



President for enhanced capacity of LEAs to counter terror in Balochistan

President Asif Ali Zardari has called for enhancing the capacity of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), posting competent officers in Balochistan, and improving the prosecution mechanism to effectively counter terrorist elements in Balochistan. (Details on Page 8)



After ex-COAS Bajwa, PTI 'trying to hold someone else's feet now': Khawaja Asif

PML-N senior leader Khawaja Asif has fired a broadside at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying after former army chief General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, the opposition party is begging "someone else" for relief now. Addressing on the floor of the NA, the defence minister cited Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) leader Aun Chaudhry as saying he hid PTI founder Imran Khan in car's trunk to take him to General (retd) Amjad Awan's house.

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Revamped

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the staff of the National Emergencies Operation Center on Thursday.



Photo: PID

SC rejects ECP plea to suspend decision of election tribunals' formation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday rejected an appeal moved by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) against formation of election tribunals by the Lahore High Court.

The two-member bench of the Supreme Court, led by Justice Isa and Justice Naem Afghan, heard the Election Commission's lawyer, Sikandar Bashir, and PTI lawyer Salman Akram Raja appeared before the court.

At the outset of the hearing, Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Justice Qazi Faez Isa expressed his concerns over the constant use of ordinances and the tendency to create disputes in the country.

Justice Isa questioned whether the Chief Election Commissioner and the CJP could not meet to resolve

disputes. He remarked that if every issue is to be made contentious, then Parliament should be shut down. He asserted that using ordinances is a disregard for Parliament and a violation of its authority.

Read more: ECP accepts PML-N lawmakers plea to change Islamabad tribunal

The Chief Justice highlighted the previous dispute between the President and the Election Commission regarding the election date. He also questioned the need for letters from the Registrar of the High Court.

Turning down the ECP's plea, the bench forwarded the matter to the SC committee for formation of a larger bench.

On June 12, Chief Justice Lahore High Court Malik Shahzad Ahmad had ordered the constitution of eight election tribunals. The Election Commission of Pakistan had challenged the decision in the Supreme Court.

Lack of quorum leads to adjournment of Senate session

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate session on Thursday was adjourned due to lack of quorum to meet again on Friday (June 21st) at 10:30 am.

The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Falak

Naz pointed out the quorum as the House was taking recommendations on the Finance Bill 2024.

The Deputy Chairman Senate, Syed Aali Khan Nasar ordered for the headcount whereas the house was not in order and therefore the proceedings were adjourned.

Tarar regrets 'smear campaign' against Pak-China friendship

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday took exception to a "smear campaign" launched by a specific political party against the Pakistan-China friendship on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday took exception to a "smear campaign" launched by a specific political party against the Pakistan-China friendship on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha.

(CPEC). "Undoubtedly, the lobbies against the Pakistan-China Dosti are active, and are completely perturbed by the CPEC's upgradation, but such both attempts are destined to fail," he added.

The minister said the government fully understood that some powers which were stunned by the Pakistan-China friendship, were resorting to undue and unfounded criticism towards the CPEC, but nothing could harm the enduring bond between the two nations.

"The people normally celebrate Eid-ul-Azha by slaughtering sacrificial animals and sharing sweets with their loved ones but there was one political party that exerted all its energies for conspiring against Pak-China Dosti," he regretted.

PM grieved over martyrdom of Hujjaj in Makkah

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic incident in Makkah, Saudi Arabia, which resulted in the loss of precious lives of Hujjaj, including some from Pakistan.

The prime minister, in a statement, directed the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pakistan's Embassy in Saudi Arabia to ensure provi-

sion of best possible medical care to the Pakistani Hajj pilgrims who were admitted in hospitals.

He talked to Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Religious Affairs Chaudhary Salik Hussain and Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq in Makkah and directed them to make arrangements for shifting of the bodies of martyred Hajj pilgrims to Pakistan.

PM-NDMA

NDMA to become a safety wall for Pakistan: PM Shehbaz Sharif

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, lauding the revamped National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC) equipped with multiple satellite feeds and artificial intelligence tools, expressed the hope that the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) would prove to be a safety wall for Pakistan against the impacts of the climate change.

"Due to climate change, Pakistan is in the red zone and among the top ten vulnerable countries. We should not lose our morale rather work hard. After this achievement, I have no doubt that the NDMA, in coordination with provincial PDMA, will become a safety wall for Pakistan," the prime minister said during his

visit to the NEOC here along with the federal ministers and secretaries.

This was the maiden visit of the prime minister since the revamped NEOC was inaugurated in October last year.

He highly appreciated NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik for realising his dream of focusing on the capacity building and human resource development of the Authority instead of an earlier planned project of building an office tower.

Referring to his previous meetings following the floods of 2022, the prime minister said he had suggested the NDMA chief to prioritise the capacity building of the organisation by equipping it with the latest technology, input from the provinces and recruitment of permanent

human resources, besides establishing a digital hub.

"Today, the way that dream has been realised deserves applause. I don't think any province has achieved such capacity with the world-class systems. I am happy that instead of a highrise building, you invested in this digital hub," the prime minister remarked.

He said the 2022 floods had inflicted a \$30 billion loss to the country which would take years to overcome as the Federal Government alone had spent Rs 100 billion for the rehabilitation of affected population, besides the funding from provinces as well as aid from the friendly countries.

He said consequent to the efforts by that time Climate Change Minister Sherry Rehman, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and other federal and

provincial organisations, the country was able to rehabilitate millions of people.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the merit-based induction of quality human resource and establishing a third-party validation mechanism at the NDMA, and assured of the government's support and funding for the staffers' training and procurement of equipment.

NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik briefed the prime minister about capabilities of the NEOC, enabled by multiple satellite feeds, softwares and artificial intelligence tools, to generate a National Common Operating Picture (NOCOP), strengthening digital risk assessment, early warning systems and preparedness strategies for Pakistan.

During the briefing, the NDMA's newly developed mobile application aimed to empower individuals and communities with vital information to effectively prepare for and respond to potential disasters was also showcased.

The prime minister was accompanied by the cabinet members including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Industries Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, and Petroleum Minister Dr Musaddik Malik, Advisor to PM Rana Sanaulah, and PM's coordinators Romina Khurshid Alam and Dr Mukhtar Ahmed.

Chief secretaries of the provinces as well as those from Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir joined the meeting via

'Economic hitman' made Pakistan's budget: NA opposition leader

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub has accused the federal government of crafting the annual budget through an "economic hitman", aimed at "shaking the very foundations" of the country.

"The fiscal year budget 2024-25 is an economic terrorism with the people of Pakistan and their future," he said while addressing the National Assembly session on Thursday. "The story of this budget began with the narrative of 'vote ko izzat do' and ended on 'boot ko izzat do'."

The aforementioned term is apparently taken from the book Confessions of an Economic Hitman by John Perkins which claims that the United States was engaged in a modern form of slavery by using the World Bank and other international organisations to offer huge loans to developing nations for construction projects and oil production.

The book claims that the loans are too big for any developing nation to repay and such a debt burden guarantees the developing nation would support the political interests of the United States.

Pakistan is seeking an Extended Fund Facility from the IMF to support its economic plans and carry out its agenda to have long-term stability. Reports say the South Asian country is seeking \$6 to \$8 billion from the Fund under a three-year programme.

