

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا ہے کہ جو لوگ میری امت کو کھینچ کر لیں، میں ان کو کھینچ کر لے گا۔
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

RAWALPINDI



Boat capsizes near Yemen: At least 49 dead, 140 others missing

The UN migration agency said that over 49 migrants have lost their lives and 140 others went missing after their boat overturned off the coast of Yemen. IOM revealed that the ship left Somalia with 260 migrants on board including Somalis and Ethiopians.



Budget 2024-25: Govt proposes up to 25% increase in govt employees' salaries

Federal Minister for Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb announced that up to 25% increase in the salaries of government employees has been proposed in the budget for fiscal year 2024-25. The minister presented the federal budget for FY25 in today's National Assembly session. During his budget speech, Aurangzeb said that the government would adopt a three-pronged strategy to reform the pension scheme in line with international best practices.

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Budget 2024-25

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb parented the Federal Budget 2024-2025 before the National Assembly of Pakistan on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister Aurangzeb unveils Budget 2024-25 with total outlay of Rs18tr

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday presented Pakistan's budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 with a total outlay of Rs18.877 trillion. The National Assembly (NA) session began with recitation of the Holy Quran followed by the national anthem. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also in attendance.

Meanwhile, the opposition lawmakers belonging to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council stood on their desks, raised slogans against government and PML-N president Nawaz Sharif. They even tore the copies of the Finance Bill 2025.

Analysts expect the budget for

the fiscal year to June 2025 to set ambitious fiscal targets as it looks to strengthen the case for a new bailout deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In Pakistan's economic survey on Tuesday, the government said GDP would expand 2.4% in the current year, missing the budgeted target of 3.5%, despite revenues being up 30% on year, and the fiscal and current account deficits being under control.

Pakistan is in talks with the IMF for a loan estimated to range from \$6 billion to \$8 billion, as it seeks to avert a default for an economy growing at the slowest pace in the region.

But a recent economic uptick following stabilisation measures and falling inflation, as well as an interest rate cut by the central bank on Monday, have made the

government optimistic about prospects for growth.

At the outset of his speech today, Finance Minister Aurangzeb said that PM Shehbaz Sharif and his team should be congratulated over his efforts in past one year to revive economy. He vowed that Pakistan will soon be on the path of inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

"I am thankful to the leadership of the coalition partners in the government, including Nawaz Sharif, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, Abdul Aleem Khan and Khalid Hussain Magasi, for their guidance in making of budget 2024," he said.

Muhammad Aurangzeb believes that despite political and economic challenges, the govern-

ment's progress on the economic front in the past one year has been impressive. He urged Pakistan to capitalise on a fresh opportunity to revitalise its economy.

"Under PM Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, we have pursued a homegrown agenda that has enabled us to overcome current economic challenges and boost the pace of development."

He acknowledged the challenges faced by Pakistan's economy, which had been struggling with depleted foreign reserves, a 40 per cent depreciation of the rupee, stagnant economic growth, and soaring inflation.

He commended the government for securing a crucial nine-month IMF programme in June 2023, which helped Pakistan avoid economic collapse.

"The previous IMF

programme was ending, and a new deal was essential to prevent a default. I commend Shehbaz Sharif's government for their efforts in securing the programme," he said.

Muhammad Aurangzeb confirmed that a long-term loan deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to bail out Pakistan's economy will provide relief to inflation-broken masses, whose incomes have hit stalled in recent years.

The minister highlighted the significant improvement in economic indicators, crediting the PM and his team for their efforts. "Inflation stood at 11.8pc in May, a notable achievement considering the challenges. We're on the right track, and inflation is likely to decrease further in the coming days," he said.

Pak-Turkish defence ties to grow: General Sahir



News desk

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamsah Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, who is on an official visit to Turkey, called on General (R) Yasar GULER, Minister of Defence, General Metin Gurak, Commander Turkish General Staff, General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, Commander Turkish Land Forces, Admiral Ercument Tatlioglu, Commander Turkish Naval Forces, General Ziya Cemal Kadioglu, Commander of Turkish Air Force and Haluk Gorgun, President SSB, a government agency dealing

with defence production.

During the meetings, both sides deliberated upon various areas of mutual interest, bilateral defence cooperation including security, counter-terrorism, and the prevailing regional environment. The military leadership shared commitments to enhance defence engagements between both countries and reaffirmed their resolve to further fortify the fraternal relationship.

In recognition of meritorious services and contributions, General Sahir Shamsah Mirza was also awarded the 'Legion of Merit'.

Pakistan earmarks Rs2,122 billion for defence

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has earmarked Rs2,122 billion for defence in its annual budget for 2024-25, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Tuesday.

He said this while presenting the budget in the National Assembly session on Wednesday.

The Rs2,122 billion allocation includes the following:

Rs815 billion in Employee Related Expenses

Rs513 billion in Operating expenses

Rs548 billion in physical assets

Rs244 billion in civil works

The allocation does not include an extra Rs6 billion for 'defence administration'.

The budget is a significant increase from last year's Rs1,854 billion. The allocation of funds is almost related to the forecasts of the International Monetary Fund, with which South Asian

countries seek an Extended Fund Facility to stabilise the economy.

This represents a more than 19% increase from the Rs1,804 trillion allocated for the outgoing fiscal year. The Fund made the forecasts in the second and final review documents of the Stand-By Arrangement.

Pakistan last month completed a nine-month \$3 billion programme, which helped staff off sovereign default, but the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stressed the need for a fresh, longer-term programme.

The short-term programme, aimed at addressing domestic and external imbalances, has yielded positive results, including moderate economic growth, improved fiscal position, and increased foreign exchange reserves, according to the IMF.

The Fund had projected Pakistan's defence allocation to be 1.72% of its gross domestic product (GDP) in FY25.

Shehbaz lauds Finland's support for UNSC non-permanent membership

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday lauded Finland's support to Pakistan in winning a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for 2025-26.

In response to Finnish President Alexander Stubb's remarks on X, the prime minister appreciated their support to Pakistan and reiterated his country's resolve to work for upholding international law and the UN Charter.

Earlier, President Stubb had congratulated Pakistan, Denmark, Greece, Panama, and Somalia on winning the UN Security Council's non-permanent membership. The Finnish president also extended best wishes to Pakistan, besides assuring collaboration in strengthening the UN and the international system.

Conspiracies to bankrupt Pakistan thwarted; economic stability achieved: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Wednesday said that conspiracies to bankrupt the country had been thwarted, steering it away from economic hardships towards stability. Presiding over the meeting of the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) Parliamentary Party at the Parliament House, he said, "We have left behind the conspiracies of those who dreamed of bankrupting the country and guided it from economic hardships to stability."

The prime minister briefed the parliamentary party about the budgetary proposals.

He assured that maximum relief would be provided to the common man in the budget, with specific measures aimed at easing the burden of workers, farmers, and salaried people.

He expressed gratitude to the party members and allies for their confidence in him and their full support of the government policies



benefiting the common man and the country.

Pm Shehbaz urged the parliamentarians to actively participate in the budget sessions, offering suggestions, and providing a robust and reasoned response to any falsehoods or propaganda regarding the budget.

He stated, "History is witness to our efforts for rescuing Pakistan's economy through prioritizing national interests. With the guidance of Allah Almighty and under the leadership of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, we averted bankruptcy and default in the country."

He said that a conspiratorial

group posed a threat to the country's security and undermined those who had sacrificed their lives for it.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the Almighty entrusted him with serving Pakistan for the second time, expressing his determination to resolve the nation's issues.

Resolving to meet everyone's expectations, the prime minister lauded the trust of brotherly countries and investors in the government's economic policies and increasing the foreign investment.

He stressed the importance of untiring efforts for the country's economic stability, and assured

Budget 2024-25: Govt announces health insurance for journalists

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has presented a deficit budget of Rs18,887 billion for the fiscal year 2024-25 in the National Assembly. While the budget has set ambitious targets for, it also brought good news for the country's journalist community.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb announced the revival of a health insurance scheme for journalists in his budget speech.

"When Shehbaz Sharif took office as Prime Minister for the second time, he ordered the restoration of health insurance for journalists and media workers," said Aurangzeb.

"Today, I am pleased to announce the revival of this scheme for my journalist brothers and sisters."

Aurangzeb explained that the scheme will be implemented in two

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AJK PM hails Pakistan for its role in Kashmir's freedom struggle

Bureau Report

BAGH: Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that making Azad Kashmir a corruption free state, establishing rule of law and supremacy of merit were his government's top priorities. He expressed these views while addressing a dinner party hosted in his honour by minister for Information Technology Sardar Zia Qamar here today. Speaking on the occasion, the AJK premier said that he believed in equal application of law. The law, he said, should apply to all people equally regardless of their status in society. He said that budget worth billions of rupees has been spent but not a single complaint of corruption surfaced during his 14 month long tenure.

The PM, on the occasion, thanked Zia Qamar and assured him of his full support and cooperation in solving the problems of his constituency. The event was also attended and



addressed by Pakistan People's Party leader Sardar Abdul Majeed Advocate, Information Technology Minister Sardar Zia Qamar, Mian Waheed, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Sardar Javed Ayub, Pir Mazhar Saeed, Qasim Majeed, Sardar Khalid Chaghtai, Sardar Qayyum Baig and others.

Meanwhile, addressing oath taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of District Bar Association Bagh, Prime Minister Chaudhry

Anwar ul Haq hailed legal fraternity's valuable contribution to society and its unprecedented struggle to uphold rule of law in the region. Terming black coat as his pride, the PM said that the black coat was etched in his childhood memories. He said that lawyers have history of fighting for the supremacy of constitution and rule of law in the state. "Whenever there is a violation of the constitution, it is the duty of lawyers to stand

and stop it legally", he added. On this occasion, the PM announced a grant of 10 lakh rupees for the district bar. The function was attended and addressed by government ministers including Sardar Mir Akbar Khan, Pir Mazhar Saeed, former Chief Justice of High Court Sardar Azhar Saleem Babar, District Judge Raja Yusuf Haroon, newly elected President Raja Mehmood Advocate, General Secretary Syed Mazhar Kazmi Advocate and others.

Earlier, the PM during his visit Haveli laid the foundation stone of the Judicial Complex and Lawyers' Chamber. Government ministers Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Sardar Javed Ayub Khan, Sardar Amir Altaf Khan, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed and a large number of lawyers were also present on this occasion. Addressing the ceremony, the PM said that all available resources would be utilized for the development of the area.

