional Director ORK Associate Professor Dr. Muzaffar Aziz, Research Associate Nishtar Medical University Dr. Muhammad Sajjad Masood, Assistant Professor Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba Manager ICT ORK and Manager Research Operations ORK Sohail Safdar participated. The director of ORC Professor Dr. Kamran Siddiqui and Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba briefed Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University about the schedule of conducting various research activities on behalf of the ORC department and the challenges faced by the department for the promotion of research. In the meeting, various proposals regarding further expansion of the research trend in Nishtar Medical University were discussed in detail. Besides, the proposal of award money was also considered to encourage faculty members and students doing quality research so that they can contribute to the development of the institution and society through better research works in future. Professor Dr. Mehnaaz Khakwani, Vice Chancellor of Nishtar Medical University emphasized the need for mutual cooperation between other universities and other institutions to promote research culture and create career opportunities for young students.

Secretary Health Punjab Ali Jan Khan visits Children's Complex Hospital Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Secretary Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Punjab Ali Jan Khan along with his team made a detailed visit to the Children's Hospital Multan and also reviewed the ongoing construction work in the Children's Hospital.

Secretary Ali Jan along with Dean Children's Complex Professor Dr. Muhammad Kashif Chishti and MS Dr. Kamran Asif reviewed the ongoing construction work in Child Life Children's Emergency, Medical Unit 1, OPD Department and Old Block Children's Hospital. Give instructions to the higher officials to complete all the work as soon as possible. Deputy Commissioner Multan Wasim Hamid Sindhu was also present on this occasion.

The secretary visited various wards of the Children's Hospital and visited the patients and also inquired from the relatives of the sick children about the medical facilities and availability of medicines provided in the hospital.

Muzaffarabad: Resettlement of Jammu and Kashmir' refugees in need of urgent action

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD:work on the construction project of 750 houses at the cost of 3 billion rupees could not be started In Chehla Bandi and other settlements, the refugees are bearing the brunt of the weather for which the rulers of Azad Kashmir are responsible.

The government has also allocated space for the construction of houses, but the plots have not been demarcated yet, Raja Irshad, Mir Altaf Hussain.

We are grateful to the Government of Pakistan and related institutions for providing money for the resettlement of refugees, Raja Basharat, Mehboob Butt. Refugees of Jammu and Kashmir 1989 and later have demanded the government of Azad Kashmir to start work on the project of immediate resettlement of the refugees, so that the work on the project can start, the Federal Minister of Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam also clarified in PC Hotel and said that he has strictly instructed to start the project soon, the continuous silence from the government of Azad Kashmir is a question mark. These views were expressed by the refugees of Jammu and Kashmir, Numberdar Irshad, Mir Altaf Hussain, Mehboob Butt, Raja Aslam, Raja Basharat Chaudhry Shafi, Abdul Ahad Lone, Raja Dilshad, Raja Arif, Qazi Iftikhar, Chaudhry Qaiser, Chaudhry Sharif Din and others, while talking to journalists here in Muzaffarabad. He said that we are grateful to the government of Pakistan and related institutions that they have provided money for the resettlement of refugees. Initially, 750 houses were to be built with this money. But unfortunately it has not been implemented, as this is the first project of its kind where the house owner has to build his own house, perhaps that is why it is seen as cheap because of the poor construction work due to the contracting system in Thotha Satellite Town. The situation is in front of everyone, he said that if the owner builds his own house, then a good house can be built according to the map.

Indian government wants to keep Kashmir pot boiling to push forward its divisive agenda: Shabir Ahmed Shah

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior Hurriyat leader and chairman Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) Shabir Ahmed Shah has strongly condemned the continued bloodbath of innocent Kashmiri youth at the hands of Indian troops.

In his message from Tihar jail, Shah, while referring to the martyrdom of two Kashmiri youth in Pulwama district, said that the targeted killing of educated youth was part of the Indian government's policy to keep the situation boiling.

"It seems that the BJP government wants to keep the Kashmir pot boiling

o that it could conveniently push forward its nationalist agenda", Shah said, adding that the incumbent government's sledgehammer policy against Kashmiris has pushed the region into a quagmire of uncertainty.

The kind of a policy, he said, suits to none but the ruling party that has thrived on falsehood and communal frenzy.

Shah said that it was no longer a secret that the Indian occupation forces were killing innocent civilians in stage managed encounters and then label them as foreign terrorists.

Protest

KARACHI: Residents of Patail Para hold a protest against prolong electricity load shedding during the extreme hot weather of summer season, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

KPK Govt to provide funds to Galiyat Development Authority for increasing the beauty of Galiyat

Sohail Abbasi

ABBOTTABAD: To increase the beauty of tourist facilities in Galiyat, tenders for development schemes with funds worth crores of rupees are ongoing. The best entertainment facilities will be available to them. The work on these development projects will be started soon. These projects will be completed in a few months. For the start of these projects, Galiyat Development Authority has released funds on the instructions of the provincial government. DG Galiyat Shah Rukh Khan, has issued tenders to start the development works soon. While talking to the journalists, Shah Rukh Khan said that these development schemes will bring new development to Galiyat. Tourists



will be provided with modern facilities. The provision of parking facilities will be ensured, he said that we will soon start the projects to provide employment facilities to the residents of Galiyat, new tourist spots will also be settled in Galiyat soon, construction of the link road of Galiyat. 20 crores funds will be released for the construction of these roads will bring new tourist spots where it was not possible to reach the tourists due to the dilapidated condition of the roads. Provision of free recreational facilities to the tourists coming to Galiyat is a manifesto. Efforts are being made to complete construction and development projects in Galiyat as soon as possible according to the instructions of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial government.

Women Journalists Association Faisalabad need role models for women: FUJ

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The establishment of Women Journalists Association in the third largest city of the country was the need of the hour for the struggling women reporters to be role models for the society. FUJ Dastur stands with journalist sisters and daughters to solve the problems of women journalists. These views were expressed by Faisalabad Union of Journalists Dastur President Syed Zikrullah Hosni while talking to a delegation of women journalists affiliated to the Women Journalists Association during a meeting held in their honor at the FUJ Dastur Secretariat in Kachhari Bazar. Senior leader FUJ Dastur

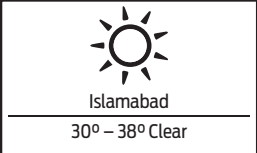


Sajjad Haider Manna, General Secretary Shahroz Ibad, Vice President Muhammad Asghar Manj, Secretary Information Malik Jameel Siraj, Finance Secretary Fathullah, Joint Secretary Mian Abid Hussain and Assistant Secretary PFJ Syed

Naseem Shah were also present on this occasion. Earlier, the delegation of Women Journalists Association Faisalabad was given a warm traditional welcome on their arrival at the FUJ Constitution Secretariat and all the women jour-

nalists were garlanded. The delegation led by President Women Journalists Association Marwah Antar included General Secretary Jawaria Khan, Kiran Shahzadi, Rabab Cheema, Rida Sindhu. President of Women Journalists Association Marwah Antar said that the organization of women journalists has been welcomed by every section of the journalism city of Faisalabad. We are grateful to him for his full support of FUJ Dastur. On this occasion, while stressing mutual agreement and unity between FUJ constitution and women journalists, Sajjad Haider Manna said that Faisalabad women journalists united on one platform is commendable. He assured women journal-

ists of his full support. delivered General Secretary Shahroz Ibad said that we are united to solve the problems of our members as well as all workers journalists. Information Secretary Malik Jameel Siraj said that the establishment of Women Journalists Association is of historical importance. This association will make Faisalabad famous throughout the country due to its work. Senior Journalist and Finance Secretary Fathullah briefed the women journalists in detail about unionization issues. Finally, Assistant Secretary PFUJ Syed Naseem Shah thanked the women journalists for coming to the FUJ Constitution Secretariat and assured them of full cooperation.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:14 am
Zohr	12:07 pm
Asr	5:06 pm
Maghrib	7:17 pm
Isha	8:59 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Rai Muhammad Akbar takes helm at Directorate of Workers Education



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rai Muhammad Akbar has been appointed as the Director General of the Directorate of Workers Education following the approval of the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development issued a notification confirming his new role.

Rai Akbar, who previously served as Director, has over twenty years of experience in worker education. Last year, he completed the mandatory senior management training course at the National Institute of Management.

In an interview, Rai Akbar emphasized the importance of workers to the economy, highlighting the need for their education and training. He pointed out that equipping workers, especially those going abroad, with proper training and awareness is crucial for enhancing productivity and earning better foreign exchange for the country.

"Occupational health and safety awareness for domestic workers is the top priority of the government," said Rai Akbar. "A healthy and accident-free worker can perform better, and the Government of Pakistan is working on legislation to support this."

Inflation-stricken masses terrified of upcoming budget

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Friday that people reeling under inflation for years are afraid of the coming budget.

He added that the business community is experiencing sleepless nights because of the expected measures being adopted under pressure from the IMF.

Talking to the business community, Shahid Rasheed Butt said that the public is not expected to get any relief in the budget, and they are bracing for a huge increase in inflation.

He said that no budget in Pakistan has ever brought good news to the

people. Still, the upcoming budget will be very painful.

He added that the budget will make electricity, gas, medicines, and many other necessities of life more expensive, which will make people worse off.

The business leader said that Pakistani people are still buying electricity and gas at very high costs compared to neighbouring countries, and the burden on them will be further increased after the budget.