Energy Minister Leghari seeks interior ministry's help to ensure security at KP grid stations

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The escalating power crisis in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has taken a dramatic turn, with the Federal Minister for Power Awais Leghari requesting security intervention from the Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

In a letter addressed to Naqvi, Leghari expressed concerns over the recent incidents at grid stations in the province, where influential figures have been allegedly interfering with power distribution.

The letter highlights the alarming trend of individuals, including provincial assembly members, entering grid stations and issuing directives to restore power supply. This has resulted in widespread power outages, damage to infrastructure, and rampant electricity theft, according to Leghari.

The situation escalated when the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, visited the Dera Ismail Khan grid station in protest against unsheduled power cuts.

He issued a stern warning to the federal government, threatening to cut off power supply from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the national grid if the power cuts continued.

The letter further details incidents in various districts, including Mardan, Charsadda, Tank, Bannu, and Peshawar, where individuals have forcefully entered grid stations and interfered with operations.

Pakistan begins post-Hajj flight operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Emotions ran high in the departure lounge of King Abdulaziz International Airport on Thursday as Pakistan has launched post-Hajj 2024 flight operation.

The farewell Tawaf at the Grand Mosque in Makkah marked the end of the five-day communion with Allah Almighty at the holy sites of Mina, Arafat, and Muzdalifah from Zilhajj 8-12.

This year, around 160,000 Pakistanis performed the religious obligation under both the government and private Hajj schemes.

On the first day of a month-long post-Hajj flight operation, a batch of 1,723 Hajj pilgrims was scheduled to leave Makkah for different destinations in Pakistan, including Multan and Lahore.

First flight PF-723 left for Multan from Jeddah airport at 05:35 Saudi Arabia Standard Time (SAST) carrying 150 passengers; second flight PA-471 for Lahore at 06:55 SAST with 190 pilgrims on board; third flight PA-273 for Islamabad at 07:55 SAST carrying 200 passengers; fourth flight PA-173 for Karachi at 08:15 SAST with 180 Hujjaj; fifth flight PA-873 for Multan at 08:30 SAST with 180 passengers and sixth flight PF-719 for Islamabad at 10:50 SAST carrying 150 Hajj pilgrims.

Similarly, the seventh Lahore-bound flight PF-721 was scheduled to take off from Jeddah airport at 11:45 SAST, carrying 150 pilgrims; eighth flight, PF-715 for Karachi at 18:20 SAST with 151 passengers on board; ninth and the last flight of the day PK-842 for Islamabad at 20:50 SAST with 372 Hujjaj on board.

Governor Punjab strongly condemn the killing of the martyred lawyers

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan has said that the martyred lawyers are our capital and their killers will be brought to justice. He expressed these views while addressing a condolence reference on the occasion of the martyrdom of Malik Asrar Advocate and Zulfiqar Ali Mirza Advocate at District Bar Association Attock.



Provincial Law Minister Malik Soheb Ahmed Bharat Members of the National Assembly Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Malik Sohaail Khan, Members of the Provincial Assembly Chaudhry Sher Ali Khan, Malik Prabi Khan, Former Provincial Minister Jahangir Khanzada Former Member of the Provincial Assembly Ifikhar Khan, Ticket Holder, Malik Hameed Akbar Khan District Bar President Rizwana Raja and the representatives and officials of lawyers' organizations

also participated. Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that we all strongly condemn the killing of the martyred lawyers and respect the sacrifices of the lawyers. Actions will be taken.

Sardar Salim Haider said that all means will be used to protect the lives

of the lawyers and the murderer of the martyred lawyers will be brought to justice.

The name of Shaheed and Zulfiqar Ali Mirza Shaheed will be written in golden words in the history of District Bar Attock. He said that all the resources will be utilized for the

welfare and safety of all stakeholders and their families.

The Law Minister said that he himself will visit all the district bars soon and with the advice of the lawyers, such a coordinated strategy will be made which will aim at the improvement and safety of the lawyers.

Later, he also prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyred lawyers. A grant of four crore rupees was also announced for the support of the families of the martyrs.

The ceremony was attended by Senior Advocate Sheikh Ahsanuddin, Member Pakistan Bar Council Qalb Hasan, Former President Supreme Court Bar Hassan Bhawan, President High Court Bar Jawad Khalid, Member Pakistan Bar Council Hasan Raza Pasha, President District Bar Attock Rizwana Raja, Sardar Tauseef Ahmad Khan Advocate and others. Speakers also addressed.

District and Cantt Administrations deserve to be commended cleaning arrangements on Eid-ul-Adha: Yaqoob Shera



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Eid-ul-Azha was celebrated with religious fervor, after offering prayers, animals were sacrificed following the Ibrahimii Sunnah. Prayers were offered for the freedom of Kashmir, Palestine, strict security arrangements were made by the administration to maintain the law and order situation, special cleaning arrangements were made during Eid-ul-Azha and timely removal of animal waste and dirt. Citizens have benefited due to the disposal strategy. In this regard, President Canton Board, Commissioner Multan Maryam Khan, Cantonment Executive Officer Farast Ali Shah and Deputy Commissioner Waseem Ahmed Sindhu are grateful to Multan. Yaqoob Shera said in his statement, he added that the district and cant board administrations deserve to be commended for monitoring the cleaning arrangements on the three days of Eid-ul-Adha and providing timely washing of the roads and spraying and medicines to the citizens. Provided a healthy environment During Eid-ul-Azha, the responsible behavior of the citizens and practical cooperation with the administration has been commendable.

TMA Takhtbhai Bhai says people very respectful, fully cooperative with administration



Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Assistant Commissioner Takht bhai Junaid Khalid said that the people of Takhtbhai are very respectful, appreciative and fully cooperative with the administration. Inshallah, they will serve the people with honesty and sincerity and work together for the development and development of the area. I will continue the struggle. If the people and the administration work together, no problem will remain unsolved. These views were expressed by the senior journalists of Takhtbhai Press Club, Press Club President Muslim Khan Sabir, Haji Hayat Akhtar and In a meeting with Ezamat Muhammad Khulwak. He said that TMA Takhtbhai is doing a very good job. And in the second phase, the complete cleaning task will also be completed. He urged the people to take their positive suggestions. Keep the time informed. And all the government and state institutions will be ready to serve the public at all times. If there are complaints, inform me timely. The doors of my office will be open for the public 24 hours without discrimination.

Keytaab and Health Services Academy Host Groundbreaking Digital Healthcare Seminar

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Keytaab, a digital learning platform dedicated to making knowledge and skills accessible to all, in collaboration with Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad, hosted a transformative Digital Healthcare Seminar at Serena Hotel. The event attracted a diverse audience including doctors, healthcare professionals, trainers, policy makers, government officials, technology leaders, CEOs of pharma companies, medical faculty, and high-profile figures from the healthcare sector.



The seminar featured keynote addresses by distinguished speakers, including Chief Guest Lieutenant General (R) Nigar Johar Khan HI (M), TI (M), Guest of Honor Mr Shahzad Ali Khan, Dean & Vice Chancellor of HSA, and Key Note Speaker, Mr Zamurrad Khan (Hila-i-Intiaz) Founder & CEO Pakistan Sweet Home,

Guest of Honor, Mr Saeed Ahmed Sheikh Director General Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (PBC) and Honorable Mr Nasir Mehmood Elia, Director BIC Health Services Academy.

The speakers lauded Keytaab for its timely initiative to promote online learning,

especially for healthcare professionals. They praised Keytaab's vision to reshape Pakistan's healthcare landscape through technology-based online courses.