Riaz Malsi promoting literary and cultural activities in South Punjab

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Riaz Malsi has played a backbone role in nurturing the talent of Saraiki region. Many people are on heights of fame today because of him. Showed

A person with conscience and good morals has achieved honorable retirement. These views were expressed by the Provincial Sirat Award-winning poet Anwar-e-Adab Pakistan Chairman Sabir Ansari in a statement regarding the retirement of Station Director Radio Pakistan Multan Riaz Malsi in promoting literary and Cultural activities. He also played an important role. His services are of historical importance which cannot be forgotten in any case. He worked hard all his life and gave Radio Pakistan Multan a great rise. Riaz Malsi is known to be of great importance, step by step. Respect for honesty

I pay tribute to him on behalf of myself and all the members of our organization



Glory Club to promote social service in Inarvail district: Saleha Pasha

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Social service is a great good and charity, so every member of the community will be able to play his full role for social development. Speaking at the introductory ceremony of the newly formed Glory Club of Inarvail District 340, President Saleha Pasha told all the officers and members about the club's objectives and services to the suffering humanity and said that We will continue to carry forward the vision of district 340 as stated by Sens Rizwana Tabasim Durani and promote community education, sustainable health, eradication of polio, social integration of women, planting campaign to eradicate poverty and pollution, clean water. We will take a lot of steps for the water filtration plant to supply Neet and Clean water. General Secretary Sidra Salim, Shehla Mustafa Pasha. Bulletin Editor and Finance Secretary Iram Mujahid also addressed the ceremony.



Cattle market arrangements complete in Multan division on Eid-ul-Adha: Mariam Khan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan along with Deputy Commissioner Multan Wasim Hamid Sindhu visited cattle markets and sale points on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha Cattle market Arrangements for 22 markets, sale points have been completed across the division. Sacrificial skins can be collected only by registered welfare organizations. All temporary sale points have been set up outside urban limits. A strict ban is in place. Elderly persons and children should be avoided in the markets. Urban cattle should wear light colors and loose clothes in the markets. DC Multan Waseem Hamid Sindhu said that a livestock desk has been set up at the entry point for pest control. A police force has also been deployed for security. No fee is charged in the temporary market established in Fatima Jinnah Housing Society, the markets are fully functional, the traders have brought cattle from 1st Dhul Hajj. Assistant Commissioner City Simal Mushtaq, CO Corporation Iqbal Khan were also present.



Police encounter in Vehari: One cop martyred and one robber killed: DPO

Malik Shahid Saleem

VEHARI: One officer was martyred while one robber was killed during the police encounter near bridge 48. According to the details, police station Jhal Sial on receiving the information conducted raids to arrest the wanted dangerous accused hiding in Chak No. 298 EB. The armed robbers fired directly at the police party, as a result of which the CIA policeman Fujji Ismail was martyred on the spot and the accused entered the nearby fields, after which more police personnel arrived and while searching for the robbers hiding in the fields. Again, there was an exchange of fire between the robbers and the police, during which an unknown armed robber was killed by the police's retaliatory fire. District Police Officer Vahari Mansoor Amman and SP Mohammad Farooq Kamiana reached DHQ Hospital. DPO formed teams to arrest the other escaped robbers.

Virtual University Offers Education Opportunities to Palestinian Students



Deputy Ambassador of Palestine Mr. Nader Al-turk presenting symbolic key of Bait ul Muqaddas to Rector of VU Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Virtual University of Pakistan is ready to offer its services in education sector to Palestinian students living in Pakistan or the students who are in Palestine including Gaza and they have internet access. It was agreed between the Rector of VU Prof. Dr. Arshad Saleem Bhatti and Deputy Ambassador of Palestine Mr. Nader Al-turk in their meeting at the main campuses of the university in Islamabad.

Both sides held a discussion on the plight of Palestinian students in Gaza whose institutions have been destroyed by Israeli indiscriminate attacks and they have neither internet nor electricity.

Rector Dr. Bhatti expressed solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and said that our educational facilities are open for Palestinian students. He briefed the Deputy Ambassador about the courses the students can take in VU.

Democratic gate closed

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert in front of closed gate at Agha Khan Road due to Government employees protest in favor of their demands at Pak-Secretariat in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Israel-Hamas war impacts Pakistan's public diplomacy

Malaika Shahbaz

The ongoing Israel-Hamas war has far-reaching consequences worldwide, but its impact on Pakistan's public diplomacy is especially remarkable. This article investigates how the war affects Pakistan's diplomatic efforts, public opinion, and media representation, with an emphasis on current events in Pakistan, such as boycotts of Israeli products, statewide rallies, media coverage, and the ban on Palestinian flags at sporting events and how these domestic challenges influence the public diplomacy goals of Pakistan and its global image.

Historical context of Pakistan's stance

Pakistan has continuously backed the Palestinian cause, seeing it as a moral and political obligation that aligns with its overall foreign policy goals. This historical stance is the result of religious solidarity, political coalitions within the Muslim world, and longstanding opposition to Israeli policy in occupied regions.

Public Diplomacy Defined

Public diplomacy refers to the means that a country employs to influence public opinion and achieve foreign policy objectives through communication with foreign populations. For Pakistan, public diplomacy is an important tool for communicating its position on the Israel-Hamas conflict. Pakistan hopes to gain international support and demonstrate its solidarity to the Palestinian cause through cultural diplomacy, international broadcasting, and social media. This strategic communication serves to strengthen its historical position while also addressing current geopolitical realities.

Impact on Pakistan's International Relations:

Strengthening ties with Muslim-majority countries.

One of the most immediate effects of Pakistan's public diplomacy activities has been the development of its relations with other Muslim-majority countries. Pakistan joins Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia in condemning Israeli activities and fighting for Palestinian rights. This unity is frequently reflected

in platforms such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), where Pakistan takes an active role. Such unity not only strengthens Pakistan's status in the Muslim world, but also on a worldwide scale.

Relations with Western Countries.

However, Pakistan's position on the Israel-Hamas conflict may hamper its diplomatic relations with Western countries, particularly those with strong pro-Israel policies, such as the United States. While Pakistan is still dedicated to advocating for Palestinian rights, it must manage the complications of maintaining diplomatic and economic relations with these countries.

This careful balancing act demonstrates Pakistan's complex approach to foreign policy, which seeks to preserve its beliefs without alienating vital international partners.

Domestic Impact

Public Opinion and Protests
War between Israel and Hamas has struck a deep chord with the Pakistani people, prompting huge public demonstrations in support of Palestine. Thousands of people have protested in Karachi, Lahore, and Islamabad, demanding justice for Palestinians and opposing Israeli atrocities. These protests demonstrate strong public emotion and strengthen the government's diplomatic stance, emphasizing the congruence of public opinion and official policy.

Boycotts for Israeli products

In response to the conflict, there have been widespread calls in Pakistan to boycott Israeli products. Civil society organizations, student organizations, and political parties have led campaigns to encourage citizens to avoid purchasing Israeli-related goods. These boycotts are part of a larger movement to exert economic pressure on Israel while also demonstrating solidarity with the Palestinian cause. This grassroots campaign demonstrates the level of public interest in the subject and its impact on Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives.

Media Coverage

Despite widespread popular interest, Pakistani media has been chastised for failing to provide significant coverage of

the protests and public acts supporting Palestine. While major news channels cover the violence itself, domestic movements and demonstrations frequently receive little attention.

This gap in coverage has spurred discussions regarding media priorities and journalism's role in highlighting important public sentiment. The media's selective attention raises concerns about its ability to shape public perception and diplomatic narratives.

Ban on Palestinian flags in stadiums.

Another major occurrence was the recent prohibition on Palestinian flags in Pakistani stadiums during matches. This decision, apparently made to avoid politicizing sporting events, has sparked controversy. Many supporters see it as a violation of their freedom to demonstrate solidarity with Palestinians. The ban has spurred new debates about the relationship between politics and sports, as well as the boundaries of public discourse. This event exemplifies broader issues in Pakistan over how public diplomacy and domestic policies converge in obvious and contentious ways.

Impact on Pakistan's Global Image

1) International Perception
Pakistan's outspoken support for Palestine strengthens its image as a leader in pushing for Muslim concerns, boosting its standing in the Muslim world. However, this stance presents complications. Western countries, particularly those who support Israel, may see Pakistan's posture as unfriendly, affecting diplomatic ties. Given this dual picture, Pakistan must carefully balance its diplomatic commitments in order to preserve a positive worldwide image. How Pakistan manages these views is critical to its overall diplomatic strategy and international status.

2) Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

Pakistan's efforts to support Palestine through cultural diplomacy, such as art exhibitions, literary events, and media content, strengthen its soft power. These campaigns present Pakistan as a nation dedicated to human rights and international justice, engendering goodwill among sympathetic

worldwide audiences. Pakistan hopes to develop a narrative that transcends political pronouncements, engaging diverse international populations via common values and cultural expressions.

Challenges and Criticism

Pakistan faces a tremendous issue in combining its strong support for Palestine with preserving diplomatic and economic connections with major powers, particularly the US. This delicate balancing effort necessitates subtle diplomacy in order to avoid serious consequences while remaining true to its ethical position. The capacity to negotiate these complicated relationships is critical to Pakistan's overall strategic objectives and diplomatic effectiveness.

Further, Critics contend that the focus on the Israel-Hamas conflict can often overshadow more serious domestic concerns. While worldwide solidarity is critical, a balanced approach is required to address internal concerns such as economic stability, security, and social welfare. Ensuring that domestic objectives are not overlooked is critical for preserving popular support and national stability.

Conclusion

The Israel-Hamas war has had a significant impact on Pakistan's public diplomacy, affecting international ties, domestic dynamics, and worldwide image. Pakistan's unwavering support for Palestine strengthens its position in the Muslim world and shapes its international diplomatic interactions. However, in order to maintain balance in international relations with big nations, this posture must be navigated carefully. Despite the intricacies of the Israel-Hamas conflict, Pakistan continues to project its position on the world arena by strategically using public diplomacy techniques and responding to local popular sentiment. How Pakistan addresses these multiple difficulties will be critical to its future diplomatic success and international stature.

Writer is student of Bachelors in Defense and Diplomatic studies from Fatima Jinnah women University.



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SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:13 am
Zohr 12:08 pm
Asr 5:08 pm
Maghrib 7:19 pm
Isha 9:02 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance 115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry 117
Railway 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

RPO Dera inaugurated newly constructed police lines

Adam Khan Wazir

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Regional Police Officer Dera Ismail Khan Division Nasir Mehmood Satti inaugurated the newly constructed Police Lines Dera at Police Lines here on Wednesday.

DPO Dera Nasir Mehmood, SP City Tayyab Jan, SP Saddar Khalid Usman, DSP Headquarters and other police officers and police personnel were present on this occasion.

After the inauguration, RPO Dera Nasir Mehmood Satti took a detailed look at the newly constructed kitchen and mess hall and got full awareness of DPO Dera.

Later RPO Dera Nasir Mahmood Satti mingled with the police jawans and officers, where he said while addressing that all resources will be used for the welfare of the police, for which the resources will not be allowed to get in the way, providing quality food and accommodation to the police personnel is among the top priorities of the police department.

On this occasion, he stressed on the policemen and said that the protection of basic human rights, public order and crime prevention are the primary responsibility of the police.

RPO further said, that it is our first priority to take measures on an emergency basis for the welfare and benefits of police force personnel.

Huawei Pakistan, Vice CEO, Ray Yu called on Federal Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Vice CEO Huawei Pakistan, Ray Yu called on the Federal Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui today in Islamabad. In the meeting, matters concerning the progress on agreements made during the Prime Minister's visit to China came under discussion.

Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui stated that youth of Pakistan can play a pivotal role in the development of the IT sector.

He appreciated Huawei's resolve to train 200,000 young



people and offered the support of the Ministry for the setting

up of Training cloud to achieve this task.