The masses will pay the price of politicians' inefficiency and mismanagement, while no burden will be placed on the elite; rather, efforts will be made to give them all possible relief.

Mr. Butt said that IMF has been asking Pakistan to fix the direction of



the economy, end the subsidy culture, make electricity and gas more expensive and increase taxes.

The IMF's demands that hurt the masses will be strictly implemented,

but those demands that burden the elites will not be implemented in the budget.

The IMF is also demanding the government cut its expenditures, end undue incentives, and sell failed state-owned companies, but nothing will be done to save the elite from the burden.

He noted that the government will continue to claim reforms in electricity and other important sectors as before. Still, the result will be the same as the election promises of two ruling political parties, who promised 200 and 300 units of free electricity to the people.

One of the most important goals of government policy should be to address inequalities in the distribution of income and to try to improve

the welfare of the poor.

Government policies must change the distribution of income and actually help the poor. Establishing the incidence of taxes is important because who actually bears the burden of taxes is generally quite different from those legally liable to make payment to the tax authorities.

Even those government expenditures intended to benefit low-income households may not do so. The impact of government budgets on the distribution of income and the status of the poor is not immediate.

Shahid Rasheed Butt noted that while the cost of living is high, lower-income families see no light at the end of the tunnel.

Golden weather

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of full blooming seasonal flowers Laburnum tree (Amaltas) on a green belt alongside a road in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistani engineers participate in Huaneng Craftsman Cup 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Two professionals working at Sahiwal Power Plant have participated in the prestigious "Huaneng Craftsman Cup 2024" event held in China that records another milestone of success for Pakistani engineers.

According to the details, Fahad Ahmed and Sohail Abbas, from the 2x660MW Sahiwal Power Plant were invited by the Huaneng Group Co. Ltd as it was the first time that international contestants were invited to participate, said a press release.

It was told by the management that the presence of Fahad and Sohail at this event drew considerable attention to Sahiwal Power Plant, highlighting the participants' technical prowess and earning admiration from all attendees. Their participation is a testament to the decade-long collaboration between China and Pakistan, which has paved the way for Pakistani engineers to compete alongside their Chinese counterparts.

This achievement underscores the technical abilities of Pakistani engineers and



strengthens the bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two nations. By promoting and enhancing the skills of its engineers, Huaneng Shandong Ruyi (Pakistan) Energy (Private) Limited (HSRE), the owner of Sahiwal Power Plant, is paving the way for a brighter future.

This initiative not only promotes localization management but also exemplifies the fruitful collaboration

between China and Pakistan, fostering a spirit of mutual growth and development.

The details also included that the latest batch of students from Huaneng Pakistan Vocational & Technical College successfully completed their vocational training programs. These programs have equipped local youth with practical employment skills in areas such as computer applications, electrical technician skills, and welding.

The completion of Sahiwal Power Plant in 2017 has significantly promoted Pakistan's economy.

"I am very happy to have had the opportunity to participate in the training course at Sahiwal Power Plant. Not only have I learned valuable skills, but I have also formed friendships with like-minded people and broadened my horizons," said Aqil, a recent graduate of the program.

The completion of Sahiwal Power Plant in 2017 has significantly promoted Pakistan's economy.

Bilateral ties and economic collaboration between Pak-China



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Prime Minister is on a historical visit to China, focused on enhancing the robust relationship between the two nations. Accompanied by a high-level delegation, the Prime Minister participated in the Shenzhen Pak-China Business Conference engaging with leading business figures to foster economic and industrial cooperation. One of the major highlights was the presentation by newly appointed Secretary for Maritime Affairs, Mr. Zafar Ali Shah, on the Gwadar Free Economic Zone. Mr. Shah highlighted the zone's immense investment potential, emphasizing its strategic advantages for Chinese investors. He further highlighted Gwadar's potential as a leading transshipment hub, enhanced maritime infrastructure, and incentives for businesses. "The Gwadar Free Economic Zone offers unique opportunities for Chinese investors," Mr. Shah stated. Its strategic location, modern port facilities, and supportive regulatory environment make it an ideal investment destination. Key points/areas for Chinese investment in Gwadar include, advanced maritime infrastructure, modern ports and logistics facilities designed to handle high-volume transshipment. Furthermore its proximity to key shipping routes and markets in the Middle East, Africa, and Central Asia make it a key strategic location in the region. Zafar Ali further discussed the incentives for Investors including streamlined customs procedures, and robust legal protections.

AIOU's Academic Council approves new degree programs

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A joint meeting of 67th Academic Council and 51st Academic Planning and Development/Research and Educational Technology Committee (APD/RET) of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) was held yesterday. Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood chaired the meeting. Registrar, Raja Umer Younis organized the meeting. Council approved to introduce news programs including BS programs, PGD programs, certificate and short courses. The department heads, principal officers, and external members attended the meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were unanimously approved during the council meeting. The council also approved changes in the title and content of several courses offered by the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies and Faculty of Sciences. The meeting also approved to launch various courses, including BS in Political Science, International Relations, Data Science, Artificial Intelligence and Environmental Studies as well as a short course of IELTS and PGD in Clinical Nutrition. Agenda items of services departments including Examination Department, Directorate of Regional Services, and Directorate of Academic Planning and Course Production were also approved.

Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood directed the faculty members and deans to keep in mind the policy of the University and Higher Education Commission in designing the courses and preparing the teaching materials. While introducing the new members, he assured to make all possible efforts for better and quality education. The Supreme Body of the University (Executive Council) will approve these decisions in the next meeting.

The Arts Council of Pakistan Honors Azhar Hussain with Lifetime Achievement Award



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Arts Council of Pakistan proudly announces the conferment of the Lifetime Achievement Award on the legendary musician, director, composer, and organizer, Mr. Azhar Hussain. This esteemed accolade was presented in recognition of Mr. Hussain's outstanding contributions to the world of music and his significant impact on the cultural heritage of Pakistan.

In a grand ceremony the notable personalities including Bushra Ansari, Anu Kapoor (via video link from India), Qasim Azhar, Sajjad Ali, Ustad Ghulam Ali Khan, Humaira Arshad, M. Arshad, Tina Sani, Naeem Abbas Rufi, Iqbal Latif, Huma Sheikh, and Samina Aslam, all of whom paid tribute to Mr. Hussain and praised his legendary work.

During the ceremony, Mr. Azhar Hussain expressed his heartfelt gratitude and pledged to continue his involvement in mentoring the

younger generation. "Through the platform of the Arts Council, I promise to be available wherever the organization invites me to mentor the young generation," Mr. Hussain stated. He added, "My country has given me love, fame, affection, and most importantly, respect worldwide. I am thankful to my country & the Arts Council."

His son, Asim Azhar, shared his pride, saying, "I feel very proud today that my father is being honored with the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award."

On this occasion the President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmed Shah said, "the Arts Council is honored to celebrate Mr. Azhar Hussain's lifetime of achievements, which have not only enriched the Pakistani film industry but also left an indelible mark on the global music scene.

Azhar Bhai has immensely enriched the

Pakistani film industry, and his legacy continues through his younger brother North America based composer, director, organizer & the CEO of Avengers Production Nadeem Ali & Azhar bhai's sons Asim Azhar, a famous young singer, and Qasim Azhar, a famous composer and sound engineer. Their contributions continue to make Pakistan proud," said Naeem Abbas Rufi.

Famous Indian actor Anu Kapoor, speaking via video link, expressed his admiration for Mr. Hussain, stating, "It is an honour for me that I worked with Azhar Bhai. I can never forget the time that I spent with him."

Biography & Career Highlights:

Born into a musical dynasty in Lahore, Mr. Hussain's prodigious talent shone from his early days. His education at Joan McDonald High School culminated in distinction in 1968.

Under the tutelage of Mrs. Harding, his



musical prowess blossomed. Completing his highest degree at Government College University Lahore, Mr. Hussain continued to refine his skills. At 16, his dedication to piano deepened, forming the Jazz Band "AJs," gaining national acclaim. Representing Pakistani culture globally, he earned admiration from legendary figures.

In film, his collaborations showcased versatility. Contributions extended to charitable endeavours, benefiting noble causes.

Mr. Hussain's compositions, including timeless classics like "Yeh Watan Tumhara Hay," resonate with audiences, a testament to his enduring impact.

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Pak Army's Explicit Position on National Matters - III

Such propaganda erodes public trust in the institution entrusted with safeguarding national security. By spreading falsehoods and nurturing distrust, it weakens the connection between the Army and the civilian population, hindering efforts to effectively address security challenges. Malicious propaganda has the potential to destabilize the nation by fueling social unrest, heightening ethnic or religious tensions, and undermining the rule of law. Internal divisions diminish the country's resilience against external threats and create vulnerabilities that adversaries may exploit.

False narratives and smear campaigns can also undermine morale and unity within the military ranks, compromising operational readiness and effectiveness. Doubt and mistrust among soldiers can weaken unit cohesion, impede decision-making, and jeopardize mission success.