Lt. General (R) Nigar Johar emphasized that digitization, particularly in training and career advancement,

can address many healthcare challenges. Prof. Shahzad Ali Khan expressed gratitude to Keytaab for providing a seamless e-learning platform and announced the launch of a one-year diploma in digital health via Keytaab, aiming to train around 100,000 graduates in various digital health-

care aspects.

"This diploma program will be a game-changer for Pakistan's healthcare sector," said Prof. Shahzad Ali Khan. "It will not only enhance expertise in digital health but also equip graduates with the necessary technology tools and connections to make a significant impact."

Mr. Ghazanfar Ali Khan, CEO of Keytaab, expressed his excitement about the seminar's success, which brought together industry leaders to share knowledge, ideas, and best practices. "Our goal is to accelerate the adoption of digital health solutions and improve patient outcomes through the power of knowledge and skill," he added.

The seminar also featured panel discussions and networking opportunities, covering topics such as telemedicine, healthcare analytics, digital therapeutics, online consultancy, and patient engagement.

Staff Nurses protest and sit in continue in Nishtar Hospital

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Staff Nurse Noreen Kausar Deputy secretary General Young Nurses Association Multan, while addressing the protest and demonstration of nurses at Nishtar Hospital Multan in front of Vice Chancellor Nishtar Medical University Office She said that the sit-in of the staff nurses of Nishtar Hospital Multan after the failed negotiations with Gilani House has resumed outside the Vice-Chancellor Nishtar Medical College University Office. During the protest sit-in, the staff nurses were holding placards For staff nurse of Khanewal Aqsa Afaq Release From The Jial. Protesters Staff Nurses shouting slogans. During Addressing the protest demonstration, Young Nurses Association Multan leader Staff Noreen Kausar further said that



before Eid-ul-Azha. All the nurses of the entire Punjab

are united against the illegal arrest of Khanewal's staff nurse Aqsa Afaq and

the staff nurses' strike will continue until the release of Khanewal's staff nurse Aqsa Afaq. Young Nurses Association Multan Deputy secretary General Noreen Kausar further said that the strike of staff nurses was extended to South Punjab. And

From today, the protest of the staff nurses has been taken from the government hospitals of Punjab to the Punjab Assembly and the office of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the protest of the staff nurses is continued outside the Punjab Assembly and the office of the Chief Minister of Punjab. Also Protest and Sit in at Nishtar Hospital Multan. Cardiology Institute Multan. Children Complex Hospital and Shahbaz Sharif Hospital Multan. During Staff Nurses Protest

Patients are facing severe difficulties due to the Staff Nurses strike

GCWUF honours its faculty with Research Productivity Award 2023

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Office of Research Innovation & Commercialization at Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) hosted the prestigious Research Productivity Award 2023 ceremony at Jinnah Auditorium. The event was graced by the university's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli, as the chief guest. Also present were Rizwana Tanveer Randhawa, Controller of Examination, Asif A. Malik, Registrar, along with directors, chairpersons, and esteemed faculty members.

The highlight of the ceremony was the presentation of cash prizes and certificates of appreciation to the distinguished researchers of 2023. Dr. Asma Aziz, Assistant Professor of Islamic Studies, was celebrated as the top researcher of the year. A total of 82 faculty members were acknowledged for their significant research contributions.

Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli, Vice Chancellor of GCWUF, extended her heartfelt congratulations to all the awardees and emphasized the university's commitment to fostering a culture of innovative research. She encouraged the faculty to continue their efforts in pushing boundaries and assured support to those who faced challenges in publishing their work this year. Government College Women University Faisalabad values every faculty member's contribution towards the university's advancement.

S&P Global Pakistan Celebrates 19 Years of Excellence and Innovation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: S&P Global, a provider of credit ratings, benchmarks, analytics and workflow solutions in the global capital, commodity and automotive markets is proud to celebrate its 19th anniversary of operations in Pakistan this month.

Since its establishment in 2005, S&P Global Pakistan has been at the forefront of providing essential intelligence that enables governments, businesses, and individuals to unlock new opportunities, solve challenges and accelerate progress for the world.

Over the past 19 years, S&P Global Pakistan has built a strong reputation in "Powering Global Markets" and delivering impact for its people, customers, and communities. On this momentous occasion, Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director of S&P Global Pakistan, said, "S&P Global Pakistan's continuous growth is a testament to our shared commitment to Accelerate Progress and live by our values of Discovery, Partnership and Integrity. On this special day, we celebrate every team member in Pakistan who strives to bring our purpose and values to life and helps us build a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization."

As S&P Global Pakistan enters its 20th year, the company will continue to focus on its five strategic pillars: Customer at the Core; Grow and innovate; Expand the potential of data & technology; Lead, Inspire, execute and deliver. These pillars will continue to guide the company in helping the world's leading organizations plan for tomorrow, today.

First Post-Hajj Flight Carrying 149 Pilgrims Landing at Multan Airport From Madina

Kiran Asim

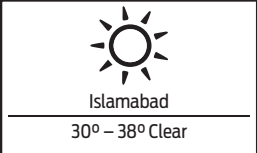
MULTAN: The first post-hajj flight No. PF 723 of Air Sial airline carrying 149 pilgrims from Madina, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, landed at Multan International Airport on Thursday. PML (N) MPA, Muhammad Salman Naem and Director Hajj Rehan Khokhar, received the pilgrims with a warm welcome. They put garlands of flowers on them turn by turn upon their arrival, requesting to pray for peace and prosperity in the country. Speaking on the occasion, MPA Salman Naem lauded the government for making exemplary arrangements for Pilgrims. He said that the post-hajj flights would continue till July 09 in which all Pilgrims would return to country. He said that receiving the pilgrims after their return from Madina was an honor for him. Direc-



tor Rehan Khokhar said, "All possible efforts have been made to facilitate pilgrims to perform Hajj and it was being extended at post-hajj operation." It is pertinent to mention here, a total of 26 post-hajj flights have been scheduled for Multan International Airport

in which over 6000 pilgrims would return to country. On Thursday, a total of two flights have been scheduled in Multan including PF 723 of Air Sial carrying 149 pilgrims and second of Air Blue airline flight No. PA 873 carrying 180 pilgrims. "However, Flight No. SV

3800 of Saudia Airline has been scheduled on June 29 in which 370 maximum pilgrims would land at Multan International Airport and it would be the maximum number of pilgrims on a single flight," official sources of Hajj department told Daily The Spokesman



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr3:14 am
 Zohr12:09 pm
 Asr5:10 pm
 Maghrib7:21 pm
 Isha9:05 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
 Bomb Disposal 15
 Fire Services Rawalpindi/
 Islamabad1122 & 16
 Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
 & Rescue Services 4451122
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 Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
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 Wasa Water Tank
 Rawalpindi0331-5022125

Govt announced 40 M grant for lawyers who were slain by cop in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: he government announced compensation worth Rs 40 million for the families of two lawyers Malik Israr Ahmed and Zulfiqar Mirza who were gunned down by an official of elite force in Attock court complex on June 15. This announcement was made during a condolence reference at district bar Attock on Thursday. The condolence reference was presided over by while Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider while Federal Minister for law Azam Nazir Tarar, Provincial Law Minister Malik Sohaib Ahmed, National Assembly Members Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, Malik Sohaib Khan, Provincial Assembly Members Chaudhry Sher Ali Khan, Malik Itibar Khan, Former Provincial Minister Jahangir Khanzada, Former Provincial Assembly Member Iftikhar Khan, President District Bar Rizwana Raja and representatives and office bearers of lawyers' organizations were also present. In his address Sardar Saleem Haider has said that government would not leave families of slain lawyers Malik Israr Ahmed and Zulfiqar Mirza and would utilized its all out resources for the well being of their family members besides the culprit behind this bloodshed would be dealt as per law.