Every year, 25000 IT graduates churn out from the universities in Pakistan. However, Only 5000 IT graduates get jobs. We have to equip the youth with training in modern technology to plug this gap, the Minister added.

The Minister also stressed that There are immense opportunities for cooperation between Pakistan and China in the private sector that need to be harnessed in order to further enhance the partnership between the two countries.

National Day of Philippines

ISLAMABAD: Chief Guest, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed along with Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines Maria Agnes M. Cervantes cutting the cake on the occasion of the National Day of the Philippines at a local hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Two-day travel, tourism symposium concludes at PNCA

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Travel and Tourism Symposium jointly organised by Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation and World Bank Pakistan at Pakistan National Council of Arts (PNCA) concluded here the other day.

During the concluding ceremony of the Symposium themed "Building National Economy through Tourism", Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan participated as a special guest.

The two-day event was attended by various tour operators including more than 400 national and international tourism experts, industry experts and decision-makers for the sustainable development of the tourism industry and development of a future roadmap. On the second day of the symposium, the provincial tourism departments informed the participants about the tourism destinations in their provinces and the investment opportunities.

Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said in his address that he will put all the sugges-



tions given by the participants and stakeholders of the conference before the prime minister so that the problems faced in the tourism sector can be solved urgently.

He assured that the government of Pakistan will use all its resources to promote tourism and in this regard, in the coming days, the government is bringing two pilot projects for the promotion of tourism, including double-decker buses for Islamabad and setting up an eco-friendly village in Shakar Pariyaan Islamabad.

He especially thanked all the foreign delegates and investors who participated

in the conference and congratulated MD PTDC and his team for organising such a successful conference.

In his closing address, Managing Director of Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Aftab Ahmad Rana said that the tourism industry is a challenge. The purpose of the event was to bring together tourism stakeholders to benefit from each other's experiences. In which proposals and road maps were compiled for the promotion of tourism at various levels and for introducing Pakistan's tourist destinations and opportunities to the world.

Railway workers to protest against current budget

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The central leaders of Pakistan Railway Workers Union Open Line said that today the government employees of the entire country and the employees of 72 institutions rejected the current budget. Instead of ending the process of privatization, there is a conspiracy to increase it. The government made the people indebted to the IMF in the current budget. All railway organizations will jointly launch a campaign against the budget.

These views were expressed in an important meeting, Pakistan Railway Workers Union Open Line Central Patron in Chief Qadir Khan Mandukhel was present on this occasion. Chief Organizer Ghulam Nabi Brohi, President Anwar Gujjar, Central Senior Vice President Junaid Awan, General Secretary Zafar Malik, Central Information Secretary Mubarak Hussain and others while addressing a special meeting called on the occasion of the budget said that the present government has 36 departments. No decision was taken in favor of contract employees including four lakh employees. We informed the government in every way but our problems were ignored. They will protest against the budget in the whole country. The increase in salaries and pensions is regrettable. The current government has failed miserably in the first budget. Only the IMF was pleased. Today, civil servants across the country and employees of 72 institutions have rejected the current budget.

Budget or manipulation of words: Sheikh Anwar

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Government employees and pensioners are once again ignoring 25% in salaries and 15% increase in pension. This was said by Prime Union Marzi President Sheikh Muhammad Anwar while talking to the media. He has further said that not increasing any allowance is unfair to the employees. Taxes have been killed in the budget. If the minimum salary was increased to 40000 thousand instead of 36000, then the TL A employees would have breathed a sigh of relief. The federal government has not allocated any amount for the dues of retired employees. By all accounts, this budget is not a labor-friendly budget. We reject it.

RCCI terms budget 2024-25 sugar coated

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has termed the financial budget for the year 2024-25 as sugar coated and remarked that an attempt has been made to make the budget superficially acceptable. Reacting to the budget, Saqib Rafiq, President RCCI has said that increasing the tax slab to 45% is unacceptable, strongly rejecting it.

He lauded the increase in tax and duty on luxury and expensive vehicles and appreciated the steps taken in the fiscal budget for digitization of the economy. Saqib Rafiq expressed hope that the tax filing system will be better and easier. He added that reducing expenditures and increase in development funds and allocation of additional funds to non-traditional sectors such as IT is also commendable. Welcoming the increase in the annual budget of BISP, he said that it should be brought on the Akhut model so that employment increases and the economy progresses. It is also highly laudable that the Government is taking serious and practical steps for privatization, which was long demanded from the RCCI and the business community.

Group leader Sohail Altaf said that the increase in tax rate on non-filers is welcome, but we suggest that an out-of-box solution should be taken to increase the tax net, making chamber membership mandatory for businesses.

Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, former Presidents, EC members, representatives from the trade associations, and a large number of members were also present on the occasion.

CISS-AJK analyzes Modi's reelection fallout on regional dynamics



City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: The Centre for International Strategic Studies Azad Jammu and Kashmir (CISS-AJK) hosted a landmark conference titled 'From Campaign Rhetoric to Diplomatic Realities: Modi's Reelection and the India-Pakistan Equation' on Wednesday. The event provided a deep dive into the seismic shifts in regional dynamics triggered by India's recent elections, focusing on the implications for Pakistan.

As part of its academic initiatives to foster research and policy development, CISS-AJK hosted this scholarly forum, drawing a distinguished audience. Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Raja Farooq Haider, was among the notable guests who received a warm welcome from the CISS-AJK research team. The event saw the participation of researchers, dignitaries from academia, civil administration, and media representatives.

Hashoo Group Real Estate Division & Park View Enclave join hands to enhance premium urban residential experiences in Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Two of Pakistan's leading groups, Hashoo Group and Park View Enclave, have joined forces to elevate Islamabad's urban landscape with state-of-the-art residential properties, complete with luxurious amenities, designed to enhance the quality of life in the city.

This strategic collaboration will oversee the development of several key projects in Islamabad, aimed at providing unmatched comfort and convenience to residents. These projects include the development of serviced apartments, the opening of Pearl-Continental Signature Restaurants, and the creation of signature villas, all intended to offer premium living standards.

The partnership was officially launched earlier this evening in the picturesque setting of Park View City, with senior delegates from both organizations in attendance. Sharing his vision for this new venture, Shakir Bhura, Chief Executive Officer of Hashoo Group Real Estate Division, remarked, "We are excited to embark on this new journey with Park View Enclave to enhance luxury living in Islamabad through our combined expertise in real estate development. I am grateful to our partners at Park View Enclave and look forward to achieving our shared goals in the coming years."

Abdul Aleem Khan, Chairman of Park View Enclave, also expressed his enthusiasm for the partnership, stating, "By combining our strengths and vision, we will implement impactful projects that

positively influence Pakistan's real estate landscape through premium living facilities."

Park View Enclave has been the epitome of premium lifestyle services for over 20 years, providing timeless quality through houses, commercial buildings, and much more.

Hashoo Group Real Estate Division offers a comprehensive range of services, including hospitality, residential, corporate, and commercial assets, as well as development services, to facilitate luxurious and welcoming experiences nationwide. With a proven track record of excellence, Hashoo Group Real Estate Division has delivered notable projects such as Pearl City Multan, with exciting upcoming projects currently under development including Pearl-Conti-



mental Hotel Multan and Pearl-Continental Hotel, Mirpur. Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premium conglomerate with a diversified business portfolio spanning

both national and international markets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts and PC Legacy & Hotel One brands

in Pakistan and has business interests encompassing the information technology, investment, travel & tourism, and real-estate sectors.

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Punjab Defamation Act: Protecting Reputations, Or...-I

The entire primetime talk shows overwhelmingly discussed the Punjab government's recently notified Punjab Defamation Act 2024, with the print media generating articles and editorials on the aggressive nature of this law. Social media is rife with criticism of the legislation, which has already been challenged in the Lahore High Court and admitted for hearing.

One question that dominated the discussion on all the shows was why it was so important and special for PML(N) and Punjab, compared to the Federation and other provinces, that this bill—termed draconian and authoritarian by media analysts and legal experts—was bulldozed through the Punjab Assembly, even without the consent of one of its biggest coalition partners, the PPP. The second and most important point discussed was the jurisdictional limitations and enforceability of the Act within Pakistan.

Both questions are difficult to answer. However, while attempting to brainstorm the first question, let us examine the stated objectives, which are to provide legal protection from false, misleading, and defamatory claims made via print, electronic, and social media against public officials and private citizens. These claims violate people's privacy and damage the reputation and image of public figures or the

government by defaming, slandering, and libeling them. The bill is necessary to contain such unwarranted criticism and dislike for a person or authority.

However, analysts view, albeit without any evidence, this Act as an attempt by the PML(N) to consolidate their control and influence in the province by curbing dissent and opposition within their stronghold to ensure smoother governance and political dominance. It might be aimed at centralizing power, streamlining decision-making, and implementing policies, albeit at the cost of democratic processes and coalition dynamics. It may also be an attempt to restrict the activities of rival political groups, curb protests, and control media narratives more tightly.

They also purported again without any conclusive evidence that within the coalition, there could be power struggles and disagreements that have led the PML(N) to act unilaterally. The exclusion of the PPP's consent indicates possible rifts and a desire by PML(N) to assert its dominance over the coalition and provincial governance. There might be underlying economic interests, such as investment projects, land reforms, or industrial policies that the PML(N) government aims to push through with

minimal opposition.

The reply to the other question is even trickier. If alleged defamation occurs outside the province of Punjab, it would face challenges in bringing the alleged defamer to task. It would require coordination with federal authorities or the respective provincial government, through complex legal processes. However, when alleged defamation occurs outside Pakistan, the complexities increase further. The Punjab government lacks the authority to unilaterally enforce its defamation laws internationally. Thus, prosecuting or penalizing individuals residing outside the province and outside Pakistan becomes highly impractical.

Having said this, let us dive deep into the most controversial provisions of the said Act, which are making headlines in print, electronic, and digital media. Let us start with Section 3 of the said Act, which provides a speedy remedy to the person defamed by empowering them to initiate an action under this Act without proof of actual damage or loss. Where defamation is proved, general damages shall be presumed to have been suffered by the person defamed.

The onus to prove that defamation has occurred also does not rest with the

claimant, as the Act does not require the claimant to establish their reputation. It shall be sufficient if they prove any damage, over and above the general damages to their reputation, against the defendant.

The general damages, as defined under Section 2, are damages to be granted by the Tribunal at the time of granting a preliminary decree if the defendant fails to obtain leave to defend in terms of Section 13 of this Act, with a minimum of Rs. 3,000,000/- (Rupees Three Million).

In this definition, the phrase "obtain the leave to defend" is key to understanding the full implication of this law. This means that the defendant cannot automatically defend against the claim but must apply to the tribunal to get permission to present their defense. In case of their failure to obtain leave to defend, the allegations in the claim are deemed to be admitted.

The tribunal will then pass a preliminary decree of general damages in favor of the person defamed, which, according to Section 2 of the said Act, is a minimum of Rs. 3,000,000/-. The story does not end here; there is another layer of deterrent to protect the defamed person. The preliminary decree passed under Section 15(1) cannot be stayed either by the Tribunal or the Lahore High Court.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Al-Azhar welcomes SC endorsement of Gaza truce call

Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, Sunni Islam's highest seat of learning, has welcomed the UN Security Council's endorsement of the resolution to stop the aggression against the Gaza Strip.