Recently, a group in Britain plotting against Pakistan's armed forces faced failure despite support from "RAW." Anti-Pakistani elements have conspired to discredit the country's armed forces, with Adil Raja, a fugitive and convicted Pakistan Army officer, playing a central role in executing this scheme. India's intelligence agency, "RAW," is also implicated in this plot. Shayan Ali, a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf activist in Britain, is also involved in this group, with Adil Raja's alleged contact in RAW

being Rohit Sharma. Audio recordings surfaced on the dark web, revealing that Adil Raja received instructions and funding from the Indian agency "RAW" to incite political and social unrest in Pakistan. The Pakistani government should seek the extradition of Pakistani citizens residing in Britain involved in this scheme. This was not just an attack on the armed forces but a coordinated effort to undermine Pakistan's stability. To counter such conspiracies originating from Britain, these individuals should be prosecuted in Pakistani courts for their betrayal. Every Pakistani, alongside the Pakistani forces, bears the responsibility to ensure that those who betray the nation and jeopardize its integrity are held accountable. It's imperative to use all available means to attain justice.

On a different note, a post credited to Shabar Zaidi raised questions about the activities of forty thousand troops during times of peace. However, it was a deliberate misinterpretation of Zaidi's remarks, taken out of context. Zaidi's actual proposal pertained to the implementation of geo-fencing for traders, aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economy, an idea endorsed by the Pakistan Army. To find Shabar Zaidi's statement within its original context, the post can be seen on X and Zaidi's podcast.

Regrettably, in Pakistan, propaganda against the nation and its armed forces frequently cloaks itself under the guise of freedom of expression. In an age of digital interconnectedness and global information dissemination, discerning between genuine freedom of expression and detrimental propaganda has become increasingly challenging. While freedom of expression stands as a crucial human right essential for the functioning of democratic societies, negative propaganda poses a significant threat to truth, trust, and societal cohesion. Freedom of expression forms the cornerstone of democracy, entrenched in international human rights treaties and upheld as a fundamental liberty in democratic nations. It encompasses the right to seek, receive, and share information and ideas through any medium without hindrance or censorship. Essentially, freedom of expression empowers individuals to express diverse viewpoints, challenge authority, and engage in public discourse without fear of reprisal or persecution.

In contrast, negative propaganda entails the deliberate dissemination of false or misleading information with the intent to deceive, manipulate, or incite harm. Unlike legitimate forms of dissent or critique, negative propaganda seeks to erode trust in institutions, exacerbate

societal rifts, and undermine democratic values. It often exploits vulnerabilities in the information landscape, such as social media algorithms and echo chambers, to amplify its reach and impact. Whereas freedom of expression is rooted in the pursuit of truth, the exchange of ideas, and the advancement of knowledge, negative propaganda is propelled by hidden agendas like advancing political motives, fomenting violence, or sowing discord for ideological purposes. It is crucial to differentiate between genuine expressions of opinion and the deliberate dissemination of falsehoods or misinformation. While freedom of expression encompasses a wide array of viewpoints, including contentious or unpopular ones, it is imperative to prioritize truth and accuracy. Negative propaganda relies on falsehoods, distortion, and manipulation, often sacrificing truth and accuracy to achieve its objectives. Responsible discourse necessitates a commitment to fact-checking, verification, and evidence-based reasoning. Although freedom of expression fosters informed public discourse and democratic exchange, negative propaganda can result in diminished trust in institutions, societal division, and the encouragement of violence or prejudice. It's crucial to recognize the potential damage inflicted by propaganda and to take measures to alleviate its effects while safeguarding the right to free speech.

To be continued

New horizons for Pakistan-China cooperation

The year 2024 marks the start of a soaring UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) industry, heralding new frontiers for Pakistan-China cooperation," Sun Yang, Vice President of Shenzhen UAV Industry Association said at the Pakistan China Business Forum held in Shenzhen.

In response to agricultural disruptions caused by climate change, Pakistan and China are bolstering cooperation in applying UAVs to mitigate impacts on agricultural sector.

Ghulam Qadir, Commercial Counsellor of the Pakistani Embassy in China, has revealed a plan to invite 50 to 60 Chinese technology companies including those in the UAV and AI sectors, to visit Pakistan next month..

According to Dong, CEO of Baina Zhihang, a UAV startup in Shenzhen, South Asia and South America are the most promising markets for low-altitude economic development and cooperation.

"The vast rice paddies in South Asian countries provide boundless opportunities for UAV usage, from weed control to fertilizer and pesticide distribution," he said, adding that close people-to-people connections and exchanges also facilitate communication and technical training.

"As an emerging industry, drone-related laws and regulations are often similar among various Asian countries, laying the foundation for international cooperation," Dong told China Economic Net (CEN).

In China, the "low-altitude economy" represented by UAVs has been termed as a strategic emerging industry and a new growth engine. "Low-altitude" refers to an airspace range below 1000 meters vertically, extending as needed to not more than 3000 meters.

Last year, China's civilian drone industry registered a year-on-year increase of 32%. It is forecast the market size of China's low-altitude economy is expected to reach RMB 1.5 trillion by 2025 and RMB 3.5 trillion by 2035.

In Shenzhen, a special economic zone in southern China, consumption-level UAVs take up 70% of the global market, and the figure for industry-level usage is around 50%. Last year, over 400,000 trips were concluded successfully here by the UAV fleet of Meituan alone, which is China's top retail technology company.

"Efforts are being made within the industry to make safe, stable UAVs with passengers on board," Sun Yang said. By then, commuting by air would become a reality.

Sun Yang pointed out that, to fully leverage this cutting-edge technology, Pakistan requires the establishment of physical infrastructure, communication and sensing networks, digital operations, as well as regulatory and service mechanism.

"Besides farmlands, more application scenarios can be explored, such as package delivery, mid-air sightseeing, first aid, urban patrol," he said.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

'REDLINE'



Courtesy China Daily

Harnessing Soft Power for Human Security in Central Asia - II

Aiman Abbasi

Promoting Human Rights and Good Governance: Creating Fair Societies

Supporting local NGOs that advocate for human rights can make Central Asian societies more inclusive and fair. Training government officials in good governance practices can lead to more transparent and effective administrations. When people trust their governments and feel their rights are protected, societies become more stable and prosperous.

For instance, programs that train public officials in anti-corruption measures can significantly improve governance. Transparent and accountable governance attracts foreign investment and boosts public confidence. Additionally, promoting gender equality and protecting minority rights can create a more harmonious and equitable society.

Health Initiatives: Promoting Well-being

During health crises, soft power can save lives. Imagine international medical teams working alongside local doctors in Uzbekistan during an epidemic. This collaboration not only provides immediate relief but also leaves a lasting impact by improving local healthcare systems. Health education campaigns can prevent diseases and promote healthier lifestyles, ensuring long-term benefits for communities.

For example, partnering with international health organizations to combat diseases like tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS can strengthen healthcare infrastructure and improve public health. Health education programs can teach communities about hygiene and disease preven-

tion, reducing the incidence of preventable diseases.

Real-World Impact: Stories of Change
 Consider the story of a Kazakh student who studied engineering in Japan. Upon returning home, they implemented new technologies that improved local agriculture, boosting food security and the economy. Or think about how international media coverage of Kyrgyzstan's stunning landscapes could increase tourism, providing jobs and stimulating economic growth.

Another example is the collaboration between Turkmenistan and international organizations to preserve the ancient city of Merv, a UNESCO World Heritage site. This project not only attracts tourists but also fosters a sense of pride and cultural heritage among locals.

Conclusion: A Path to Prosperity

By harnessing soft power, Central Asia can create a more secure, stable, and prosperous future for its people. It's about building bridges, fostering mutual respect, and working together to solve common challenges. The region's rich cultural heritage and strategic position offer a unique opportunity to influence global perceptions and attract the support needed to enhance human security.

Through education, media, diplomacy, economic development, human rights, and health initiatives, Central Asia can achieve lasting positive change. The key is to focus on sustainable and inclusive development, ensuring that all segments of society benefit from these efforts. By promoting mutual understanding and cooperation, Central Asia can build a brighter future for its people and contribute to global peace and stability.

Practical Steps Forward

To put these ideas into action, Central Asian countries can start by:

- Expanding Exchange Programs: Increase the number of scholarships and exchange programs with countries known for their expertise in key areas like technology, medicine, and environmental science.
- Promoting Tourism: Invest in marketing campaigns that highlight the regions unique cultural and natural attractions to attract more tourists.

- Strengthening Diplomatic Ties: Engage in regional dialogues to address shared challenges like water management and climate change, promoting peaceful cooperation.

- Attracting Foreign Investment: Create favorable conditions for foreign investors by improving governance and reducing bureaucratic hurdles.
- Supporting Local NGOs: Provide funding and resources to local organizations that advocate for human rights and social justice.

- Enhancing Healthcare Systems: Partner with international health organizations to improve healthcare infrastructure and provide training for local healthcare professionals.

By taking these steps, Central Asia can leverage its soft power to build a more secure, prosperous, and inclusive future. The journey may be challenging, but the potential rewards are immense. With a strategic focus on education, diplomacy, and development, Central Asia can emerge as a beacon of stability and growth in a rapidly changing world.

Writer is Final year student of International relations in University: Fatima Jinnah Women University, Rawalpindi

Advancements in AI in Pakistan

Mahnoor Hasan Shigri

Artificial intelligence is the reenactment of human insight processes by machines, particularly PC frameworks. AI systems employ the technique of feeding huge amounts of labelled training data, digesting the data to look for the correlations and patterns, and thereafter using the patterns to make predictions about the future states. The latest 20 years have been given a name by "artificial intelligence" (AI) which is humanized and hence given a chance to explore its tremendous potential. The quickly growing population of generative AI can be very useful in educational and marketing areas as well as product design.