Finance Minister chaired the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presided over a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) at Finance Division today.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Housing & Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training of Pakistan Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers of the relevant ministries.

The Committee considered the summaries presented by different Ministries/Divisions for the categorization of their relevant State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as strategic/ essential or otherwise.

Cabinet Division presented summaries related to Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC) and Printing Corporation of Pakistan (PCP). The Cabinet Committee directed

Cabinet Division to initiate the process for winding up of PTDC by clearing the ongoing litigations etc. The Committee also directed that PCP's Board be reconstituted in line with SOE Law & Policy & and business viability plan presented to the Committee, before a final decision is taken on the future of the entity.

The CCoSOEs also considered the summaries of the Ministry of Housing & Works relating to PEPAC & National Construction Limited (NCL). The committee approved the proposal for winding up of PEPAC. It also directed the authorities to complete the ongoing projects of the NCL and prepare the plan for winding up its operations.

The committee further approved the proposals presented by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs regarding categorisation of the Port Authorities i.e. Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Karachi Port Trust (KPT), and Gawadar Port Authority (GPA) as Essential. The Committee was informed that port operations were already outsourced in a number of cases & this policy will



continue. The Committee directed M/o Maritime Affairs to ensure that the governance framework of Port Authorities is compliant with the SOE law. To this end the Ministry will initiate

amendments to their respective statutes. The summary presented by Power Division to consider the recommendations of Board Nominations Committee (BNC) regarding boards of Electricity

Distribution Companies (DISCOs) was approved by the Cabinet Committee, which contained nominations for Boards of 9 electricity distribution companies.

Electric buses

ISLAMABAD: A view of electric busses on their way at a road in the area of Bari Imam during test service in the Federal Capital. The residents of Islamabad will see more buses on city roads soon as out of the 160 electric buses 30 have arrived from China and another fleet of 70 is on the way.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SCO Launches Pakistan's First-Ever Data Center in Line with National Cloud Policy

RAWALPINDI, JUNE 14, 2024: Special Communications Organisation (SCO), a leader in connecting Northern Pakistan, has inaugurated the country's first state-of-the-art Tier 3 certified cloud data center for the AJ&K and GB region. This landmark achievement was celebrated with a grand launch event where Major General Umar Ahmed Shah, HI(M), Director General SCO, officially opened the facility, marking a significant milestone in the Digital Pakistan initiative.

The newly launched cloud data center is a big step in modernizing Pakistan's remote regions, providing a



robust platform for sectors such as freelancers, hotels, banks, and tourism. Moreover, government sectors, NGOs, e-commerce enterprises, and economic zones along the CPEC and KKH will derive significant benefits from these cloud services.

Major General Umar Ahmed Shah, HI(M), Director

General of SCO, expressed immense pride in inaugurating Pakistan's first-ever Tier 3 certified cloud data center for AJ&K and GB region. He emphasized that this facility showcases SCO's commitment to bridging the digital divide and fostering technological advancement. According to him, the facility is a catalyst

for economic growth and a key step towards opening new opportunities for innovation and development in remote areas.

SCO's cloud services adhere to ISO certified standards, ensuring high levels of security and reliability, thus fostering growth and development in the AJ&K and GB regions. Since its inception in 1976, SCO has been dedicated to connecting Pakistan's most remote areas, offering comprehensive fiber and 4G GSM services. The launch of this cloud data center further solidifies SCO's commitment to enhancing digital connectivity and infrastructure.

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

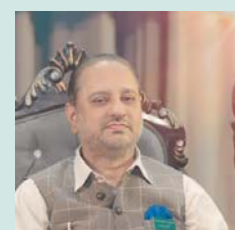
World Hydrography Day (WHD) is celebrated worldwide on 21st June each year to raise awareness about the importance of hydrography and how it plays an important role in improving our knowledge of the oceans. The theme chosen by International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) for WHD-24 is "Hydrographic Information Enhancing Safety, Efficiency, and Sustainability in Marine Activities," which aptly underscores the criticality of hydrographic services in contemporary maritime affairs. Annual celebration of this day emphasizes importance of hydrography as it underpins almost every activity associated with the sea including safety of navigation, security and defence, environmental protection, ports/ harbour construction, coastal zone/ disaster management and maritime boundary delimitation.



Pakistan is blessed with over 1000 kms of coastline along with 290,000 Sq kms of sea area within its EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) and Continental Shelf (CS). Pakistan like other coastal states is responsible for hydrographic surveys and production of nautical charts/ maps of its waters to provide accurate nautical information to the mariners. On behalf of Pakistan, the National Hydrographic Office (NHO) is entrusted with this task. In this backdrop, NHO conducts comprehensive hydrographic surveys and ensures regular updating of relevant nautical products in order to ensure navigational safety of the vessels traversing through Pakistani waters. NHO is also shouldering the National responsibility of Coordinator NAVAREA-IX (comprising North Arabian Sea, Persian Gulf, Red Sea region) since 1976 for promulgation of Navigation Warnings.

Sardar Attique says all Kashmiris are united for sake of Pakistan

Abdul Majeed Tahir



MUZAFFARABAD/GHAZIABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has said that all Kashmiris are united for the stability and survival of Pakistan, those who wish to weaken the eternal relationship between Pakistan and Kashmir will always fail. We will be Pakistanis, Pakistan is ours, the children of Kashmir are standing like a rock with Pakistan and the armed forces of Pakistan, he expressed these views at his constituency and various Union Councils of Bagh district yesterday at Ghaziabad Mujahid e Awwal House. Talking to the officials and workers, he said that Pakistan's accession is the goal of Kashmiris, Kashmiris have made sacrifices before for the stability of Pakistan and the protection of ideological and geographical borders and this will continue in the future against the enemy who is spreading chaos in Azad Kashmir. It is aimed at strengthening the agenda. The presence of Pakistan forces on the Line of Control is a source of satisfaction and peace for Kashmiris. The services of Pakistan forces for the freedom of Kashmiris are unforgettable. I can't, those who spread chaos in the state have failed before and will not succeed in the future. There is no example in history that Pakistanis and Kashmiris are brothers. This relationship needs to be further strengthened. Pakistan's forces are the protection of Kashmiris. Breathing in the air, Pakistan is the axis and center of the hopes of the entire Muslim Ummah and the guarantor of the Kashmir Azad movement, the senior workers held meetings and in the meetings they discussed the current situation of Azad Kashmir. The Chairman of Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan was also present on this occasion.

Former PM condemns Indian rule over North Kashmir as 'Hindu tava'

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Abdul Majeed has termed Hindu tava calculated design that by defeated the former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah from Occupied Kashmir in the general elections and severely condemned Engineer Abdul Rasheed, who was elected as Member of Parliament, for not releasing him for taking oath and keeping him in Tihar Jail. It has been said that India has put on the mask of democracy to deceive the world. Indian elections are nothing but a pretense which is a secret weapon to deprive the people of India's minorities and small caste from their basic human and democratic rights. Ing's theory was proved invalid, on which the extremist Hindu rulers of Delhi are standing on their heels, violating their own constitution and insulting the Parliament. The people of India should save their system and state and do their part to administer oath to the elected Member of Parliament Engineer Rasheed as Member of Parliament.