The grand imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed Al-Tayeb, hailed the resolution endorsed by the Security Council, which calls for a ceasefire in Gaza, the full withdrawal of Israeli forces, the bilateral release of prisoners and hostages, the return of displaced Palestinians to their homes, the immediate entry of aid into the Gaza Strip, and moving toward the reconstruction of Gaza.

A statement from Al-Azhar said the seminary hopes that the Security Council will be able to ensure all the guarantees required for the implementation of the resolution and for all parties to adhere to it and save the lives of innocent people.

It stressed that the resolution, issued after the loss of more than 37,000 lives, "is a step in the right direction and represents a final opportunity to restore peace and trust in the international community and international institutions, promote global peace and security, and grant the Palestinian people their right to establish their independent state."

Meanwhile, Al-Tayeb received a group of senior secondary students from the Gaza Al-Azhar Institute, Gaza Institute, Khan Yunis Institute, and North Gaza Institute. The male and female students joined Al-Azhar institutes in Cairo to pursue their studies after Israel launched its offensives against Gaza.

Al-Tayeb welcomed the Gazan students to Egypt and Al-Azhar, saying: "Our hearts have been broken over the past six months since the onset of the aggression, and we have felt for you during this human tragedy that has afflicted you day after day. However, our meeting with you today has induced hope in us anew. You have taught the world the meaning of steadfastness, perseverance, hope, and trust in God.

"I see this in your steadfastness and your determination to pursue your education. We at Al-Azhar Al-Sharif are happy to have you with us, and we will work to provide all the amenities that ensure your excellence. My door and the door of Al-Azhar are open to you at any hour of the day or night."

He listened attentively to the students who recounted their ordeals during Israel's invasion and expressed fears about the difficult days ahead.

The students offered Al-Azhar's imam a Palestinian keffiyeh in appreciation for his role in supporting them and advocating for the Palestinian cause.



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

Politics of Captain - I

In the realm of politics, truth can often be hard to find out, and the commitments made by political leaders may not always match reality. After taking office in 2018, Imran Khan faced scrutiny for alleged inaccuracies and unkept promises.

During his election campaign, Imran Khan pledged to revolutionize Pakistan's economy, vowing to generate millions of jobs, eradicate poverty, and stimulate economic growth. However, in reality many of these assurances remained unfulfilled. Economic indicators painted a bleak picture, with escalating inflation, unemployment, and a weakening currency adversely affected ordinary citizens. Khan's economic strategies fallen short, with austerity measures and reliance on loans failed to produce tangible outcomes.

Transparency and accountability were pivotal themes of Imran Khan's political agenda, with commitments to combat corruption and hold the powerful accountable. However, these endeavors were marred by the selective targeting of political adversaries while ignoring allegations of corruption within his own administration. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), tasked with probing corruption, faced accusations of bias and pursuing political vendettas, casting doubt on the sincerity of Khan's anti-corruption campaign.

Imran Khan's tenure was characterized by frequent policy reversals, leading to allegations of inconsistency and a lack of foresight. From his approach to engaging with militant groups to his management of diplomatic relations with India, Khan's

shifting stances left many bewildered and disillusioned. These abrupt changes undermined the credibility of his government and eroded public trust in his ability to fulfill his commitments.

The Ehsaas program, heralded as Pakistan's largest social welfare initiative, aimed to alleviate poverty and empower marginalized communities. However, the program fell short of addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality, with limited impact on improving the lives of the most vulnerable. Furthermore, reductions in social welfare budgets and inadequate implementation hindered the effectiveness of poverty alleviation efforts, leading many to doubt Khan's promises of social justice.

Accusations of democratic regression and the erosion of civil liberties plagued Imran Khan's leadership. From crackdowns on media freedom to allegations of electoral manipulation, his government's adherence to democratic norms came into question. Khan's authoritarian tendencies and intolerance of dissent posed a threat to Pakistan's democratic institutions and diverse society, undermining principles of accountability and transparency.

Regrettably, a culture of sportsmanship is absent in the Pakistani political system. A stark illustration of the absence of sportsmanship in Pakistani politics is evident in the behavior of Imran Khan and his associates, who only acknowledge

victory and consistently deny defeat. Although Imran Khan's government was brought to an end through a legitimate political process, he has a track record of accepting only those outcomes that suit his interests. Following the conclusion of his government, he swiftly shifted blame to the United States and the Pakistani Army for its downfall. The events of May 9th last year showcased actions by Imran Khan and his allies that surpassed what even enemies of Pakistan could do in seven decades.

Despite being incarcerated, he continues to employ tactics aimed at inciting public sentiment against institutions.

Recently, while in jail, Imran Khan accused the country's Army Chief, General Asim

Munir, of directly orchestrating the imprisonment of his wife, Bushra Bibi. Bushra Bibi, aged 49, has been convicted in a corruption case and in a case related to an unlawful marriage with Khan, aged 71. Currently, she remains under house arrest at their Bani Gala residence in the outskirts of Islamabad. Imran Khan made these allegations against the army chief during a conversation with journalists at Adiala Jail, as documented in a post shared on Khan's official social media account. "General Asim Munir is directly implicated in the sentencing of my wife," Khan stated, further asserting that the judge who pronounced her guilty claimed to have been coerced into his decision. He issued threats, declaring

that if any harm were to come to his wife, he would pursue General Munir relentlessly, vowing to expose what he deemed as unconstitutional and illegal actions. Khan decried a state of lawlessness in the country, attributing all actions to the "king of the jungle." He alleged that the dispensation of justice was arbitrary, suggesting that while the "king of the jungle" pardoned all cases against Nawaz Sharif at will, his own party was swiftly punished in multiple instances within days.

Imran Khan has been detained at Adiala Jail since August of the previous year, while Bushra Bibi has been confined to their Bani Gala residence, which has been converted into a sub-jail. She was convicted in February in a case related to an "un-Islamic marriage." Earlier, during a hearing of a corruption case at Adiala Jail, Khan informed the judge of an alleged attempt to poison his wife. He claimed that she exhibited symptoms such as skin and tongue marks as side effects of the alleged poisoning. However, Bushra Bibi's personal physician conducted a medical examination and confirmed that she had not been exposed to any toxic substances.

In the past, Imran Khan has also leveled baseless and erroneous accusations against senior military leadership. A few months ago, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Imran Khan made allegations claiming that a "top intelligence official" was responsible for assassination attempts against him and would bear responsibility if any harm befell him in the future.

To be continued

Past, Present and Future

M Azam Tariq

The year 2024 is poised to be a pivotal one for global democracy, as around sixty-five countries across various continents will engage in the electoral process to elect their respective governments. This extensive wave of elections underscores the universal commitment to democratic governance and the essential role it plays in shaping national futures. Among these, the United States will notably hold its presidential election, a significant event that not only determines the leadership of one of the world's most influential nations but also impacts global political dynamics.

Pakistan, another key player on the international stage, commenced its electoral activities earlier this year with elections held on February 8. Despite facing numerous criticisms and allegations of irregularities, the electoral process proceeded, culminating in the formation of a new government. This event marked a significant moment for Pakistan's political landscape, reflecting the nation's ongoing commitment to its democratic framework. Similarly, Russia has conducted its elections, resulting in the establishment of a new government, which will undoubtedly influence its domestic and foreign policy in the coming years.

In South Asia, both Pakistan and India have now completed their election cycles, leading to the establishment of new governments. These developments are particularly noteworthy given the complex political dynamics in the region. Elections in these countries are not just about internal governance but have profound implications for regional stability and international relations. They play a crucial role

in shaping foreign and economic policies and in fostering regional cooperation and development, which is essential for long-term peace and prosperity in the area.

A persistent issue since the partition of India and Pakistan has been the "Kashmir conflict," which has remained a focal point of tension. This territorial dispute has resulted in three direct wars and an enduring state of indirect conflict between the two nations. This ongoing friction poses a significant threat to regional peace and security. Furthermore, the internal policies of both countries have, at times, exacerbated the situation, causing disruptions at the international level and complicating diplomatic relations.

To mitigate these issues, it is imperative to develop internal policies that are coherent with and supportive of the state's foreign policy. In the modern era, it is crucial to address the challenges faced by minorities and to ensure that all citizens are provided equal opportunities. This equitable approach not only strengthens national unity but also enhances a country's international standing. Moreover, resolving conflicts through dialogue rather than military means should be a priority. Diplomatic solutions allow nations to concentrate on public welfare and development, fostering a more stable and prosperous region.

For India's new government, as well as for the broader South Asian region, adopting a positive and constructive approach in addressing these matters is essential. This strategy should not be limited to India alone but should be a collective effort by all stakeholders involved, aiming to create a more harmonious and cooperative regional environment.

Writer is student at University of Sargodha.

Ambassador of Turkmenistan visits AIOU

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, visited Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and met with the Vice Chancellor, AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood. During the meeting, Mr. Movlamov discussed the potential for enhanced mutual understanding and relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan. Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood expressed the deep historical and cultural ties between the two countries and emphasized the mutual respect and affection between the people of Pakistan and Turkmenistan. He also proposed the establishment of a special section in the AIOU History Museum dedicated to showcasing the literature and work of Turkmenistani poets, researchers, religious, political, and social figures in order to educate the students about the history and culture of Turkmenistan.



The Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, expressed his joy at visiting the university named

after Allama Iqbal. He also assured the creation of a Historical Corner of Turkmenistan within Allama Iqbal Open University. He empha-

sized that the corner would benefit not only the students of Allama Iqbal Open University but also all citizens of Pakistan, providing them with

insight into the history and culture of Turkmenistan. Additionally, the Ambassador visited the Institute of Educational Technology at AIOU.

PRCS empowers flood-affected families with livelihood assistance through Loader Rickshaw distribution



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Under the leadership of Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS), in collaboration with the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), has successfully distributed 210 loader rickshaws to families affected by the monsoon floods of 2022. This initiative forms a crucial part of PRCS's Livelihood Assistance Program during the Recovery Phase.

The loader rickshaws have been allocated to deserving families in five districts of Sindh province, including Dadu, Khairpur, Shikarpur, Larkana, and Qambar Shahdadkot, with each district receiving 35 rickshaws. Additionally, 35 loader rickshaws were distributed in Jaffarabad district of Balochistan. The distribution of loader rickshaws in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will take place after Eid-al-Adha. This initiative aims to strengthen the affected communities by providing a source of income. It is part of PRCS's ongoing efforts to empower communities to regain their livelihoods and move towards a brighter future.

The distribution ceremonies took place during the first and second weeks of June, attended by Secretary General PRCS, Muhammad Abaidullah Khan, Dr. Asfar Shams, Health Coordinator, IFRC Country Delegation Pakistan, officials from the provincial and district branches of PRCS and IFRC Country Delegation, volunteers, community members, and local notables.

PRCS Chairman Sardar Shahid Ahmed Laghari praised the relentless dedication of PRCS staff and volunteers, who continue to provide crucial support to flood-affected communities. He emphasized PRCS's steadfast commitment to restoring normalcy through multifaceted programs, including livelihood assistance, shelter construction, cash assistance, and health and hygiene initiatives.