The Vision 2025 manifested a few initiatives the Pakistani government worked on for the period of recent years to fulfil the country's growing call for technical advancement. Pakistan has set up some artificial intelligence centers like the Sino-Pak Place for Artificial Intelligence (SPCAI) and the National Center for Artificial Intelligence (NCAI). Obviously, IT has not remained a back mole and it is now the main and most rapidly growing sector of Pakistan as far as 2024 is concerned. Thus, purpose of human practice of thinking will be almost gone to Pakistan currently. Pakistan is offering numerous jobs and cognitive artificial intelligence programs for its youth in universities etc.

"The Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a human intelligence augmentor; it does not replace but enhances human puzzle-solving abilities and creativity." Besides, although AI has developed, Pakistan also has drawbacks. AI algorithms are trained and operate efficiently with huge amount of data. One of the main hindrances in the development of the digital economy is the poor quality of data infrastructure. Therefore, it is being bettered to improve data collection and storage infrastructure.

This problem can be solved by the universities and training centers which are presenting AI-focused software and courses that will help to collect a huge number of talented specialists of AI. It also enables

doctors to detect diseases, recognize medical images, and estimate patient tendencies. The same situation is also seen in Pakistan which is gradually getting better with the help of AI. Artificial intelligence solutions can look soil conditions closely, and optimize crops yield as well as predict weather patterns. Inventions make it possible for even the most inexperienced farmers to make informed decisions in their day-to-day activities, manage pests and diseases, and minimize the number of resources wasted.

AI algorithms are now being applied to detect scams, assess risks, and create personalized customer experiences. Intelligent tutoring systems are beginning to come into being to help students learning to their individual needs. Personalization of the feedback and suggestions is one of the main benefits that students can obtain from virtual tutoring through technology.

The use of virtual reality technologies in classrooms is becoming a trend to create the most immersive learning environments. For managers, fields like facial recognition systems are employed, speech synthesis and video analytics apparatuses to administer for safety in public areas and subsequently law enforcement may arrest culprits through the systems.

The future of AI in Pakistan is full of promising perspectives. The Pakistan government patrols the AI through its research and development, collaborates with international organizations, and invests capital in AI technologies by the private sector, which paves the way for progress even further. In this regard, Pakistan must continue to engage in AI-related developments to be where the future of the artificially intelligent world is headed. The further development of research, development, and education, which are the key elements in understanding of AI, will be the major factor in the future of AI and its contribution in the progress of the society. In conclusion, there is a need to steer to the next phase with determination to tackle the difficulties, nourish technological workforce, and establish ethical and responsible AI application. The tomorrow is very bright, and in this way, AI will play a definite rule and help us to move forward.

Japan's contribution enhances food security, nutrition and builds resilience in Pakistan through WFP support

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) acknowledges the Government of Japan's generous contributions under three projects that provided emergency assistance for the stabilization of food-insecure people in the flood-affected areas of Pakistan, implemented in Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

WFP organised a Project Completion ceremony to recognize the vital contributions of USD 7.2 million (USD 3.7 million, USD 2.5 million and USD 1 million) from the Government of Japan to address the critical needs of 246,000 people affected by the unprecedented 2022 floods in Pakistan. The USD 2.5 million enabled WFP to provide emergency

food assistance to flood-affected communities, ensuring their immediate food security and nutrition needs in 2022, while the USD 3.7 million and USD 1 million contributions helped WFP to deliver nutritionally balanced food every month to those actively involved in community rehabilitation, livelihood and resilience building initiatives and identified through district-level consultations in 2023. The USD 3.7 million grant also supported conditional cash assistance during the early recovery phase. Furthermore, tailored capacity-building activities were implemented to enhance local skills in disaster risk reduction, climate-smart agriculture, food production and storage, and other marketable skills.

The ceremony took place at the WFP Country office in Islamabad in

the presence of Ms. Coco Ushiyama, WFP Country Director in Pakistan, H. E. Wada Mitsuhiro, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, along with senior Japan Embassy and National Disaster Management Authority officials.

Speaking at the occasion, H. E. Mr Wada, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, appreciated WFP's Pakistan work and reaffirmed Japan's commitment by noting "Food security and nutrition are among the priorities for Japanese Official Development Assistance, and we consider them to be the fundamental requirements for achieving sustainable development."

"We greatly appreciate the unwavering support provided by the Government of Japan, which enabled us to address food insecurity and rebuild livelihoods in flood-affected areas at a critical time," said Ms. Coco Ushiyama,

Country Director of WFP Pakistan.

In 2023, Pakistan continued to grapple with the compounding impact of the devastating 2022 floods that affected more than one-third of the country. WFP played a pivotal role in supporting nearly 4.4 million people following the flood crisis through a variety of complementary interventions to address both critical and immediate humanitarian needs through unconditional cash support to approximately 1.7 million people in 2023 and longer-term needs to build resilience, enhance livelihoods opportunities, and address malnutrition.

Overall, with generous and timely support from donors and partners including this USD 7.2 million from Japan, WFP successfully mobilized over USD 150 million for its emergency flood response by December 2023.



Every Water for Everyone-Hashoo Group's Innovative Filtration Solution

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Access to safe and clean water is a fundamental human right and is crucial for healthy living, whether it is to cultivate top-notch fruits and vegetables, wash clothes, or cook food. It is harrowing, then, to note that in Pakistan, 80% of the population relies on contaminated water sources. Despite having significant surface water sources, including lakes, coastal basins, reservoirs, glaciers, and rivers, growing nationwide demands and other unique challenges are diminishing access to clean water, posing risks for citizens. Through a recent study, it is estimated that 16 million people across Pakistan lack access to clean water close to their homes.

To address the critical lack of clean water, Pakistanis often turn to bottled water and filtration systems, which require frequent replacement and extensive maintenance or visit community filtration plants. As these solu-

tions can be complex and inconvenient, it is more important than ever to ensure that people across the nation have seamless access to safe water. Several notable local and international parties work tirelessly to facilitate safer and healthier lives for Pakistanis nationwide. One such enterprise is a project of one of the country's leading hospitality and tourism companies, Hashoo Group, which has business interests in real estate, information technology, corporate social responsibility, and much more. Hashoo Group's EveryWater is an innovative initiative designed to offer affordable, convenient, and sustainable access to healthy, drinkable water, impacting thousands of lives daily. EveryWater began its mission two years ago and has a deep understanding of the critical nature of water scarcity and how it adversely impacts daily lives. The company supports community empowerment through its easy-to-use, low-maintenance, and convenient filtration device,



which transforms water from any tap into safer and drinkable water and lasts up to two years for a family of four to five individuals, catering to their daily needs. This device removes 99% of water contaminants as small as 0.025 microns, including bacteria, viruses, and harmful chemicals, leaving safer and healthier water for all. By reducing the population's reliance on bottled water and minimizing water wastage, EveryWater also promotes sustainable

practices in line with its parent company, Hashoo Group's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions by 2050.

More than just a profit-based business, when the need has risen, EveryWater has played its part in empowering communities afflicted by natural and economic calamities. After the flash flooding incidents in 2022, EveryWater distributed 60,000 units of its filters to hard-hit areas so they could maintain healthier lives with safe drinking water for themselves and their loved ones. The company focuses its corporate social responsibility efforts on the more impoverished regions of Sindh and Baluchistan, where access to clean water, among other essential resources, remains scarce for most people. With collective efforts from dedicated initiatives such as EveryWater, the aim is to ensure a better quality of life for Pakistanis nationwide by promoting safe and clean living, all of which starts with the life-giving substance that sustains us all - Water.

First multi-modal cargo transit carried out through Trans-Afghan Corridor



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: KTZ Express and JSC QazTrade in partnership with Pakistan's National Logistics Corporation carried out the first multimodal transportation of cargo through the Trans-Afghan Corridor, Kazinform News Agency reports citing the press service of Kazakhstan Temir Zholy. "The multimodal transportation route through Afghanistan and Pakistan to the UAE's Jebel Ali port was piloted as part of cooperation in development of export potential, by JSC KTZ Express and JSC QazTrade in partnership with Pakistan's logistics operator National Logistics Corporation," the Kazakh company said.

Two trucks 21 tons each departed from the Pavlodar Special Economic Zone on April 27, towards Zhetysay Trade and Logistics Center, where cargo was transferred into two FEU containers. The containers were loaded onto the trucks with a container trailer and sent to Pakistan's Karachi Port.

The cargo arrived in Karachi within 20 days having covered the distance of 4,900 kilometers.

On June 1, the containers were loaded onto a feeder vessel and arrived at the Jebel Ali Port on June 3.

The overall delivery time made 38 days. 60 containers are planned to be transported by the route in June-July, KTZ adds.

Pakistan & Russia signed agreement on Cooperation in Railways at SPIEF

SAINT PETERSBURG: On the sidelines of 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF), Pakistan and Russia signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Railway Sector on 7 June 2024.

Through this MoU, the two sides aim to look for opportunities to implement railways up-gradation projects and other initiatives of this vital sector. The MoU also sets the tone for potential future collaboration between the relevant companies operating in this sector, and aims to promote and facilitate international cargo transport.

The MoU was signed by H. E. Ambassador Muhammad Khalid Jamali from Pakistan side and Deputy Transport Minister Mr. D. S. Zverev from the Russian side.