UNDP-P, Climate Ministry to deepen collaboration to boost climate solutions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Resident Representative for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Pakistan, Van Nguyen called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change MNS Romina Khurshid Alam here on Thursday.

During the meeting held here at the M/o Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, both sides discussed at length the matters related to the climate risk mitigation, climate finance for adaptation and mitigation measures, agriculture insurance, urban flood resilience.

The senior UNDP-Pakistan official Van Nguyen also briefed the PM's aide about the Global Shield against Climate Risks initiative, saying the new global funding mechanism aims to close protection gaps in climate-vul-



nerable countries like Pakistan, using pre-arranged finance.

Meanwhile, the UNDP-Pakistan official also assured the PM's aide Romina Khurshid Alam of her organisation's all-out support to access the financial and technical support provided by the initiative to build the country's climate resilience.

Romina Khurshid thanked and

lauded the UNDP - Pakistan for their generous offer for helping Pakistan through the climate change and environmental coordination ministry to build up resilience of the climate-vulnerable sectors, particularly agriculture, urban flood resilience and early warning for disaster risk reduction.

"I would leave no stone unturned to avail any opportunity that help us

protection lives and livelihoods of the people and socio-economic sectors particularly agriculture, water, energy, health, education through climate adaptation and mitigation measures," Romina Khurshid Alam told the UNDP - Pakistan's senior official Van Nguyen.

Greater financial protection and faster and more reliable disaster preparedness and response provided under the initiative can contribute to effectively responding to the vulnerabilities as well as climate change-related loss and damage in Pakistan, the PM's aide said.

During the meeting, the PM's coordinator also noted that over the last decade, the adverse fallouts of climate change have exacerbated alarmingly to an extent that these now pose grave risk to the human survival and ecosystems' sustainability.

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Banning Social Media for children and teenagers

During my tenure as Press Minister at the Embassy of Pakistan in France, I once attended a dinner with the Ambassador and several other dignitaries, where we dined with members of the French parliament. I was seated between two female parliamentarians, and our discussion turned to the impact of social media on families. When I mentioned that my 13-year-old daughter had a Facebook account, all the ladies reacted with utter disbelief, covering their mouths in shock. They unanimously believed that children should not be allowed to use social media until they reach adulthood, under any circumstances. Taking their advice to heart, I made considerable efforts to regulate my children's use of social media, though with limited success.

Ironically, social media, invented by the US and the West, was initially promoted to ensure the global permeation of their lifestyle, political, and geopolitical influence. However, they did not foresee that this very tool, designed to impose their values, customs, and preferences on the rest of the world, would eventually become a significant risk to the lives of millions of children and teenagers.

In families, excessive social media use reduces the amount of quality time family members spend together, weakening family bonds. Parents may find it challenging to monitor and regulate their children's social media usage, leading to potential exposure to harmful content. Families may rely more on digital communication, reducing meaningful, in-person interactions and discussions. Differences in social media use and content consumption can lead to conflicts between family members.

In society, widespread social media use

leads to decreased face-to-face interactions, weakening community ties and social cohesion. While social media can connect people virtually, it can also contribute to feelings of isolation and loneliness in real-life situations. Exposure to risky behaviors and content on social media can normalize such actions, particularly among impressionable teenagers. Social media can create echo chambers where individuals are exposed only to information that reinforces their existing beliefs, reducing exposure to diverse perspectives.

Based upon these findings, the Surgeon General of the United States issued recommendations emphasizing the need for stricter age verification measures, enhanced parental controls, and comprehensive education on digital literacy. Integrating safe internet use into school curricula

and providing mental health support, such as counseling services and helplines. Working with social media companies to enhance content moderation and filter harmful content for minors. Promoting community and extracurricular activities as healthy alternatives, and advocating for legislation that protects young users.

In Pakistan, we tend to adopt whatever is imposed on us by the West without a cognitive decision-making process to evaluate its suitability for our individuals, families, and national fabric. As a result, social media use has permeated all levels of society without any checks and balances. Even children as young as six months old have unrestricted access to social media. Young children, some as young as three to five years old, have become social media

stars, frequently appearing in social media posts. There are no effective regulations in place to govern social media use in Pakistan, and even if regulations exist, they are not being enforced. Consequently, children of all ages are becoming addicted to this phenomenon.

This addiction to social media is causing children to become increasingly detached from outdoor games and physical interactions with friends and relatives. Their interactions with their parents are often limited to basic needs such as paying school fees and providing necessities like food, clothing, and shelter. This limited interaction is eroding their emotional attachment to their parents, siblings, and relatives. Children now prefer to stay in their rooms, where they socialize with online friends, both within the country and international, without any parental control.

Children have unrestricted access to all types of content, including ethical and unethical, sexual and non-sexual, and religious and non-religious material. They are also exposed to extremist and non-extremist content. This lack of parental control over their children's social media use is shaking the very foundation of our society. There is a dire need to react quickly to address this anomaly and correct it in our society.

To effectively regulate social media use by children and teenagers, a concerted effort from the government, society, and parents is essential. The government can play a pivotal role by implementing stringent age verification laws and establishing regulatory bodies to oversee social media

platforms, ensuring compliance with child protection laws. Additionally, public awareness campaigns and education programs should be launched to educate parents and children about the risks associated with social media use and the importance of digital literacy. Integrating digital literacy into school curricula and providing access to helplines and counseling services for social media-related issues are crucial steps. Society, on the other hand, can contribute by engaging communities through workshops and seminars for parents and children to discuss the impacts of social media and share best practices for safe use.

Parents have a crucial role in regulating their children's social media use by utilizing parental control software and apps to monitor and limit usage, setting clear rules and boundaries, and maintaining open communication about the potential dangers of social media. Modeling responsible social media use and encouraging offline activities, such as family outings, sports, and reading, can help children develop a balanced approach to technology. Promoting social and community activities that foster face-to-face interaction and physical activity will further mitigate the risks associated with excessive social media use.

The goal of these recommendations is to create a safer digital environment for children and teenagers, mitigating risks and promoting healthier development, where the government, society, and parents can work together to create a safer and healthier environment for children and teenagers.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Deaths of Hajj pilgrims due to extreme heat

The death toll from this year's hajj has exceeded 1,000, an AFP tally said on Thursday, more than half of them unregistered worshippers who performed the pilgrimage in extreme heat in Saudi Arabia.

The new deaths reported Thursday included 58 from Egypt, according to an Arab diplomat who provided a breakdown showing that of 658 Egyptians who passed away, 630 were unregistered pilgrims.

All told, around 10 countries have reported 1,081 deaths during the annual pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam which all Muslims with the means must complete at least once.

The figures have come via official statements or from diplomats working on their countries' responses.

The hajj, whose timing is determined by the lunar Islamic calendar, fell again this year during the oven-like Saudi summer.

The national meteorological centre reported a high of 51.8 degrees Celsius (125 Fahrenheit) this week at the Grand Mosque in Makkah.

According to a Saudi study published last month, temperatures in the area are rising 0.4 degrees Celsius each decade.

Each year tens of thousands of pilgrims attempt to perform the hajj through irregular channels as they cannot afford the often costly official permits.