Road network for hilly areas, Dev. On China's Mous: A. Aleem Khan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Investment Board Abdul Aleem Khan has directed that the National Highway Authority should further improve the quality of all Motorways and ensure speedy completion of under-construction roads and highways. He has further directed that NHA should immediately prepare plan of its own Emergency Medical and Helicopter service at all Motorways for accidents. He expressed these views while presiding over high level meeting at National Highway Authority where he directed that to pay more attention to the construction and repair of those roads which can be completed from beginning to the end so that these could be more useful for the masses. Federal Minister for Communications also directed that National Highway Authority to arrange special training with in next 6 months for the drivers of heavy vehicles and make sure that they follow all the rules and regulations on Motorways. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan urged the officers of the Authority to perform their duties honestly, with dedication and devotedly. He added that we all have to be accountable to Allah Almighty so we have to give priority to our country and masses. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that special attention should be given to the construction of roads connecting to the Northern Regions because the improvement of the road network is the basic requirement for tourism including Kaghan, Naran to Chilas, Gilgit and Skardu. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that tourism can be promoted on a large scale through highways with better infrastructure. Federal Minister of Communications Abdul Aleem Khan while directing the immediate progress on the various agreements and MOUs of the recent visit of China and said that he himself will monitor its follow-up.

In the high-level meeting of the National Highway Authority, special consideration was given to NHA projects in rural Sindh and a proposal was made to contact the Sindh Government regarding the construction of some highways, there. Federal Secretary Communications Ali Sher Mehsud and Chairman National Highway Authority Arshad Majeed briefed the meeting while senior officers informed about the progress of ongoing construction projects with the support of national and foreign funding.

Over 40 dead as massive fire engulfs building in Kuwait

At least 41 people have been killed in a massive fire at a building housing workers in southern Kuwait early on Wednesday, the country's deputy prime minister said during a visit to the site, Gulf News reported.

Kuwait's Deputy PM Sheikh Fahad Yusuf Saud Al Sabah, who also runs the interior and defense ministries, held real estate owners accountable for the fire in Kuwait's city of Mangaf, accusing them of violations and greed.

He said: "Unfortunately, the greed of real estate owners is what leads to these matters."

According to Major General Eid Rashed Hamad, the fire was reported to the authorities at 6:00am local time (0300 GMT).

"The building in which the fire occurred was used to house workers, and there was a large number of workers there," another senior police commander said.

"Dozens were rescued, but unfortunately there were many deaths as a result of inhaling smoke from the fire."

The senior police official added that they "always alert and warn against" cramming too many workers into housing accommodation.

However, he did not provide details on the workers' type of employment or place of origin.

The fire was contained and authorities were investigating its cause, officials said.

Balochistan Home Minister Hails EU, UN Support to Rule of Law Sector

Bureau Report

QUETTA: In his concluding remarks at the 7th Steering Committee meeting of the European Union-funded 'Deliver Justice Project', Balochistan Home Minister, Mr. Ziaullah Langua, hailed the European Union and UN partners for supporting the Government's rule of law reform agenda. He further said, "It is a journey that we all look forward to as we take the work under the new Rule of Law Roadmap to the next level to realize our vision of a people centered rule of law in Balochistan." He also appreciated the Police, Levies, Prosecution, Probation and Parole, and Prisons for their commendable work by improving their legal and operational capacities.



aligning ongoing efforts on legislative, police, prison, and women-focused reforms. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of citizen-centered and evidence-based rule of law initiatives.

Highlighting the need for Government's ownership and provision of matching resources for effective implementation of the Rule of Law Roadmap, Mr. Jeroen Willems, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Pakistan stated that revalidated Rule of Law Roadmap 2023-2026 was pivotal in advancing justice, peace, and security, particularly for women and girls.

He also said that data-centric, results-based approaches remained the backbone of the roadmap, serving as a tool to monitor progress and make timely decisions, while citizen-centric interventions aimed to enhance public trust in the justice system.

Dr. Jeremy Milsom, Representative, UNODC Country Office, thanked the Government of Balochistan for their vision and commitment and facilitating the revalidation and approval of the revised Roadmap. He also emphasized the need for institutional leadership to embrace evidence-based

approaches to improve performance, noting the effectiveness of such methodologies in order to measure institutional performance and implementing robust reforms.

Mr. Arsalan Malik, Criminal Justice and Reforms Advisor from the UNODC Country Office in Pakistan, presented project updates and the 2024 work plan. He commended the Government of Balochistan's commitment, as evidenced by the adoption of PC-1 and the initiation of the second phase of reforms through the endorsement of the Action Plan 2024-26.

Pakistan Faces Challenges in Gender Parity

World Economic Forum Launches Global Gender Gap Report 2024.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan ranks 145th out of 146 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2024. This represents a decline from its 142nd position in 2023, highlighting growing challenges in achieving gender parity.

Amir Jahangir, Chief Executive Officer of Mishal Pakistan, the Country Partner Institute of the World Economic Forum said, "Pakistan's performance in the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 is a stark reminder of the persistent gender disparities that hinder our nation's progress. Despite some improvements in educational attainment, significant gaps remain in economic participation, political empowerment, and health.

He further said, "Pakistan's performance in the Global Gender Gap Report 2024 highlights the urgent need for more effective and impactful gender empowerment initiatives. While efforts have been made, the overall impact on gender parity remains limited. To address these challenges, the government must prioritize comprehensive policies that promote women's participation in the workforce, ensure equitable access to quality education at all levels, and enhance women's representation in political and leadership roles. Strengthening institutional frameworks and fostering a culture of inclusivity are crucial steps towards achieving gender parity and unlocking the full potential of Pakistan's human capital."

"Global gender parity isn't just an aspiration; it's an imperative for sustainable development and social justice. We must collectively commit to empowering women and girls with equal opportunities and rights to build a more inclusive and prosperous future for all." -Puruash Chaudhary

The report underscores critical areas where Pakistan must focus its efforts to bridge the gender gap:



Economic Participation and Opportunity: Pakistan ranks 143rd in this subindex with a score of 0.360. The country faces significant gender disparities in labor-force participation (30.4%, ranked 140th), wage equality (ranked 81st), and representation in senior roles (6.1%). These indicators reflect the urgent need for policies and initiatives that promote women's economic empowerment and leadership.

Educational Attainment: With a score of 0.836, Pakistan ranks 139th in this subindex. Despite slight improvements, notable gaps persist in literacy (67.1%, ranked 137th) and varying levels of educational enrollment. Primary (87.6%), secondary (84.3%), and tertiary education (92.6%) enrollment rates indicate progress, but the pace remains slower compared to other countries.

Health and Survival: Pakistan's score remains stable at 0.961, ranking 132nd. The country shows parity in sex ratio at birth but lags in healthy life expectancy.

Political Empowerment: This subindex sees the most significant decline, with Pakistan ranking 112th and scoring 0.122. The representation of women in parliament (19.3%) and ministerial positions (6.3%) reflects substantial gender imbalances in political leadership.

Regional Context - South Asia
In South Asia, Pakistan ranks seventh with a gender parity score of 63.7%. The region has shown modest improvements since 2006, but challenges persist. South Asia ranks lowest in Economic Participation and Opportunity, with significant gender disparities in labor-force participation and leadership roles. Educational Attainment scores 94.5%, indicating progress but with gaps in literacy and education, particularly in Pakistan and Nepal. Health and Survival remains stable at 95.4%, while Political Empowerment sees a slight decline to 26%, reflecting gender imbalances in ministerial and parliamentary representation across the region.

Saadia Zahidi, Managing Director, World Economic Forum on the launch of the report said, "Gender parity is fundamental to whether and how economies and societies thrive. The Global Gender Gap Report 2024 highlights the urgent need for action to close gender gaps and ensure equal opportunities for all. Pakistan's performance underscores the critical need for comprehensive strategies to address gender disparities and promote inclusive growth."

Global Overview

In 2024, the global gender gap

score across 146 countries is 68.5%. Compared to last year, the gap has narrowed slightly by +0.1 percentage points to 68.6% for both the full sample and the 101 countries tracked since 2006. Progress has slowed, indicating it will take 134 years to achieve full gender parity, far beyond the 2030 Sustainable Development Goal target. Iceland leads the index with 93.5% closure, while European economies dominate the top 10, including Finland, Norway, and Sweden. Health and Survival and Educational Attainment gaps are nearly closed, while Economic Participation and Opportunity and Political Empowerment remain more challenging, with significant regional variations.

The Global Gender Gap Report 2024 calls for concerted efforts by governments, businesses, and civil society to accelerate progress towards gender equality. In Pakistan, addressing the gender gap requires targeted policies that promote women's economic participation, enhance educational opportunities, improve healthcare access, and increase political representation.

The World Economic Forum, committed to improving the state of the world, is the International Organization for Public-Private Cooperation. The Forum engages the foremost political, business, cultural, and other leaders of society to shape global, regional, and industry agendas.

Mishal Pakistan is Pakistan's leading strategic communication and design company. It is a multi-year award winning strategic planning company. Mishal is the Country Partner Institute of the World Economic Forum. Mishal generates primary data on more than 200 indicators measuring Pakistan's growth and competitiveness. Mishal's foremost domain of activity is behavior change communication, strategic communication with a spotlight on media, and perception management.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
72,797.43	72,589.49	
Day's High	Day's Low	
73,169.00	72,464.24	
Index Value	Change	
5,805,060,171	+207.94	
Percentage	Time	
+0.29%	12 Jun, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,215.48	+67.67	
Percentage	Time	
+0.83%	12 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,807.76	+60.34	
Percentage	Time	
+0.16%	12 Jun, 1:28 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,876.71	-258.08	
Percentage	Time	
-0.66%	12 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182	184
Bahrain Dinar	740.88	748.88
Canadian Dollar	204	206
China Yuan	38.38	38.78
Danish Krone	40.14	40.54
Euro	296	299
Hong Kong Dollar	35.66	36.01
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.19	917.19
Malaysian Ringgit	59.3	59.9
New Zealand \$	170.79	172.79
Norwegians Krone	25.97	26.27
Omani Riyal	723.52	731.52
Qatari Riyal	76.42	77.12
Saudi Riyal	73.1	73.85
Singapore Dollar	203.5	205.5
Swedish Korona	26.4	26.7
Swiss Franc	309.94	312.44
Thai Bhat	7.56	7.71
U.A.E Dirham	75	75.9
UK Pound Sterling	350.5	353
US Dollar	277.7	280.5