Malays' envoy addresses Bahria University students at academic session on 'development of Malaysia'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: His Excellency Ambassador Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan, held an academic discourse session with students of Bahria University, Islamabad. Upon arrival, Vice Admiral (R) Asif Khaliq HI (M), Rector of Bahria University warmly welcomed the High Commissioner and his delegation. The event was attended by academicians, staff, and approximately 100 students from the media and international relations disciplines.

During the session, Ambassador Dato' Azhar gave a brief on the background of Malaysia from independence to modern times. He emphasised the strong bilateral relations between Malaysia and Pakistan, highlighting key areas comprising trade and economic cooperation, tourism, and essential people-to-people connections. He also explained how these factors contribute to mutual growth and understanding.

The presentation also addressed



various aspects of Malaysia's foreign policies, underscoring its role within ASEAN and its commitment to regional stability and development. Additionally, Ambassador Dato' Azhar elaborated on the Malaysian Technical Cooperation Program (MTCP), which is pivotal in capacity-building and development cooperation between Malaysia and Pakistan.

A significant portion of the session

focused on promoting educational opportunities in Malaysia for Pakistani students. Ambassador Dato' Azhar highlighted that Malaysia offers an ideal environment for students, with modern facilities and globally recognised education standards, all within a Muslim-friendly setting. He proudly mentioned that, as of May 2024, nearly 5,000 Pakistani students are pursuing their studies in various

higher education institutions across Malaysia.

The event concluded with a lively Question-and-Answer session, where students could engage directly with the High Commissioner. During the session, the High Commissioner was requested by students to give his views on the opportunity to work in Malaysia after completing their studies as well as the way forward on Malaysia-Pakistan bilateral relations.

Following the session, the audience had the chance to experience the rich flavours of Malaysian cuisine, with dishes such as Nasi Minyak and Daging Kurma (fragrant ghee rice and beef korma) being served. This culinary offering aimed to introduce Pakistani students to Malaysia's diverse culinary heritage.

The session is part of the ongoing efforts by the High Commission of Malaysia in Islamabad to strengthen bilateral ties through educational and cultural exchanges within Pakistan's institutions of higher learning, fostering people-to-people contact between Malaysia and Pakistan.

Empowering Change: Serena Hotels Partners with Behbud Association for Fundraising Gala

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels proudly partnered with the Behbud Association to host a memorable fundraising event under the banner of cultural diplomacy. The event's proceeds went directly to the Behbud Maternal and Children's Hospital, a vital institution providing comprehensive healthcare services to mothers and children, enhancing the quality of care within the community.

The evening featured a spectacular fashion show featuring apparel by artisans from Behbud and a mesmerizing musical performance by Saakin, blending entertainment with philanthropy to make a significant impact. Fashion enthusiasts and music lovers were treated to an unforgettable experience, showcasing the stunning

dresses and creations of Behbud Association's skilled artisans. This event highlighted their exceptional craftsmanship, traditional techniques, and unique designs, supporting community development and empowerment. Models on the runway helped bridge the gap between artisans and a broader audience, promoting the preservation of traditional crafts and supporting sustainable livelihoods for the workers involved.

Abida Malik, President of the Behbud Association, expressed, "Our artisans create stunning apparel that illustrates their exceptional craftsmanship and dedication to traditional techniques. These pieces are not just fashion statements but symbols of our cultural heritage. With Serena's invaluable support for our fundraising efforts, we can channel



proceeds towards our hospital project, providing better healthcare facilities and supporting

the overall development of our community." Serena Hotels recognizes the

importance of community development and is committed to playing its part in creating positive

change. Supporting initiatives that uplift and empower communities is fundamental to our values. Sere-

na Hotels is proud to stand behind such endeavors, working together towards a brighter future for all.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
73,754.01	73,862.93
Day's High	Day's Low
73,902.78	71,781.96
Index Value	Change
12,291,027,766	-108.92
Percentage	Time
-0.15%	7 Jun, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,245.37	-39.97
Percentage	Time
-0.48%	7 Jun, 4:50 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
38,969.25	+83.08
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	7 Jun, 1:54 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
38,683.93	-19.58
Percentage	Time
-0.051%	7 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183	185
Bahrain Dinar	740.7	748.7
Canadian Dollar	204	206
China Yuan	38.47	38.87
Danish Krone	40.63	41.03
Euro	301	304
Hong Kong Dollar	35.66	36.01
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.74	917.74
Malaysian Ringgit	59.2	59.8
New Zealand \$	172.53	174.53
Norwegians Krone	26.3	26.6
Omani Riyal	723.4	731.4
Qatari Riyal	76.51	77.21
Saudi Riyal	73.6	74.1
Singapore Dollar	203.5	205.5
Swedish Korona	26.63	26.93
Swiss Franc	312.79	315.29
Thai Bhat	7.64	7.79
U.A.E Dirham	75.25	76
UK Pound Sterling	354	357
US Dollar	277.75	280.5

High rates make growth targets difficult: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Friday that inflation in the country is decreasing after two long years.

He praised the government for reducing the inflation rate from 38 percent to 12 percent, stating that the State Bank must now lower interest rates by at least 10%.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that cutting interest rates is also important to provide some relief to the public and the business community, reduce unemployment, and increase exports.

Talking to the business community, the

veteran business leader said that people have been suffering from a 22% interest rate since last year, which is seriously affecting businesses and promoting unemployment, while causing a lot of damage to the government.

This year's interest payment will cost nine thousand billion rupees. A 10% reduction in interest rates will also halve the government's interest payment burden.

According to the Bureau of Statistics, the consumer price index was 11.8 percent in May, which was 17.3 percent in April. Inflation has decreased by 8.62% compared to last month.

Last year, the inflation rate reached a record high of 38 percent. Keeping these figures in mind, the central bank should cut interest rates by 10 percent in its June 10 meeting so that economic conditions can improve, as unnecessary caution has hurt



the economy. Mian Zahid Hussain said that economic

activity in the country has been sluggish for the past two years as the government has implemented some tough reforms under the bailout package of the International Monetary Fund to stabilize the declining economy, but many of the reforms have been politically motivated.

The ongoing neglect of important reforms and the slow progress on some are not producing the desired results.

He said that experts expect the GDP growth rate to be 2 percent in the fiscal year ending in June, which was negative last year, while the government may keep the growth rate target for the new fiscal year at 3.5 percent. This is because it expects an increase in economic activity, but if tax increases and energy prices continue to rise, the expected increase in economic activity will be difficult.

MOU

ISLAMABAD: Signing of agreements in the presence of PMs of Pakistan and China.



Photo: PID

Section 7E of Income Tax Ordinance Should Be Abolished: Atif Ikram Sheikh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has echoed the collective demand of the business, industry and trade community that the section 7E of the income tax ordinance (ITO) 2001 should be abolished for being unproductive and unfair for levying deemed or imaginary income on immovable properties. 7E has produced no significant increase in the tax collection; instead, it has created chaos and discontentment in the otherwise very vibrant real estate sector, he added.

FPCCI Chief also highlighted that the Sindh government collects infrastructure cess on import stage at 1.25 percent; which translates into PKR. 225 billion per year. Logically, the better part of that cess should be spent on the infrastructural development and maintenance of Karachi; and, if that happens, the real estate of Karachi will be in a much better shape and its market will also pick up, he added.

Mr. Saqib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that real estate can help bring more foreign exchange to the country in the form of remittances.

Mr. Magoon added that, for the sake of policy advocacy in the national interest,



any sector that can contribute to inward remittances should be facilitated and encouraged. Instead of investing in the real estate of other countries.

Syed Saqib Shah, Convener of FPCCI's Central Standing Committee on Real Estate Property and Builders, said the systemic shortcomings and lack of facil-

itation for the real estate sector can only be addressed through digitalization of the registration system; in order to bring transparency, fairness and validity in the documentation of the properties. Karachi should also get e-stamp system at the earliest like Punjab has implemented, he added.

ICCI to have 'Police Centre of Services' to facilitate business community: DIG

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General of Police Islamabad Syed Ali Raza Naqvi has applauded the hard work of the traders' community for the development of the country by saying that all out efforts will be made to provide them a peaceful environment for the growth of businesses. He said that security will be beefed in all the shopping centers by ensuring the functioning of the safe city cameras and that issues like beggary, snatching, drug trafficking etc. will also be curbed with the cooperation of the business community.

He said this during his interaction with traders' leaders of different markets of the capital city at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry along with SSP Traffic Sarfraz Virk.

On this occasion, he announced that a 24/7 'Police Centre of Services' will be established at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry from where the traders' will be able to obtain Character Certificates, verifications and other required documents under one roof.

In his address, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry said that ICCI has been playing the role of a bridge between the government and business community for ensuring the viable atmosphere for ease of doing business and that resolution of community's problem on priority basis is need of the hour.

Highlighting his achievements as President ICCI, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari



termed maintenance of law and order as pre-requisite for the development of the country and affirmed business community's fullest cooperation to police for the objective, by asserting that traders' representatives must be taken on board vis-à-vis the matters pertaining to the community.

Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari by terming the posting of visionary IG and DIG Police in Islamabad as the blessing for the inhabitants said that availability of peaceful, congenial and business friendly environment will surely bear fruit and go a long way in strengthening the economy of the country.

SSP traffic Sarfraz Virk said that six driving test centres have been established in different localities of the capital city and a state of the art Police Facilitation Centre will be established at the ICCI from where business community

will be able to get renewed its driving licenses.

President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajraan Ajmal Baloch demanded issuance of police verified identity cards and removal of police pickets from.