Saudi authorities reported clearing hundreds of thousands of unregistered pilgrims from Makkah this month, but it appears many still participated in the main rites which began last Friday.

This group was more vulnerable to the heat because, without official permits, they could not access air-conditioned spaces provided by Saudi authorities for the 1.8 million authorised pilgrims to cool down after hours of walking and praying outside.

"People were tired after being chased by security forces before Arafat day. They were exhausted," one Arab diplomat told AFP on Thursday, referring to Saturday's day-long outdoor prayers that marked the hajj's climax.

The diplomat said the main cause of death among Egyptian pilgrims was the heat, which triggered complications related to high blood pressure and other issues.

Meanwhile friends and family members have been searching for pilgrims who are still missing.

On Wednesday they scoured hospitals and pleaded online for news, fearing the worst during the scorching temperatures.

Saudi Arabia has not provided information on fatalities, though it reported more than 2,700 cases of "heat exhaustion" on Sunday alone.

Last year various countries reported more than 300 deaths during the hajj, mostly Indonesians.



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

Kashmir in the Mirror of Reality - II

The funding issue for AJK universities has been effectively addressed by the Government of Pakistan. Additionally, efforts are underway to establish an expressway connecting Mansehra with Muzaffarabad. Moreover, the concept of Kashmiriyat is integrated into the curriculum of all Army Public Schools in AJK.

However, the implementation of labor laws, particularly regarding minimum wages, remains a concern in AJK. Steps are being taken to ensure that wages in Army Public Schools in AJK adhere to the minimum wage policy.

Given that many villagers in AJK rely on trees for cooking fuel, there are no restrictions on collecting firewood from rivers and streams, although tree cutting is prohibited.

Pakistan and the Pakistan Army are prioritizing the expansion of educational facilities in AJK. A feasibility study has recently been conducted for establishing an Army Public School in Haji Pir.

These facts and figures clearly demonstrate the comparatively better living conditions enjoyed by the residents of AJK compared to those in the rest of Pakistan and IIOJK. Pakistan prioritizes addressing the issues of AJK and endeavors to resolve them promptly.

Within Pakistan's intricate governance and administration structure, AJK occupies a distinct position. The relationship between AJK and Pakistan is characterized by a blend of autonomy, collaboration, and shared goals. Pakistan's engagement with AJK transcends rhetoric, reflecting a genuine dedication to the region's welfare and advancement.

A cornerstone of Pakistan's approach to AJK is the provision of constitutional autonomy. Enacted through the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution Act of 1974, this legislation grants AJK significant legislative and administrative authority, enabling autonomous governance within Pakistan's constitutional framework. This autonomy empowers AJK's residents to shape their own future

and pursue progress and prosperity.

Moreover, Pakistan's commitment to AJK's development is evidenced by substantial investments in infrastructure, education, healthcare, and social welfare initiatives. Recent years have witnessed notable advancements in road networks, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions, contributing to the overall well-being of AJK's populace. Programs like the Prime Minister's AJK Development Package further underscore Pakistan's dedication to fostering growth and progress in the region.

Politically, AJK residents have representation in Pakistan's national affairs through elected representatives in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. These representatives actively engage in Pakistan's parliamentary processes, ensuring that AJK's interests and concerns are heard and addressed at the highest levels of government. This integration into Pakistan's democratic framework highlights the inclusive nature of Pakistan's governance

model.

Furthermore, Pakistan's engagement with AJK extends beyond administrative measures, encompassing a deep sense of solidarity and fraternity. Cultural exchanges, economic collaboration, and humanitarian aid strengthen the bonds between AJK and Pakistan. Pakistan's steadfast support for Kashmiri self-determination underscores its unwavering commitment to AJK's aspirations.

However, it is crucial to acknowledge that challenges persist, and continuous efforts are required to enhance governance, promote accountability, and address socio-economic disparities in AJK. Ongoing initiatives to improve governance and socio-economic conditions must remain top priorities. Nevertheless, Pakistan's treatment of AJK reflects a trajectory marked by progress, partnership, and mutual respect.

In contrast, the situation in IIOJK stands in stark contrast to the positive developments observed in

AJK. For decades, the picturesque landscapes of IIOJK, adorned with snow-capped peaks and lush valleys, have been overshadowed by a dark reality—the reality of human rights violations and atrocities perpetrated by India's security forces. While global attention often focuses on the geopolitics of the region, it is imperative to illuminate the harsh realities faced by the people of IIOJK under the rule of the Indian Army.

Among the most egregious violations in IIOJK is the widespread occurrence of extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances. Thousands of Kashmiri civilians have lost their lives or vanished under mysterious circumstances, often at the hands of Indian security forces. These killings, purportedly conducted in the name of counterinsurgency operations, have left families shattered and communities traumatized, with justice remaining elusive and accountability scarce.

Arbitrary arrests and detentions are a common occurrence in IIOJK, where draconian laws like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) grant extensive powers to Indian security forces. Countless Kashmiri civilians, including minors, have been detained without trial or due process, frequently subjected to torture, harassment, and psychological trauma. The pervasive culture of impunity within the security apparatus perpetuates these abuses, fostering a cycle of fear and oppression. The freedom to express oneself and gather peacefully faces severe restrictions in IIOJK, where any disagreement with Indian governance results in harsh consequences. Journalists, activists, and dissenting voices are consistently targeted, with media outlets and internet access tightly controlled to manage information dissemination. Peaceful demonstrations are met with disproportionate force, including tear gas and pellet guns, resulting in injuries, disabilities, and loss of life. The use of pellet guns by Indian security forces has become emblematic of the harsh suppression of dissent in IIOJK, inflicting serious harm such as blindness and permanent disability, particularly among young Kashmiri protesters.

To be continued

Ego rather than a sense of responsibility, look back before saying

Nowadays in Pakistan, it is often claimed that certain decisions were not made personally but under pressure, with interference in judicial matters being alleged. However, this assertion seems questionable. A recent example is a Chief Justice who removed a Prime Minister from office, weakened his party, and played a controversial role in subsequent elections. At that time, their actions seemed to reflect the stance of a severe political opponent rather than an impartial judicial figure.

Now, the judiciary asserts that its domain is being interfered with. The same pattern was evident during the Senate elections, where the objective appeared to be to ensure the party's defeat. This raises the question of whether their decisions at that time were also influenced by external pressure. Furthermore, a recent instance involved a figure who, under the guise of upholding the constitution and law, acted more like a political player. One must ask whether they too were under similar pressure. Historically, Pakistan's judiciary has repeatedly rendered decisions that are perceived as unconstitutional. When these significant rulings were made, there was no mention of external pressure

influencing the decisions.

However, now that their own positions and authority are under scrutiny, the claim of pressure is being vocalized loudly. This shift suggests that the current noise about interference is more a matter of protecting their own interests and ego rather than a genuine concern for the constitutional process. I do not advocate for interference in the judiciary, as an independent judiciary is vital for the rule of law and democracy. However, I am strongly opposed to the apparent double standards that have characterized its recent actions.

If the judiciary is genuinely committed to preventing unconstitutional acts, it must also hold accountable those judges who made unconstitutional decisions in the past. The judiciary's credibility and integrity are undermined if it fails to address these past transgressions with the same vigor it applies to current issues. In conclusion, the situation appears less about adherence to the constitution and more about safeguarding individual egos and interests. For true justice and constitutional adherence, the judiciary must apply consistent standards of accountability and resist the temptation to protect its own interests at the expense of the rule of law.