Undocumented economy depress investment and tax compliance: Mian Zahid Hussain

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain said on Wednesday that it is difficult to provide any relief to the masses and business community as taxes worth 4000 billion rupees are not being collected. He said the new budget is expected to set a revenue target of 12900 billion rupees, 3500 billion rupees more than the current target. The sales tax rate is also likely to increase. Mian Zahid Hussain said that if the difference between filers and non-filers is not removed in the new budget, the economy will not be fully digitized, and the tax base will not increase by five percent; then, the budget measures will affect the public, the salaried class, and the tax-paying business community. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the current

tax system relies on indirect taxes and targets the commoner while rewarding tax evaders. In the presence of skewed taxation, the country's development is impossible, he added. The business leader said that a series of measures have been initiated to manage the country's economy, and good results have come out. Inflation has come down; agricultural production has increased substantially, imports have decreased, and exports have increased slightly, bringing Pakistan's current account out of deficit. Despite the efforts, some sections are not ready to pay any tax, so the policy of transferring the entire burden to the taxpayers has been adopted, which has broken the backs of the people. On the other hand, non-tax-paying and tax-dodging sectors, including property, agricultural income, professionals, wholesalers, and retailers, are flourishing. Mian Zahid Hussain said that the poor



and middle class are continuously targeted. At the same time, those belonging to influential sectors benefit from all possible reliefs and

tax concessions. They will try to continue this trend even after the budget. The government's priorities will remain the same in the next financial year as before the budget. If the landed elite, real estate tycoons, wholesalers, retailers, and professionals continue to pay negligible taxes and carry on cash transactions, the tax burden will fall on the existing taxpayers and the public, reducing tax payments and investment. He demanded that the government refrain from targeting the industrial sector to boost revenue. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that realizing the commoner's plight, the government must bring the undocumented economy into the tax net to broaden the tax base and distribute the tax burden fairly. It will help stop the continuous punishment of the common people and taxpayers. A fair and comprehensive tax system makes sustainable economic growth and prosperity possible.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan called on Minister for Defence and Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Budget is a mix of sweet and sour: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has termed the budget 2024-25 as a difficult one in which some of the proposed measures are praiseworthy while the others are alarming and disturbing. He expressed these views during a press conference at the Chamber House on Wednesday evening on the budget proposals presented by the federal government. He said that instead of broadening the tax net, the government has fixed the tax target of Rs.12970 billion which will definitely increase burden on the existing taxpayers. Imposition of excise duty on cement and the allocation of huge amounts for the debt servicing could prove detrimental for the country, he warned. He also said that the government has badly ignored an important and vibrant sector of tourism which can generate huge foreign exchange for the country in lieu of some attention. However, he described the increase in the salaries of the government servant as well as the laborer wages as good steps. He added that after the detailed study of the



budget document, he will be able to give a comprehensive reaction of the Chamber. Vice President Faad Waheed also termed the budget as disturbing by saying the tax on mobile phones, textile industry and exporters will badly hurt the business atmosphere in the country however he described the privatization of the PIA, incentives for the solar industry as commendable steps. Vice President Eng. Azhar ul Islam Zafar said that increase in FED on cement will cause further unemployment in the country, however he appreciated the

concessions for the steel scrap business. President IEAA Sardar Tahir Mehmood rejected the imposition of capital gain tax and federal excise duty on the transfer of immovable property. President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran Ajmal Baloch expressed his astonishment on the imposition of taxes on the transfer of immovable property, mobile phones etc. The Press conference was largely attended by the former ICCI Presidents, executive members and representatives of the trader's community.

BankIslami launches exclusive Priority Banking Lounge

Commerce Desk

space.

LAHORE: BankIslami, a leading financial institution, is proud to announce the opening of its exclusive Priority Banking lounge for Freelancers and IT Exporters a cost-free workspace. This initiative aims to provide a pleasant environment for freelancers to work, collaborate, and network. The BankIslami Priority Lounges are equipped with modern facilities, ensuring a productive and comfortable experience for freelancers, absolutely free of cost. With features like free access to hi-speed internet, free refreshments including coffee/tea, and convenient access to banking services, freelancers can now enjoy a seamless and efficient work-

At Lahore BankIslami Raya Branch, the event was attended by esteemed guests & individuals from BankIslami, PAFLA & SBP along with top freelancers from Pakistan. From the State Bank of Pakistan, Senior Joint Director - Foreign Exchange Operation Department Mr. Javed H Nayyar, graced the event as the guest of honor. BankIslami's representative voiced his thoughts, highlighting, "We understand how essential freelancers & IT Exporters are for Pakistan's economy. Our Priority Banking lounges are designed to empower freelancers & IT Exporters by providing them with a conducive workspace and access to banking services."

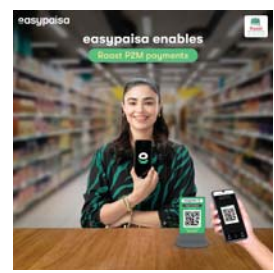
PIAF nominates Shah Alam Market's leader to contest LCCI polls

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (PIAF) has announced to nominate Shah Alam Market leader Rana Nisar as its new candidate for Lahore Chamber election 2024 from the Shah Alam Market Board during their visit to the PIAF Office. A trade delegation under the leadership of Khawaja Amir, President Central Shah Alam Market Board and Secretary General Rana Nisar, Shah Alam Market Board officials and members along with the Presidents General Secretaries of the main markets of Lahore arrived at the main office of PIAF. Patron PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman PIAF Fahimur Rahman Saihgol, Former Chairman PIAF Muhammad Ali Mian, Mian Abuzar Shad, Senior Vice Chairman PIAF Nasrullah Mughal, Vice Chairman PIAF Tahir Manzoor Chaudhary, Senior Vice President Lahore Chamber Zafar Mehmood, other leaders of PIAF received them. Patron Chief PIAF Mian Anjum Nisar and Chairman PIAF Fahimur Rahman Saihgol, addressing the delegation, said that PIAF has an excellent record of 22 years of service to the business community because PIAF brings qualified and working people to Lahore to advocate for the business community. Fahimur Rahman Saihgol said that Rana Nisar from Shah Alam Market Board will prove to be a strong candidate due to his extensive experience in dealing with market problems and serving traders. Mian Anjum Nisar provisionally nominated Rana Nisar as a hopeful from the PIAF in the Associate Class which the House applauded and supported. He advocated for the policy rate to be reduced to a single-digit figure to alleviate the financial burden on the business community and stimulate economic activity. Anjum Nisar highlighted that the tight monetary policy, combined with the government's significant domestic borrowing, has left minimal room for business growth.

easypaisa Enables Raast P2M Payments to Digitize Person-to-Merchant Transactions

Commerce Desk



KARACHI: easypaisa, has elevated its service offerings by integrating the Raast P2M (Person to Merchant) payments system on its platform. The State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) Raast P2M payment mechanism is designed to accelerate the digitization of merchant and business transactions nationwide. The service aims to facilitate and simplify digital payment acceptance for merchants and promote business growth. The strategic move by the SBP reflects a significant leap towards establishing a digital and

financially inclusive economy. Farhan Hassan, Head of easypaisa Wallet Business, remarked, "Integrating Raast P2M with easypaisa amplifies our mission to spearhead a financially inclusive Pakistan, enabling businesses and merchants to receive instant customer payments."

3rd International Conference on Islamic Leasing (Ijarah) Explores Innovation and Growth

Spokesman Report

DUBAI, UAE: The 3rd International Conference on Islamic Leasing (Ijarah) is set to convene in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, from September 7th to 10th, 2024. Organized by AlHuda CIBE in partnership with Uzbekistan Leasing Association and Uzbekleasing International AO, this prestigious event promises to be a pivotal gathering for industry leaders, experts, and stakeholders from across the globe. The conference will explore into the critical role of Ijarah, a cornerstone of Islamic finance, in driving growth, fostering economic sustainability, and expanding financial inclusion strategies. The theme of innovation and growth will be central to the conference. Participants can expect in-depth discussions and presentations exploring the development of new Shariah-compliant leasing products. Experts will shed light on effective strategies based on Islamic principles that can unlock the full potential of Ijarah. A key focus will be on how Ijarah can contribute to the expansion of the Islamic finance industry worldwide, with the ambitious goal of reaching a \$4 trillion market size by the end of 2025. The conference transcends geographical boundaries, fostering a global exchange of knowledge and best practices. Delegates from over 15 countries are anticipated to participate, enriching the discussions with diverse perspectives and experiences. Prominent industry leaders will share their insights on Ijarah's role in promoting financial inclusion for both Muslim and non-Muslim populations. This commitment to financial inclusion underscores the conference's dedication to supporting the development of a more equitable and accessible financial landscape. The conference program will be comprehensive and investigate into a wide range of topics relevant to the future of Islamic finance. Attend-

ees can expect sessions focused on innovative product development in Islamic leasing, exploring new Shariah-compliant leasing structures that cater to evolving market needs. Investment opportunities within the Islamic leasing space will be analyzed, providing participants with insights into potential areas of growth and diversification. The conference will also explore the application of Shariah principles in fostering broader economic development, highlighting



the contribution of Islamic finance to sustainable and responsible economic growth. Mr. Mughal emphasizes the significant share of Ijarah holds within the Islamic finance landscape. He estimates it accounts for roughly 25% of the industry, followed by Murabahah (cost-plus profit) products at 46%. Diminishing Musharakah (home financing) sits at 12%, while Salam and Istisna (advance sale) products represent around 5%. Mudarabah and Musharakah (partnership-based products) hold a smaller share of approximately 2%, with the remaining portion encompassing other Islamic financing instruments. Mr. Mughal highlights a key advantage of Ijarah: its ease of introduction in jurisdictions with limited legal frameworks for Islamic finance. He suggests that Ijarah products can be effectively offered in European and American markets without requiring significant regulatory changes. This accessibility presents a potentially

lucrative opportunity for expanding the global reach of Islamic finance. The conference aims to address this growth potential. By bringing together stakeholders, the event seeks to explore innovative product development in Islamic leasing. Discussions will focus on attracting investment opportunities within this sector. Additionally, the conference will examine the application of Shariah principles in fostering broader economic development. This holistic approach positions Ijarah as a key driver for not only financial inclusion but also sustainable economic progress. Mr. Mughal emphasizes the critical role of the banking and finance sector in driving economic prosperity. He acknowledges the impressive double-digit growth of Islamic banking and finance globally in recent years. The conference seeks to build on this momentum by providing a platform for addressing potential challenges and strengthening

Punjab to launch 40-day summer sports camps from June 25 to August 3

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Sports Department is going to launch a 40-day summer sports camps from June 25 to August 3 in all divisions of the province. Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said this while addressing a press conference at National Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that summer sports camps of 12 games, including athletics, archery, badminton, table tennis, hockey, football, tennis, swimming, cricket, karate, taekwondo and gymnastics will be organized in Lahore while the camps of six games will be conducted in other divisions of the province.

He said that the children of 5 to 16 years of age could participate in the summer sports camps. "June 15 is the last



date for registration of 40-day summer camp. Sports events will be organized among the participants of camp to judge their game and fitness level during the last three days of summer camp."

He informed that the members of our selection committee will attend the

summer camps to monitor and evaluate the performance of all participants and the athletes who will be selected on the basis of performance will be retained for further grooming and nurturing.

Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that yoga classes will be conducted for the parents

accompanying children in summer sports camp. "The registration of summer camp is being done online this year for the convenience of camp probables. "The registration fee is Rs 2,000 in Lahore while the fee is Rs 500 in the rest of the divisions," he added.

India avoid USA scare to reach T20 World Cup 2024 Super 8s



NEW YORK: Arshdeep Singh's four-fer, followed by Suryakumar Yadav's unbeaten half-century led India to a hard-fought victory over the United States of America (USA) in the 25th match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

The seven-wicket victory propelled India to the Super 8s of the ongoing mega event.