M/s Khalid Chaudhry, Ikhlaq Abbasi and Raja Hassan Akhtar by mentioning community's problems concerning Police said that businessmen are determined to contribute in country's development, therefore they must be facilitated by all the concerned quarters for the job.

Convener Police subcommittee ICCI Saif-ur-Rehman while conducting the ceremony narrated the significance of Police-Corporate liaison.

Those present on the occasion also include SP City Khan Aurangzeb, Raja Hassan Akhtar, Yousuf Rajput, Faizan Shehzad, Abdur Rehman Siddiqui, Rizwan Cheena, Chaudhry Waseem, Chaudhry Mohammad Ali and other.

Muhammad Yasin elected as Vice President of ICMA Pakistan



of ICMA's National Council (2018-2020) and has been re-elected to the National Council for the term (2024-2026). During his earlier tenure, he was Chairman Research and Publications Committee, Honorary Treasurer, and President of PIPFA's Board of Governors and has also been involved in various committees of the South Asian Federation of Accountants (SAFA). With over 24 years of diversified experience spanning across sectors including Textile, Oil & Gas, Media, Aviation, Supply Chain, and Education, he is currently the Group CFO at The Superior Group and a Distinguished Toastmaster (DTM) from Toastmasters International USA.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Council of ICMA, in its 413th session, elected Mr. Muhammad Yasin as Vice President of ICMA Pakistan. Mr. Muhammad Yasin is a fellow member of ICMA, CIPFA (UK) & PIPFA. He has also served as a member

ZONG 4G brings special IDD Saudi Arabia LBC offer on the holy month of Eid-Ul-Adha 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, Pakistan's premier mobile connectivity partner, continues its legacy of bringing best calling offers for its International Callers on the occasion of Eid-Ul-Adha-2024. IDD Saudi Arabia LBC Offer. Under this special IDD Saudi Arabia offer, customers from different walks of life may subscribe to the offer at just Rs. 2+Tax Daily and enjoy pulsed based calling at 0.70/sec.

For activation of these special IDD offer, ZONG 4G subscribers may send SUBIDDAP to 7966

"The offer will assist Paki-

stanis to stay in touch with their loved ones performing Hajj during 2024 or residing in KSA. Continuing to address the needs of our customers, we will continue to expand our International Dialing portfolio for our clients by offering more innovative products and services," shared the spokesperson of ZONG 4G.

ZONG's industry-leading international dialing have allowed Pakistanis to stay in touch with friends and family living abroad. These bundles have been a major help to Pakistani in cross-border communication, especially during Eid-Ul-Adha 2024.

Financial facilitation will augment Pak China business activities, NBP President Hasnie



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) President, Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnie, participated in the Pakistan China Business Conference held in Shenzhen, China.

Mr. Hasnie was among the delegation accompanying Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif who on Tuesday landed in China's Shenzhen on his official visit to the country, as Islamabad aims to advance bilateral trade and economic ties with Beijing and attract Chinese investors via business-to-business (B2B) projects.

The conference provided a platform for fostering economic ties between Pakistan and China. Mr. Hasnie met with key officials, including Mr. SHI Weigan, Director-General of the Shenzhen

Local Financial Supervision Administration, to discuss potential opportunities for establishing an NBP branch in Shenzhen and exploring the city's government incentives.

The President NBP also held fruitful discussions with representatives from the Ministry of Finance and Silk Road International Investment Management Co. Ltd. (SRIIF) about potential collaboration opportunities.

Furthermore, Mr. Hasnie met with Mr. Wallace LAI, COO of Huawei Technologies, and Mr. Ethan SUN, CEO of Huawei Pakistan, to explore avenues for collaboration on smart products, financial solutions, and services. He also visited the Huawei Technology Centre, gaining insights into their latest advancements.

NEPRA issues decision on KE's provisional FCA request for 9MFY24

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has issued its decision in the matter of provisional monthly Fuel Charges Adjustments (FCA) requested by KE for the period from July 2023 to March 2024. The Authority has decided to stagger the recovery of these FCAs in consumer bills over a period of four (04) months i.e. from June 2024 to September 2024.

The mechanism governing the calculations for FCA is outlined in the Multi-Year Tariff (MYT) for Distribution Companies. Since K-Electric's MYT petition for control period FY24 to FY30 is currently under deliberation, KE requested NEPRA for directions on passing on the FCA costs for the period from July 2023 to March 2024 to customers in their bills. The hearing on the matter was conducted by NEPRA on May 9, 2024, and included detailed discussions on the variations in fuel costs incurred by KE during the specified period. These adjustments account for global changes in fuel prices and KE's energy mix. Pertinent to note that during the first 9 months of FY24, customers of other DISCOs in the country have already undergone a similar process of paying FCA on a monthly basis, with an average rate of approximately PKR 2.89/ unit. In comparison, KE's provisional FCA during the same period is approximately PKR 1.26/ unit on average.

The decision specifies the following FCA rates, which will be applied progressively to customer bills over the next four months:

June 2024 Bills: PKR 2.6761/kWh (pertaining to Oct 23 and Feb 24)

July 2024 Bills: PKR 3.1057/kWh (pertaining to Jul 23 and Sep 23)

August 2024 Bills: PKR 3.2242/kWh (pertaining to Aug 23, Nov 23, and Dec 23)

September 2024 Bills: PKR 0.9980/kWh (pertaining to Jan 24 and Mar 24)

These adjustments are part of the regular process to align the cost of electricity with actual fuel expenses, ensuring transparency and fairness in energy billing. Customers also receive a benefit in their bills when global fuel prices decrease.

Nominees for ICC Men's Player of the Month award for May unveiled

A Sports

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Friday, unveiled the nominees for the Men's Player of the Month Award for May 2024, including star Pakistan pacer Shaheen Afridi.

The ICC Player of the Month award acknowledges the magnificent individual performers on the international stage in May.

Along with Afridi, the nominees for the Men's Player of the Month also include West Indies spinner Gudakesh Motie and Ireland's wicketkeeper batter Lorcan Tucker.

The Pakistan pace spearhead had a successful month as he picked up 10 wickets at an average of 14.5 in May.

Shaheen Shah Afridi was magnificent with the new ball amid Pakistan's tour to Ireland and England, picking up three consecutive three-wicket hauls, one against Ireland and two against England.

His second three-wicket haul came in the final T20I of the three-game T20I series against Ireland.

Shaheen provided Pakistan with important breakthroughs in each stage of the innings and was thus adjudged the Player of the Match for returning brilliant figures of 3/14.

On the other hand, Gudakesh Motie



was one of the key spinners that led the West Indies to clean sweep South Africa 3-0 ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Motie claimed a total of eight wickets in the three-match home series at an impressive average of just 8.5.

He bagged three wickets in the middle overs of the series opener to defy South Africa from chasing down the 176-run target. He played a similar role in the second T20I and bagged as many wickets.

Meanwhile, Ireland's wicketkeeper batter Lorcan Tucker, who recorded four

40-plus scores in May, is also among the nominees for the ICC Men's Player of the Month award.

Tucker scored two half-centuries in the three-match home series against Pakistan and went on to score 227 runs in six innings at an average of 37.83.

Canada stun Ireland as T20 World Cup 2024 marks another upset

A Sports

NEW YORK: A gutsy fifth-wicket partnership between Nicholas Kirton and Shreyas Movva, followed by a tight bowling display led Canada to upset Ireland in the 13th match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 here at Nassau County International Stadium on Saturday.

Set to chase a modest 138 on a tricky surface, Ireland could only manage 125 for the loss in the allotted 20 overs despite a fighting 62-run partnership between Mark Adair and George Dockrell.

Ireland had a cautious start to their innings as their openers Paul Stirling and Andy Balbirnie struggled to score freely against a disciplined Canadian bowling.

Canada soon got the reward of the early domination as Jeremy Gordon got Stirling caught behind in the sixth over with just 26 runs on the board. Stirling scored just nine off 17 deliveries.

Ireland then lost five more wickets at regular intervals and were consequently reduced to 59/6 in 12.3 overs.

It appeared all over for the European side as they needed 79 runs off just 45 balls with four wickets in hand but Adair and Dockrell glimmered a ray of hope for Ireland fans with a fighting partnership.



The duo brought Ireland in touching distance as they needed 17 off the final over.

However, Mark Adair played out a dot on the first delivery and perished on the second as Canada regained control. Adair top-scored for Ireland with a 24-ball 34 which featured three fours and a six.

Ireland only managed four runs on the last four deliveries, paving the way for Canada to taste their first-ever victory

in T20 World Cups.

Put into bat first, Canada managed to register a decent total on the board despite a disastrous start to their innings.

The associate nation, after a dismal start, lost wickets at regular intervals and consequently slipped to 53/4 in 8.1 overs.

Following the debacle, wicketkeeper batter Movva joined Kirton in the middle and the duo combined to launch recovery. Movva and Kirton batted sensibly

under pressure and added 75 runs for the fifth wicket to pull Canada out of trouble.

Nicholas Kirton, however, had an agonizing end to his gutsy knock in the penultimate over as he fell just one run short of his well-deserved half-century. He remained the top-scorer for Canada with a 35-ball 49 with the help of three fours and two sixes.

Barry McCarthy and Craig Young bagged two wickets each while Mark Adair and Gareth Delany chipped in with a wicket apiece.

It is worth mentioning here that Ireland are at the bottom of Group A of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 while Canada are placed fourth as both teams sustained defeats in their respective campaign openers.