Writer is student at University of Sargodha



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



Analysis

M Azam Tariq

Google partners with the Ministry of Federal Education to bring education access and digital transformation to millions of students

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Google for Education and Pakistan's Ministry of Federal Education today announced a strategic collaboration to bring digital transformation to millions of students in the country. The partnership will improve access to education and support the development of a digital ecosystem for learning—for Pakistan's tens of millions of students.

Shehbaz Sharif, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, emphasized the need for such initiatives and said, "The work Google has been doing in the education sector is highly commendable, and we are here to support its efforts in Pakistan." He also expressed a strong interest in expanding the collaboration between Google and the Government of Pakistan and

requested the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional and the Ministry of IT & Telecom to work closely to identify mutually beneficial synergies."

Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister of Education and Professional Training, said, "The partnership with Google for Education is a significant step forward in our efforts to provide quality education to all children in Pakistan. "We believe that technology can play a vital role in improving learning outcomes and preparing our students for the future."

Farhan S. Qureshi, Google Pakistan's country director, says: "This partnership has the potential to transform education in Pakistan for the better, giving millions of students access to education and digital tools that will help them learn better and

get ready for the digital economy. Also, creating a local assembly of over 500,000 Chromebooks will help Pakistan's manufacturing industry grow and attract more investments in technology."

Kevin Kells, Managing Director, Google for Education, adds: "Google for Education offers powerful tools that can support learners in developing some of the key skills they need to thrive; including foundational literacy and cutting edge digital and AI skills. We are proud to be able to support the Government's mission and help to safely connect Pakistani young people—including out-of-school children—to high quality learning opportunities. Moreover, Google Classroom and Workspace for Education will help teachers have the maximum impact on their students."



ISSI-MEMO Co-host Webinar on 'The Future of Palestinian Refugees'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Middle East Monitor (MEMO), hosted a webinar to mark World Refugee Day, titled, "The Future of Palestinian Refugees." The webinar was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. The speakers at the webinar included Ambassador Sohaail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Dr. Daud Abdullah, Director Middle East Monitor (MEMO); Dr. Salman Abu Sitta, Founder and President Palestine Land Society; Dr. Nader Al-Turk, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of the State of Palestine; and Prof. Nur Masalha, Palestinian historian.

DG ISSI Ambassador Sohaail Mahmood stressed the need to acknowledge the unwavering spirit of refugees of the world over. He highlighted how Pakistan has been hosting Afghan refugees since 1979, and remains a major refugee-hosting country despite economic challenges. He noted that according



to UNHCR global displacement, driven by conflicts in Gaza, Sudan, and Myanmar, reached 117.3 million people in 2023, including 1.7 million Palestinians displaced in Gaza due to Israel's war.

Ms. Amina Khan highlighted the Palestinian refugee crisis due to Israel's systematic occupation and oppression since 1948. She said that the ongoing reign of terror that has been unleashed on Palestine amounts to what can only

be characterized as genocide has led to further displacement putting into question the right of return for refugees.

Dr. Salman Abu Sitta lamented that the issue of Palestinian refugees was being ignored by certain countries while focusing on Israeli hostages, asserting the refugees' legal right to return despite Israeli usurpation.

Prof. Nur Masalha emphasized understanding the history of the

Palestinian issue, highlighting the 1948 Nakba and ongoing expulsions. Noting that Palestinians never voluntarily left their land and were forcibly evicted through systematic actions of the occupying power.

Dr. Nader Al-Turk highlighted the rise in Palestinian refugees since 1948, Israel's disregard for UN resolutions, and targeting of UNRWA. He noted the impact of the 2018 Trump funding freeze and the displacement of 500 villages. He called for international efforts to address the refugee crisis and hold Israel accountable.

Dr. Daud Abdullah emphasized the right of return for refugees, focusing on repatriation, property restitution, and compensation. He noted that historical agreements have failed to resolve refugee issues justly and argued that political agreements must uphold refugee rights under international law.

During his concluding remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood lamented UNRWA's chronic underfunding and stressed addressing the root causes, ensuring refugee return, property restitution, and compensation. He urged unity among refugees to press their cause more fervently and energetically.

High-level delegation led by Industries Minister to visit Turkmenistan from June 24



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation led by Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain will visit Turkmenistan from June 24 to 26 to explore new opportunities for bilateral trade and investment.

The minister on Thursday held a meeting with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Pakistan Atadjan Movlamov to discuss matters relating to the visit.

During the meeting, the minister said that strengthening trade and economic relations with Turkmenistan was the government's top priority and the delegation's visit would play an important role in that regard.

Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov proposed that both countries should organize a joint trade exhibition to promote trade and investment.

Ambassador Amna meets Denmark's representative to EU Michael Lund Jeppesen

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: Ambassador of Pakistan to Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU Amna Baloch on Thursday met with Representative of Denmark to the Political and Security Committee of the European Union Ambassador Michael Lund Jeppesen and discussed matters of mutual concerns.

In the meeting, they also discussed the ongoing political developments and avenues for strengthening bilateral cooperation.



China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan to construct new railway to enhance trade, economic cooperation

Spokesman Report

BELJING: China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan will construct a new railway starting in China Kashgar and traversing Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan, to enhance trade and economic cooperation.

A trilateral inter-governmental agreement on the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project was signed at a ceremony in Beijing last week.

Chinese President Xi Jinping, President of Kyrgyzstan Sadyr Japarov, and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev hailed the event as a sign of unity and shared progress.

The governments of China, Kyrgyzstan, and Uzbekistan agreed to embark on constructing the new railway at a Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit held in the Uzbek city of Samarkand in September 2022. The project feasibility study was updated following the completion of field surveys by Chinese engineers in December last year.



"All three countries have diligently prepared for the construction, which is expected to commence later this year," China Daily reported. The new railway, a beacon of hope and optimism, will

start in China's Kashgar and traverse Torugart, Kosh-Dobo, and Kazarman in Kyrgyzstan, culminating in Andijan in eastern Uzbekistan.

It is estimated that the railway will shorten the route between China and Europe by about 900 kilometers and reduce freight transit time by eight days.

This transformative railway, with its potential to enhance trade and economic cooperation between the countries along its path, holds the promise of a brighter future and instills optimism due to the potential economic benefits it will bring.

According to an earlier announcement, the planned 523-km railway will be constructed through a joint venture involving three countries. The estimated total cost of the project is \$8 billion, with \$4.7 billion allocated for the Kyrgyz part.

The new railway lines will intersect in Central Asia with planned and under-construction railway lines in the north-south direction from Russia and Central Asia through Afghanistan, Pakistan, Azerbaijan, and Iran to the deep-water ports of the Indian Ocean.

Potential of Pakistan's IT Sector

Embracing Web3 and Collaborating with Japan for a Prosperous Future

Pakistan's Information Technology (IT) sector is on the brink of a significant transformation. With a large, youthful population, increasing internet access, and a thriving community of tech startups, Pakistan is well-positioned to make its mark in the global tech industry. The transition to Web3, the decentralized internet, offers a unique chance for Pakistan to advance rapidly. Moreover, collaboration with tech-savvy nations like Japan can propel innovation and economic growth, benefiting both countries.