India had to make hard yards to chase down the 111-run target as the USA bowlers bowled tightly.

The former champions got off to an unwanted start to the run-chase as they lost both their openers Virat Kohli (0) and Rohit Sharma (3) inside three overs with just 15 runs on the board.

Following the early debacle, Suryakumar Yadav joined Rishabh Pant in the middle and the two combined to anchor the run chase.

Pant and Yadav added 29 runs for the third wicket before the former was cleaned

up by Ali Khan in the eighth over. Yadav then stitched a match-winning partnership with Shivam Dube and steered India over the line in the penultimate over.

Suryakumar Yadav top-scored for India with an unbeaten 50 off 49 deliveries while Dube made a 35-ball 31 not out.

Saurabh Netravalkar was the pick of the bowlers for the USA with two wickets while Ali Khan took one.

Sent into bat first, the USA could only accumulate 110/8 in the allotted 20 overs despite Nitish Kumar's brisk 27 in the middle.

The co-hosts had a disastrous start to their innings as their opener Shayam Jahangir (0) and wicketkeeper batter Andries Gous (2) fell victim to Arshdeep in the first delivery of the innings. In-form Aaron Jones then briefly stabilized the proceedings with a cautious third-wicket partnership with Steven Taylor.

The duo added 22 runs for the third wicket until Jones perished in the eighth over after scoring 11 off 22 deliveries with the help of a six.

Taylor then joined forces with Nitish Kumar and the pair added a further 31 runs to the USA total before the former finally departed in the 19th over.

Steven Taylor scored 24 off 30 deliveries, laced up with two sixes.

Kumar then knitted a brief one-sided partnership with Corey Anderson before Arshdeep Singh struck again for India to dent USA's march.

He remained the top scorer for the USA with 27 off 23 deliveries, featuring two fours and a six.

Following his dismissal, Anderson (15), Harneet Singh (10) and Shadley van Schalkwyk (11*) added valuable runs to the home side's total at the backend.

Arshdeep Singh spearheaded India's bowling charge with exceptional figures of 4/9 in his four overs, followed by Hardik Pandya, who bagged two wickets.

Left-arm spinner Axar Patel chipped in with a wicket.

The seven-wicket victory strengthened India's grip at the summit of Group A of the T20 World Cup 2024 with six points in three matches while USA remained second with four points in as many matches.

Pakistan players on the rise in ICC Men's T20I Rankings



A Sports

DUBAI: Pakistan players including white-ball captain Babar Azam excelled in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's T20I Rankings, updated Wednesday.

Pakistan captain Babar Azam, who scored a run-a-ball 33 in a tense run chase against Canada on Tuesday, jumped a spot to claim the third spot in the T20I batting rankings. Whereas, wicketkeeper batter Mohammad Rizwan slipped to fourth.

Returning pacer Mohammad Amir registered a significant rise in the bowling rankings by jumping up 65 spots to 82nd while Naseem Shah moved up 21 spots to joint 43rd.

Furthermore, left-arm spinner Imad Wasim, jumped five places to claim the 34th rank. Imad also jumped one spot to 11th in the T20I all-rounder's rankings whereas Shadab slipped three places to 14th.

On the contrary, Pakistan's ace pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi, who has been far from his best, has slipped a

spot to 12th in the ICC Men's T20I Bowling Rankings. Whereas, right-arm speedster Haris Rauf slipped two places to 26th.

According to the apex cricketing body, Afghanistan's veteran all-rounder Mohammad Nabi was the "big winner" in the latest rankings update as he claimed the top spot in the T20I all-rounders rankings, following his two wicket-haul against New Zealand.

"Veteran Mohammad Nabi is the big winner in the latest rankings update, with the 39-year-old rising to the No.1 spot on the list for all-rounders following his recent two-wicket haul against New Zealand in Guyana," stated ICC in a press release.

"Nabi jumps up two places to first on the updated T20I rankings for all-rounders, with Australia's Marcus Stoinis rising three places to claim second spot and previous No.1-ranked player Shakib Al Hasan drooping four rungs to fifth as a result of the major shake-up at the top.

Yango partners with Myco for exclusive ICC T20 World Cup 2024 live-streaming

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Yango, an international tech company, is excited to announce a strategic partnership with Myco, the innovative web3 streaming platform. This collaboration will bring a thrilling new feature to Yango users: the ability to live stream ICC T20 World Cup 2024 matches directly from the Yango app at no additional cost.

From the beginning of the ICC T20 World Cup 2024, Yango users will notice the Myco banner within the app. By clicking on the banner, users can access live streams of all the World Cup matches, ensuring they don't miss a moment of the action and excitement. This "Ride, Watch and Earn" initiative enhances the user experience by combining the convenience of Yango's services with the thrill of live cricket streaming.

In addition to live streaming, Myco will provide Yango users with exclusive promo codes. These promo codes will offer amazing discounts on rides with Yango, making travel more affordable while enjoying world-class cricket entertainment. Users can look forward to these promo codes being available throughout the World Cup, ensuring continuous benefits both on and off the field.

"We are excited to partner with Myco to offer users a unique experience during the ICC T20 World Cup 2024" said Miral Sharif, Country Manager at Yango Pakistan. "This partnership not only provides live cricket streaming but also rewards users with valuable discounts on their rides."

Commenting on the occasion, Somair Rizvi, Chief Operation Officer at Myco said: "You all have seen the Yango brand on the road, and now we are thrilled to incorporate our streaming service within the multi-functional app through this exciting new partnership. You can now enjoy your Yango services while seamlessly watching the World Cup on Myco. So get ready to "Ride, Watch, and Earn" with Yango."

Lionel Messi expects Inter Miami to be his final club

Sports desk

LAHORE: Argentine football superstar Lionel Messi says he expects Inter Miami to be the club where he closes his legendary playing career, but he is not intending to depart right away.

Messi, who has a contract with the MLS squad until the end of the 2025 campaign, made his comments to ESPN in an interview to be broadcast on Wednesday.

"Yes, as of today, I think it's going to be my last club," Messi told ESPN.

But Messi, who turns 37 on June 24, also added, "I'm not ready to leave football either."

The record eight-time Ballon d'Or winner became a legend with Barcelona, helping capture four Champions League crowns and 10 La Liga titles.

Lionel Messi sparked Argentina victories in the 2021 Copa America and 2022 World Cup and is set to play for Argentina in this month's Copa America, to be staged in the United States.

After playing for Barca from 2004-2021, Messi joined Paris Saint-Germain from 2021-2023 and then moved to Inter Miami last year, helping the club win the Leagues Cup crown in his early days with the squad.

"It was a difficult step to leave Europe to come here," Messi said. "The fact of having been world champion helped a lot to see things differently also."

Messi's star turn raised the profile for MLS in the United States, matches selling out wherever he plays and his shirt by far the most popular among MLS jersey purchasers.

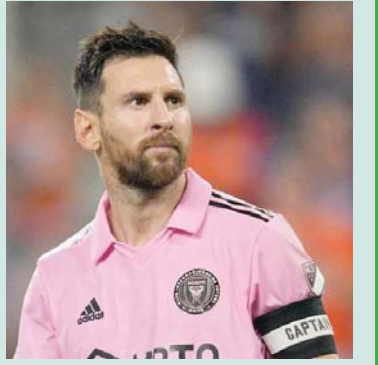
Lionel Messi now ponders playing for his homeland in the 2026 World Cup, to be co-hosted by the USA with Mexico and Canada, and is contemplating the end of his incredible career.

"My whole life I did this. I love playing ball. I enjoy the training, the day every day, of the matches. A little afraid that everything will end," Messi said.

"I try to enjoy. That's why I enjoy everything much more, because I'm aware that there's less and less to go and I have a good time at the club."

"How lucky I am to have colleagues and friends by my side. I had a good time in the selection, where I have teammates and friends too, and many of them, and I enjoy the little details that I know I'm going to miss when I don't play anymore."

Notably, Lionel Messi, who joined Inter Miami in July last year will remain with the club until 2025.



Pakistan hockey team recaptures lost Olympic title in Mexico: Tariq Aziz

Abdul Majid

FAISLAABAD: On October 26, 1968, at the end of the hockey final of the Mexico Olympics, when the national anthem of Pakistan was being played and the flag was being raised, then the victorious captain Tariq Aziz decorated his chest with a gold medal and considered himself the luckiest person in the world. were beside

Under his leadership, the Pakistani hockey team not only regained the lost Olympic title, but this victory also gave a new lease of life to Pakistan's hockey.

After losing to India in the finals of the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, the Pakistani hockey team had to face defeat in the finals of the 1966 Bangkok Asian Games to their arch-rivals, after which the reliability of the Pakistani hockey team was questioned. General opinion had changed.

This is the reason that when the Pakistani team was leaving for Mexico, it was not considered as the favorite for the gold medal, but the magnificent performance of the team in this Olympics is a part of history and the winners who define these historical moments. The captain of the team is Tariq Aziz.

Talking to BBC Urdu, 83-year-old Tariq Aziz says, "Keeping in

mind the height of seven and a half thousand feet above the sea level of Mexico, the training camp was set up in Lower Topa near Murree."

The players worked hard in this three-month long camp. The reins of the Pakistan Hockey Federation had come into the hands of Air Marshal Noor Khan while Brigadier Atif had been appointed as the manager of the team.

He says that at that time, some journalists criticized Atif. Atif said that journalists sitting in Lahore and criticizing come to the camp and watch the preparation of the team and then write whatever comes to their heart. When these journalists came to the national camp and saw the training of the team, they had to change their opinion.

'Crazy reply' to Dutch manager

Pakistan opened the Mexico Olympics by defeating the Netherlands by six goals, including Rashid Junior's three goals, Tanveer Dar's two goals and Asad Malik's one goal each.

Tariq Aziz says that 'I met the manager of Holland one night before this match and he asked me what do you think about tomorrow's match? I patiently replied that it would be a good match but he said no. We will win this match. I said to them that I did not tell



you that we will win but now if you are saying this then listen tomorrow's match we will win.

Tariq Aziz says that the Holland manager also told me that our team is afraid of one of your players, center forward Tariq Niazi, he is a very dangerous player. If we have them, no team in the world can beat us.

After hearing this, I replied, don't worry. In tomorrow's match, we are not feeding Tariq Niazi, we will feed a junior player and beat

you with him.

Tariq Aziz says that "I used to go for a walk every evening with manager Atif". A day before the match against Holland, Atif asked me whether to feed the experienced Tariq Niazi or give the new player Rashid Junior a chance at the centre-forward position. During this conversation, it was decided that Rashid Jr. should be fed.

Tariq Aziz says that Rashid Jr. was a very lucky player. He did not

score many goals during practice in the camp, but on the day when Air Marshal Noor Khan visited the camp, he would score two or three goals.

Tariq Aziz says that Atif made important changes in the team after becoming the manager. He was preceded by Brigadier Hamidi as manager who dropped Rashid Jr. from the camp even though he was picked by the selectors.

After Atif became the manager,

Rashid Jr. was fed center forward instead of right-in and his experiment was successful. Rashid Jr. proved to be the best scorer in his career. Pakistani team has not lost any match

The Pakistani hockey team went undefeated in the Mexico Olympics, winning all their ten matches.