PLAYING XI

Ireland: Paul Stirling (c), Andy Balbirnie, Lorcan Tucker, Harry Tector, Curtis Campher, George Dockrell, Gareth Delany, Mark Adair, Barry McCarthy, Josh Little, Craig Young.

Canada: Aaron Johnson, Navneet Dhaliwal, Pargat Singh, Nicholas Kirton, Shreyas Movva (wk), Dilpreet Bajwa, Saad Bin Zafar (c), Junaaid Siddiqui, Dilon Heyliger, Kaleem Sana, Jeremy Gordon.

Canada captain takes a dig at Pakistan over shock USA defeat

A Sports

Canada's captain Saad Bin Zafar took a dig at the Pakistan team following their shocking defeat in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign opener against co-host United States of America (USA).

Pakistan-based cricketer Saad, who has been given the leadership role of the inexperienced Canadian side, stated that he aims to do against Ireland what the USA did to Pakistan.

"We would've bowled first as well. If we can put decent runs on the board, will not be easy to chase. It's always good to see an associate country to beat a full member

country," stated Saad Bin Zafar at the toss against Ireland.

"Hopefully what USA did to Pakistan, we can do to Ireland. If you play your A game on the day, you can beat anyone," he added.

The Pakistan men's cricket team on Thursday, stooped to a new low as the former champions succumbed to an upset five-run defeat against the USA after an enthralling match which was decided in the Super Over. Pakistan captain Babar Azam entrusted senior pacer Mohammad Amir to bowl the Super Over. However, the left-arm pacer struggled to maintain his line and length and went on to concede



18 runs.

Amir bowled three wides in the over while poor fielding and overthrows saw the Green Shirts leaking away more runs.

Set to chase 19 in the one-over eliminator, Iftikhar Ahmed and Fakhar Zaman

came out to bat for Pakistan while Saurabh Netravalkar was given the ball for the USA. The right-handed batter played out a dot on the first delivery but hit Netravalkar for a four on the next delivery.

The boundary put the left-arm pacer under immense pressure as he bowled a wide on the next delivery. However, Netravalkar was soon to recollect himself and dismissed Iftikhar Ahmed on the next delivery.

Pakistan then needed 14 off the last three deliveries and Netravalkar displayed nerves of steel to defend the total for the USA and steered the associate nation to a historic victory.

President's Cricket Trophy Grade-II Final Begins on 8th June

Sports Desk

ABBOTTABAD: IS The final of the President's Cricket Trophy Grade-II 2023-24 will be played between Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) and Eshaal Associates at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium in Abbottabad from tomorrow on 8th June. It will be a four-day game taking place from 8 to 11 June.

The winner will bag a cash prize of PKR 1.5 million while the runners-up team will be awarded PKR 0.75 million. The best batter, bowler, wicket-keeper and the player of the tournament will be awarded PKR 50,000 each.

A total of 24 teams took part in the tournament, which were placed in four different pools. Table-toppers in each pool locked horns in the semi-finals of the tournament. OGDCL beat Khayaban-e-Amin while Eshaal Associates beat MIT Solutions to qualify for the tournament's final.

Eshaal Associates won three matches, lost one and drew one game in their group. On the other hand, OGDCL won four games and lost just one in their pool matches before qualifying for the semi-final.

For OGDCL, Adil Amin has scored 410 runs in six matches while Jawad Ali has picked up 37 wickets. Afaq Ahmed scored the most runs for Eshaal Associates, scoring 603 runs in five games while Hamza Sajjad picked up 18 wickets.



Wasim Akram lambasts Pakistan over "pathetic performance" against USA

A Sports

DALLAS: Legendary pacer Wasim Akram termed Pakistan's performance "pathetic" as they succumbed to a shock loss in their ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 campaign opener against the United States of America (USA) on Thursday.



Akram, while speaking to an Indian channel, did not mince his words in criticising the national team's performance before praising the associate nation for playing well in tense situations.

"Pathetic performance. They were playing against the USA. I was confident, that Pakistani supporters were confident that they would win but credit to the USA for the way they played their cricket," stated Akram.

"The first innings, the second innings when they came out to chase and then of course the Super Over. I mean 19 runs in Super Overs is like getting 36 runs in an over. So well done USA," he added.

Akram also predicted that the Babar Azam-led Pakistan would struggle to qualify for the Super 8s, given the current situation of Group A.

"Pakistan will struggle from here onwards to qualify for the Super 8s because they have to play India and two other good teams too."

Wasim Akram also highlighted the turning point of the match before pointing out the errors, the national team made.

"I think turning point of the game... was the way they got early wickets. They had no little partnership between Shadab and Babar and then nobody looked comfortable. The fielding was average, overall cricket was very average by Pakistan.

"Winning and losing is a part of it, we all know it but till the last ball, show some fight, put some dives. Catches are being dropped, wickets are tough to get. So yeah, it was a bad day for Pakistan I suppose," Akram concluded.

Former champions Pakistan had a disastrous start to their T20 World Cup 2024 campaign as they endured a shock loss against the USA in the Super Over as they failed to chase down the 19-run target.

Senior pacer Mohammad Amir bowled the Super Over for Pakistan and conceded 18 runs. In response, the Green Shirts only managed 13/1.

Shahid Afridi calls Pakistani strategy in Super Over 'blunder' against US

Former cricket captain Shahid Afridi called Pakistan's shocking defeat at the hands of the United States Thursday during their maiden game of the T20 World Cup 2024 a major blunder.

While speaking on his YouTube channel Friday, the 47-year-old Afridi said: "They made a huge mistake by opting for Iftikhar instead of Fakhar to play the first ball of the Super Over. The left-arm fast bowler would have suited Fakhar because of the angle of the bowling."

"I don't know who told Iftikhar to face the left-arter," Afridi said. Afridi was also unhappy with the way Mohammad Amir bowled in the super over of the match.

"Mohammad Amir bowled really well during the match and I thought that they will go within the Super Over as well. But he conceded a lot of extras in the Super Over which also didn't help Pakistan's cause. He is experienced and knows how to bowl yorkers. The ball was reversing as well which is why I think he shouldn't have given away so many runs," the former captain added.

Portugal's SL Benfica, Pakistan Football League team up to boost Pak sports economy

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Portugal's national football club SL Benfica has announced partnership with the Pakistan Football League (PFL) Pearl Project to develop professional football and boost the sports economy in Pakistan.

SL Benfica, as the official partner of PFL, a pioneering initiative to develop professional football in Pakistan and stimulate the country's football economy, will impart technical expertise to coaches and players, significantly advancing football in the region. With support from government officials, this initiative aims to inspire

a new generation of footballers and fans in the region.

Benfica representatives are currently in Pakistan for prominent events in Islamabad, Lahore, and Karachi. SL Benfica stated that this partnership places the club at the forefront of football expansion in a nation with a population of approximately 250 million.

They attended the formal launch of PFL in Lahore on 4th June - attended by the likes of Michael Owen, Emile Heskey, Pascal Chimbona and Raúl Rodríguez. The global delegation held meetings with the senior government ministers

who offered full support to the football initiative.

"June marks the launch of the Pakistan Football League, a project with the potential of 250 million inhabitants committed to launching a football league. Benfica has been invited to present itself as the league's technical partner to support its teams, coaches and players. As leaders in identifying and developing players, we had to accept this challenge. This project is another historic moment for Benfica, as we will be collaborating with an international league for the first time," said Miguel Reis, SL Benfica's Operations Coordinator for

Global Expansion.

"For Benfica, this represents another great project with a huge responsibility, igniting a passion for sport in children and guiding them towards clubs to commence playing in a more structured and professional manner. Our goal is to facilitate the simultaneous development of young athletes and coaches, fundamentally transforming the football landscape in the country.

Our distinct methodological approach will be harnessed for the benefit of the league and the clubs, with Benfica potentially becoming the driving force in shaping the future of football

in Pakistan. We are also excited about the upcoming global campaign 'One Ball One Smile', which will bring smiles to the faces of countless children by providing them with footballs. This initiative will not only empower them to play football in their communities but will also nurture the grassroots of football worldwide", explained Davide Gomes, technical coordinator for international projects at SL Benfica.

This partnership not only recognizes Benfica's global reach and expertise but also marks a significant milestone in the evolution of football in Pakistan. With



SL Benfica's support, the Pakistan Football League aims to inspire a new generation of footballers and fans, taking the game to new heights in the region. The Portu-

guese club will be the central incubator of the league and the entity that will ensure that standards in football development are maintained.

Meeting

BEIJING: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Primere Li Qiang in a delegation level talks on Friday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan, China resolve to protect CPEC from detractors; ensure projects' timely completion

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan and China on Friday expressed their firm commitment to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) from its detractors and adversaries, besides ensuring high-quality development and timely completion of its all ongoing projects. The bilateral ties and cooperation were discussed in the delegation-level talks between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chinese Premier Li Qiang at the Great Hall of the People. The prime minister was accompanied by key members of his cabinet.

A welcome ceremony was arranged in honour of the prime minister on his arrival at the Great Hall of the People. Pakistan, China resolve to

protect CPEC from detractors; ensure projects' timely completion. During the talks, the two leaders discussed the entire spectrum of bilateral relations, and regional and global developments of mutual interest.