Tariq Aziz talks about the group match against Australia, 'At the end of the first half, Australia had a two-to-one lead. On this occasion, Air Marshal Noor Khan was looking worried and was asking me what will happen. I consoled them and said don't worry, we will win this match. In the second half we scored two goals. I scored both goals on penalty corners.

Pakistan defeated West Germany by one goal in the semi-final after a tight contest.

Tariq Aziz says that this match was equal at the appointed time. We also got a penalty stroke on one of my penalty corners but Saeed Anwar wasted it.

The goal could not be scored even in extra time. Khalid Mahmood, the right-out in sudden death, scored a beautiful goal while dodging three players to take us to the final.

'Assad can't keep Malik out'

Tariq Aziz says that 'During the tournament, Atif told me that Air Marshal Noor Khan thinks that

we should try Laeac Ahad instead of Asad Malik, but I have told him without talking to you that the captain does not agree. Therefore, if they talk to you, you should also give the same answer.'

When Air Marshal Noor Khan mentioned this, I told him that I think we are winning because of Asad Malik. The team is also winning so I can't rule them out. I was proved right because in the final against Australia, Asad Malik scored the decisive goal and made Pakistan the Olympic champion.

Pakistan scored a total of twenty-six goals in the Mexico Olympics, in which Rashid Jr.'s seven, Tanveer Dar's six and Asad Malik's five goals were notable.

When the Pakistani team returned home after winning the Mexico Olympics, like the victory in the Rome Olympics, this time also the winning players were taken to different cities where they were warmly welcomed.

President General Ayub Khan announced the prizes for the players. The action photo of Asad Malik, who scored the decisive goal in the final, was adorned for the first time on Pakistan's postage stamp.

The government also announced Pride of Performance Award for captain Tariq Aziz and Khalid Mahmood.

Protest

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert at main gate of Parliament house in the Federal Capital, during government employee's protest to demand rise in wage and pension, whilst they march towards the National Assembly, before Pakistan's Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb presents the country's annual budget for fiscal year 2024-25.



Photo: Online

'Immense' scale of Gaza killings amount to crime against humanity, UN inquiry says

Reuters

GENEVA: Both Israel and Hamas committed war crimes in the early stages of the Gaza war, a UN inquiry found on Wednesday, saying that Israel's actions also constituted crimes against humanity because of the immense civilian losses.

The findings were from two parallel reports, one focusing on the Oct. 7 Hamas attacks and another on Israel's military response, published by the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI), which has an unusually broad mandate to collect evidence and identify perpetrators of international crimes committed in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel does not cooperate

with the commission, which it says has an anti-Israel bias. The COI says Israel obstructs its work and prevented investigators from accessing both Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories.

Israel's diplomatic mission to the UN in Geneva rejected the findings. "The COI has once again proven that its actions are all in the service of a narrow-led political agenda against Israel," said Meirav Eilon Shahaar, Israel's Ambassador to the UN in Geneva.

Hamas did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

By Israel's count more than 1,200 people were killed and 250 taken hostage in the Oct. 7 cross-border attacks that

sparked a military retaliation in Gaza that has since killed over 37,000 people, by Palestinian tallies.

The reports, which cover the conflict through to end-December, found that both sides committed war crimes including torture; murder or willful killing; outrages upon personal dignity; and inhuman or cruel treatment.

Israel also committed additional war crimes including starvation as a method of warfare, it said, saying Israel not only failed to provide essential supplies like food, water, shelter and medicine to Gazans but "acted to prevent the supply of those necessities by anyone else."

Some of the war crimes

such as murder also constituted crimes against humanity by Israel, the COI statement said, using a term reserved for the most serious international crimes knowingly committed as part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilians.

"The immense numbers of civilian casualties in Gaza and widespread destruction of civilian objects and infrastructure were the inevitable result of a strategy undertaken with intent to cause maximum damage, disregarding the principles of distinction, proportionality and adequate precautions," the COI statement said.

Sometimes, the evidence gathered by such UN-mandated bodies has formed the basis

for war crimes prosecutions and could be drawn on by the International Criminal Court.

Mass killings, sexual violence and humiliation

The COI's findings are based on interviews with victims and witnesses, hundreds of submissions, satellite imagery, medical reports and verified open-source information.

Among the findings in the 59-page report on the Oct. 7 attacks, the commission verified four incidents of mass killings in public shelters which it said suggests militants had "standing operational instructions." It also identified "a pattern of sexual violence" by Palestinian armed groups but could not independently verify reports of rape.

PML-N Leader Kohistani highlights civil protest as cornerstone of democracy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A prominent leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), Member of the National Assembly Kheal Das Kohistani on Wednesday highlighted the significance of civil protest as a cornerstone of democracy.

He emphasized that during democratic periods, protest and the expression of opinions are essential civil rights. Kohistani urged all parli-

mentarians to actively participate in the budget session discussions, describing the budget process as crucial for the nation's development and economic crisis resolution.

Speaking to journalists in the Parliament lobby following the presentation of budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, he stressed the importance of considering the opposition's viewpoints. "The opposition, too, has been elected by the people and their positive suggestions should be



taken into account," he said. He praised the government's

dialogue with the opposition, calling it a commendable effort vital for economic and political stability.

Kohistani expressed optimism about the forthcoming budget, describing it as a step in the right direction. "A strong budget lays the groundwork for economic growth and improves the quality of life for the public," he stated.

He urged the government to invest in various sectors and advance administrative reforms.

Highlighting the necessity of cooperation between the government and the opposition, Kohistani questioned,

"If a member can be elected unopposed in Senate elections, why can't the opposition join hands for the public welfare?" He noted that the opposition has representation in standing committees and should play a constructive role in legislation. "Legislation is a crucial process necessary for societal betterment and the advancement of justice," he added.

Citizens hail Federal Budget 2024-25 for people-friendly measures, economic stability

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal budget 2024-25 has garnered widespread acclaim from citizens and the business community, who have hailed it as people-friendly and a positive step towards enhanced economic stability.

The budget, announced by the

government, includes a series of measures aimed at fostering growth and improving public welfare, PTV reported on Wednesday.

Citizens have particularly welcomed the establishment of a digitization authority, which they believe will improve tax collection and help document the economy more effectively.

"This initiative is a game-changer. It will bring more transparency and efficiency to our tax system," said Ahmed Khan, a local businessman.

Key measures in the budget include a significant increase in employee salaries and a 27% boost in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP).

These steps are expected to provide

immediate relief to the general public.

"The increase in BISP funds will greatly help families in need. It's a commendable move by the government," remarked Ayesha Ali, a school teacher. The budget also focuses on the IT sector, introducing reforms and schemes aimed at increasing exports and creating new opportunities for the youth.

Budget 2024-25: Hike in levy on petrol, diesel proposed

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) led federal government proposed a significant increase in the petroleum levy on petroleum products.

Presenting the federal budget for the fiscal year 2024-25, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator

Muhammad Aurangzeb said that the government proposed an increase of 33 percent on petrol and diesel.

The National Assembly has been proposed by the government to okay an increase of levy on petrol and diesel from Rs 60 to Rs 80 per litre.

Similarly, the proposal sought a 50 percent increase in the levy on high-octane, light diesel, and ethanol

has been increased. After approval of the proposal, Rs 50 would be charged on per litre high-octane, light diesel, and ethanol.

The finance minister said that the government has proposed 18 percent sales tax on different categories of mobile phones.

The federal government proposed significant changes in tax policies,

aimed at increasing revenue. Similarly, there is a proposal to withdraw exemptions on various items depending on their categories.

The government also proposed to increase import duties on luxury cars worth over \$50,000. The budget proposal also asked the House to increase the import duty on steel and paper products.

Deadlock ends: PPP to attend NA budget session after brief boycott

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party decided to attend the National Assembly's budget session after a brief boycott, following negotiations with the government.

However, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari left the Parliament House without attending the session.

Earlier, PPP leader Shazia Mari had in a conversation with journalists at Parliament House on Wednesday said, "The PPP has decided to boycott the budget meeting."

She further claimed that Tuesday's meeting between the president and the prime minister had nothing to do with the budget. She further said the two coalition partners had decided about consultation on the PSDP, which did not take place.

"We will also listen to the speech of the finance minister in the National Assembly session," she added.

On the other hand, PPP leader Khurshid Shah claimed that his party had not been consulted on the budget. "It was decided that the PSDP of the four provinces

will be mutually decided. However, the provinces were not consulted about the fund allocation," he told the media in the Parliament House.

Shah said the government claims it had briefed the PPP, adding that there was a difference between a briefing and a discussion.

"Promises regarding salaries and farmers within the budget have not been fulfilled," he claimed, adding that both the government and the party were in the same boat and both would face equal losses.

"To avoid these losses, our demands should be met," he announced.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar headed over to the chamber of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari to convince him to withdraw his party's boycott of the budget session. Dar met with Bilawal to sort out any concerns of the PPP, as per sources.

"We are united, will give good news soon," he said after the meeting concluded, adding that they were all working for the betterment of the country.

Belarus envoy calls on Defence Minister in Islamabad to further boost defence ties



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: E. Andrei Metelitsa, Ambassador of Belarus, called on Minister for Defence & Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif at his office in Islamabad today. Federal Minister warmly welcomed the Ambassador and appreciated the existing mutual goodwill and bilateral cooperation. Belarus is an important country and Pakistan attaches great importance to its bilateral relations with Belarus. Matters of mutual

interest, particularly cooperation in the field of defence production came under discussion. Defence Minister expressed that the high-level visits between two countries have extensively contributed to strengthening the bilateral relations. Federal Minister also opined that Pakistan and Belarus share a cordial history of bilateral relations in economy, trade and defence. The Minister emphasized the need for furthering existing levels of cooperation between the two countries.

LHC summons top police officers over harassment to ATC judge

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday issued a notice to the Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab and others for June 13 in a contempt case related to threats and harassment directed at an anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge in Sargodha.

The court also summoned the IGP Punjab, the regional police officer of

Sargodha, and the district police officer of Sargodha in person for June 13. Additionally, it directed federal and provincial law officers to seek instructions from other respondents regarding the issues involved in the case and to assist the court.

LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan conducted the proceedings based on the reports forwarded by the ATC judge in Sargodha, treating them as a contempt case.

Govt announces health insurance...

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phases. In the first phase, 5,000 journalists and media workers across Pakistan will be covered by the health

insurance program.

The second phase will expand coverage to an additional 10,000 journalists, providing them with access to essential healthcare.

Conspiracies to bankrupt ...

Continued from Page 1

providing basic healthcare, higher education, and equal opportunities for development.

He said that providing employment to the talented workforce as well as ensuring education and training in the IT field for the youth were among the government's priorities.

Calling for efforts to empower women and dignified employment opportunities to them, the prime

minister said that during his foreign visits, he called for attracting investments instead of seeking loans.

He said the environment of peace and political stability was inevitable for investment and that the nations always achieved success through hard work, dedication, and courage.

He stressed the need to get aspiration from China and other developed nations to forge a bright future tailored for Pakistan's specific conditions.