They noted that the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership was characterized by mutual trust, shared principles and strategic convergence. Premier Li congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Pakistan's election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The two leaders reaffirmed unwavering support for each other on core issues, and expressed continued commitment and support for the high-quality development of CPEC. Pakistan, China resolve to protect

CPEC from detractors; ensure projects' timely completion. They also emphasized the timely completion of all ongoing projects with a special focus on industrial development, agriculture modernization, science and technology, and development of Special Economic Zones for mutually beneficial and socio-economic development of Pakistan.

The two sides discussed the significance of Gwadar as an important pillar of the CPEC and agreed to expedite the timely completion of all related infrastructure projects to transform it into a regional economic hub.

They also expressed their firm commitment to protect the CPEC from its detractors and adversaries, and to upgrade it in the form of enhanced cooperation. Prime

Minister Shehbaz reaffirmed Pakistan's unflinching resolve to ensure the safety and security of Chinese personnel and projects in Pakistan.

The two sides agreed to maintain high-level exchanges, including strengthening institutional linkages at all tiers and in all spheres of bilateral cooperation. Pakistan and China would also continue to consult closely on issues of regional and global significance and multilateral fora, especially during the two-year tenure of Pakistan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

The delegation-level talks were followed by an MoU signing ceremony, witnessed by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Premier Li Qiang. The two sides signed 23 memoran-

dums of understanding (MoUs) and agreements deepening cooperation in transport infrastructure, industry, energy, agriculture, media, health, water, socio-economic development and others of mutual interest.

The meeting was followed by an official banquet hosted by Premier Li Qiang in honour of PM Shehbaz. Meanwhile in his social media post on X, the prime minister said during his meeting with the Chinese premier, he had a detailed discussion on all areas of mutual interest, including bilateral as well as regional and global developments. "Reaffirmed our shared desire to further strengthen the Pakistan-China All-Weather Strategic partnership and upgrade CPEC in the form of enhanced cooperation."

Message of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf on World Oceans Day 2024

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: World Oceans Day (WOD) is celebrated on 8th of June each year; however, this year the Day was observed on 7th June 2024. The aim WOD is to raise awareness among populace to protect the oceans and their resources as they provide more than 50% of the oxygen produced on this planet and absorb about 30% of carbon dioxide produced by humans, moderating the impact of global warming. The Day provides us an opportunity to focus on the challenges our oceans face in maintaining an ecological balance in the

environment.

The theme selected by UNESCO for WOD 2024 is, 'Awaken New Depths'. This resonates deeply with our mission to protect and restore our oceans with renewed understanding, commitment, collaboration and vigour. Our oceans are facing unprecedented threats from human activities such as overfishing, pollution and climate change. These threats not only imperil marine life but also cast devastating impacts on our national security, economy, and human well-being.

We depend on our oceans for livelihood; fishing alone,



produces not only food for billions of people but also creates millions of jobs worldwide. We need to conserve our

enormous marine resources for our future generations. Pakistan Navy, entrusted with the task to protect our maritime interests is working assiduously, in league with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency and relevant agencies to prevent pollution, monitor marine traffic and enforce regulations to ensure sustainability of our oceans.

To commemorate significance of WOD, Pakistan Navy is playing a lead role in promoting safe and sustainable use of ocean resources. A number of events and activities have been arranged to highlight the spirit of the day and

raise awareness about oceans and their resources. Some key PN initiatives include: beach cleaning, enforcement of pollution control using harbour debris collection barges, mangroves plantation in association with International Union for Conservation of Nature, banning use of destructive fishing nets, tackling oil pollution at sea and coordinating with industrial community to reduce waste dumping into the sea. National Institute of Maritime Affairs is also holding a seminar on WOD-24 Theme which will help promote the essence of the day.

Strong Coordination & Collective approach emphasized to deal with global warming: Romina

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordinator on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized on strong coordination and collective approach among Federal Government and all Federating Units to deal with global warming and heat wave effects in the country. She was chairing first meeting of Task Force constituted by PM to propose measures to address the effects of global warming and heat wave. She stressed upon the sensitivity of the issue adding that actions need to be initiated on war footings.

High level Inter-departmental Working Group on forest fires apprised the meeting that from 17 May to 5 June



2024 total 13 fires erupted in Margalla Hills National Park & adjoining areas which affected 77.58 Hectare area. The vegetation affected in that area include small trees, scrubs, shrubs and chir pine. Well coordinated response

was launched to control these fires by Climate Change, NDMA, Pak Army, PAF and CDA. However the Chairperson raised concerns on lack of fire beaters to fire fighters. Member Operation NDMA present-

ed their strategy to combat heat wave effects adding that they have completed simulation exercise to combat upcoming moon soon spell.

While highlighting the unprecedented longer duration heat wave in country, Pakistan Meteorological Department apprised the meeting that except GB all provinces would receive above normal rainfall in upcoming moon soon. Probability of urban flooding can't be ruled out, he said in response of a question. It was also apprised that besides above normal rainfall, temperatures this year would also be higher which would cause more snow melting that on one hand fulfill the water shortage need and on the other hand rise the threats of lake outbursts in northern areas.

Biden apologizes to Zelenskiy



Reuters

US President Joe Biden met Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Paris on Friday, apologized for congressional delays in approving the latest US aid package, and announced a fresh \$225 million tranche on the sidelines of D-Day events.

The meeting was their first face-to-face encounter since Zelenskiy visited Washington in December, when the two pressed Republicans to overcome opposition in their party to more support for Ukraine.

They will meet again next week at a G7 summit in Italy, as rich Western nations discuss using Russian assets frozen after the Ukraine invasion to provide \$50 billion for Ukraine.

Zelenskiy told Reuters last month that Western countries are taking too long to make decisions about aid.

"You haven't bowed down, you

haven't yielded at all, you continue to fight in a way that is... just remarkable," Biden told the Ukrainian leader at the start of their meeting on Friday.

"We're not going to walk away from you."

Biden apologized to Zelenskiy for the delays before the last U. S. aid package passed in Congress in April. He confirmed he was signing an additional tranche of \$225 million on Friday to help Ukraine reconstruct its electric grid.

"I apologize for ... those weeks of not knowing" what's going to happen in terms of funding, Biden said. "Some of our very conservative members (of Congress) were holding it up. But we got it done, finally."

"We're still in, completely, totally," Biden said. Zelenskiy thanked Biden for U. S. military, financial and humanitarian support.

Chairperson BISP meets Speaker National Assembly to discuss Benazir Income Support Programme's initiatives

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), held a meeting with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq today. During the meeting, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt congratulations to Mrs. Rubina Khalid on assuming her new role as Chairperson of Benazir Income Support Programme.

Mrs. Rubina Khalid took the opportunity to brief Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on the ongoing and recently launched initiatives of Benazir Income Support Programme. She highlighted the role Benazir Income Support Programme plays in the economic empowerment of women and reiterated her commitment to serve the marginalized segments of society through the programme.

"Benazir Income Support Programme is dedicated to provide essential support to the most vulnerable communities, particularly focusing on the economic empowerment of women. We are committed to enhance the programme's reach and impact to ensure that no one is left behind," said Mrs. Khalid.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed his support for the programme and wished Mrs. Rubina Khalid success in her endeav-



ors. "The Benazir Income Support Programme is vital for the socio-economic uplift of marginalized communities, and I wish for its continued success under Mrs. Rubina Khalid's leadership," he stated.

In a separate meeting later in the day, Central Additional General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party, Engineer Mohammad Humayun Khan, met with Mrs. Rubina Khalid at the Benazir Income Support Programme headquarters. The discussion focused on issues faced by women beneficiaries of Benazir Income Support Programme in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly concerning stipend disbursement and the provision of necessary facilities.

Mrs. Rubina Khalid assured General Secretary PPP that all problems faced by the beneficiaries would be promptly addressed. Our priority is to ensure that every woman in need receives the support she deserves without any delays," she added.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif unveils historic package to uplift farmers

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif under a historic package for the farmers has announced, "Punjab Kisan Bank, Green Tractor Scheme, manufacturing of harvesters and agricultural tools at a local level along with Oil Seed Promotion Program." CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif and President PML-N Muhammad Nawaz Sharif presided over a meeting in which a comprehensive briefing on the 'Kissan Package' was given. It was principally decided to establish a Punjab Kisan Bank for granting loans to the farmers on soft terms. Approval was also granted for "CM Punjab Green Tractor Scheme" for the farmers. The CM turned down the proposal with regard to disbursement of mere Rs. 6 lakh subsidy on a tractor.

The Chief Minister directed to give 70 percent subsidy on a small tractor and 50 percent subsidy on a big tractor. On the proposal of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, the number of tractors under Punjab Green Tractor Scheme

has been enhanced by 10 thousands. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to complete the first phase of Punjab Green Tractor Scheme within one year. It was principally decided to increase the number of tractors under the Punjab Green Tractor Scheme every year. It was apprised during the briefing that owners possessing land from 6 acres to 50 acres will be eligible to apply in the Punjab Green Tractor Scheme.

The CM said, "For the first time in the history of Punjab, Rs. 400 billion Kissan Package is being granted. The farmers besides being granted agricultural revenue will also be given other privileges and facilities through the Kissan Card. The prosperity of every farmer along with enhancement in agricultural production is part of our foremost tasks." Launching Solarization of Tube Wells and Drip Irrigation System was also reviewed in the meeting. The participants were apprised that 47 thousand farmers have gone through their registration process in 48 hours for acquiring Kissan Card.