Web3 is the latest concept, which is revolutionizing industries across the globe, from healthcare to finance. However, the transition from Web 2.0 to Web3 is a gradual process, but experts can already feel its impact in various sectors. The concept of decentralization, tokenized economies, and blockchain technology aims to create digital spaces where users have true ownership over their content and data. Having said that, many Japanese companies have started adapting Web3 applications to be at the forefront of this innovation, with a focus on blockchain, decentralized finance (DeFi), and non-fungible tokens (NFTs). For instance, Japan's largest bank, Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG), has been actively exploring the use of blockchain technology for various applications, including supply chain management and digital identity verification. Another notable example is Japan's largest e-commerce platform, Rakuten, which has been investing heavily in blockchain

and DeFi. If we talk about the media industry, NFTStudio24 is an epitome of how incorporating blockchain into media can revolutionize the industry as the world sees it. The Current State of Pakistan's IT Sector In recent years, Pakistan's IT sector has experienced substantial growth. The country is home to a dynamic mix of tech entrepreneurs, freelancers, and IT professionals. As reported by The Nations, Pakistan's IT exports have surpassed \$2 billion, driven mainly by software development, business process outsourcing (BPO) services, and freelancing. Government initiatives, such as tax breaks for IT exports and the creation of technology parks, have played a pivotal role in this progress. However, the industry still faces challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, a skills gap, and limited access to funding, limiting the sector's potential. Overcoming these obstacles will require strategic international partnerships and the adoption of innovative technologies.

Embracing Web3 As we talked earlier, Web3 represents the next evolution of internet technology, characterized by decentralization, blockchain integration, and increased user control over data. Unlike the current internet (Web2), where few major companies have control over data, Web3 aims to shift ownership and give users control over their digital assets. In November, 2022, Punjab Government, Pakistan launched the first Web3 portal of the country. On the occasion of launch, Mr Leghari said, "the complete adoption of Web 3.0 would create jobs leading to economic growth and a rise in GDP." "Tourism, education, government services, retail and real estate will be the main beneficiaries of the new technology," he added. You may read the full news here. The Importance of Japanese-Pakistani Collaboration Japan, known for its technological advancements in areas

like robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain, can be a valuable partner for Pakistan. Japan's investment in Pakistan could lead to the creation of a robust Web3 ecosystem, with Japanese companies providing expertise and resources to Pakistani startups. Collaboration between Japan and Pakistan can drive innovation and mutual growth in several key areas such as skill development, investment and funding, joint ventures and projects, and policy and regulatory support. Asia Web3 Alliance Japan (AWAJ) aims to facilitate diplomatic relationships between two nations through appropriate networking, market strategies, and policy exploration that can benefit mutual economic and technological advancements. Pakistan's IT sector holds immense potential, and the

shift towards Web3 presents a unique opportunity to explore new avenues of growth and innovation. I believe, by embracing Web3 technologies, Pakistan can tackle its socio-economic challenges and drive sustainable development. Together, Pakistan and Japan can build a future where technology empowers people, enhances transparency, and fosters inclusive growth. Hinza Asif is a Pakistani born businesswoman in Japan. She is CEO of NFTStudio24 and President of Asia Web3 Alliance Japan. She contains eight years of experience in the media industry and five years of experience in IT and Blockchain. Aiming at making Web3 accessible globally, Hinza is building a vibrant Web3 community, fostering growth and collaboration between Japan and Asia.



Analysis
Hinza Asif

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,801.53	76,706.77
Day's High	Day's Low
78,890.37	76,896.81
Index Value	Change
15,143,332,248	+2094.76
Percentage	Time
+2.73%	20 Jun, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,272.46	+67.35
Percentage	Time
+0.82%	20 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
38,995.21	+160.35
Percentage	Time
+0.41%	20 Jun, 1:24 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,633.02	+62.26
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	20 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	181.2	183
Bahrain Dinar	740.91	749.18
Canadian Dollar	203.5	205.5
China Yuan	38.4	38.8
Danish Krone	40.11	40.51
Euro	297	299.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.9	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.62	916.62
Malaysian Ringgit	59.07	59.67
New Zealand \$	170.98	172.98
Norwegians Krone	26.3	26.6
Omani Riyal	723.62	731.62
Qatari Riyal	76.53	77.23
Saudi Riyal	72.75	73.5
Singapore Dollar	202	204
Swedish Korona	26.68	26.98
Swiss Franc	315.08	317.58
Thai Bhat	7.59	7.74
U.A.E Dirham	74.8	75.6
UK Pound Sterling	350.5	354
US Dollar	277.7	280.6

Subsidy of 2600 billion rupees to looters unjustified: Hanif Mughal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Thursday that politically connected exporters are causing irreparable damage to the country's economy and the people. He said that, after taking billions of dollars in concessions every year, exporters earn foreign exchange as much as Pakistani expatriates do, which does not cost the government anything. Exporters neither upgrade machinery nor add value to their products. They do not invest in employee training to enhance their skills, as they depend on incentives. In a statement issued here, Dr. Hanif Mughal said that some exporters use their influence to get currency devalued to fill their

coffers. This practice is destroying the economy and making the lives of the commoners difficult, he observed. He said that even now, the dollar's value is at most 250 rupees, but no one in power dares to stabilize the exchange rate to give some relief to the people. If the dollar becomes cheaper at 28 rupees, inflation will fall drastically, which is unacceptable to the greedy exporters who are only concerned about profits. According to Dr. Hanif Mughal, the general industry receives billions of rupees in relief as hundreds of influential individuals have registered their industries as export industries. Many industrial units have nothing to do with exports, and they sell their produce in cash in the local market, so there is no record



of sale. He explained that hundreds of mills

earning billions of rupees show a profit of only a few million. He said that the tax authorities remain silent due to the political influence of such millers or mutually beneficial relations. The government can save billions of rupees if the export status given to the general industry is withdrawn. Still, it is only possible when rulers are ready to sacrifice some political interests. He said that those who have been looting the country for decades do not deserve an annual subsidy of 2600 billion rupees at a time when the masses are unable to get food to the table and the country's survival is at stake. He asked, "How can the government prefer a few hundred fraudsters over 250 million people?"

Hides and skins

ISLAMABAD: Workers salting the hides of sacrificial animals to preserve them at Sector G-11 of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Budget has disappointed public: Dr. Shahid Butt

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, on Thursday rejected the Federal Budget, terming it an effort that aims to support elites and squeeze the masses. The budget has nothing for the people but disappointments and added problems, while it is loaded with benefits to the influential, he said. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that the budget will make the life of the people more difficult while the elite will continue to get benefits of four thousand billion rupees. The business leader said that this budget would lead to increased mistrust and distance between the government and the people, making it less likely to improve the country's economy. Shahid Rashid Butt said that endless elitism will never help improve the economy, which is on the brink of default.



He said that the government listens to the yes-men instead of the people, and every economic decision is made according to the will of criminal businesses. The people are disillusioned and their lives have become challenging with the passing of each day. Those who do not like the situation in Pakistan and have some resources run away from the country.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that those who come to power without the help of the people increase their problems instead of reducing them. Politicians cannot manage any institution but have all the skills to destroy important government institutions. Due to the destruction of government institutions, the private sector charges arbitrary prices for many of its products and services, and there is no system or will to control it. Important departments have become victims of politics and become a burden on the country despite investing billions of rupees in their revival, he lamented. The government does not want to reduce its expenses, nor does it intend to reduce the privileges of the elite if the country goes bankrupt. He said there are solutions to the problems, but these solutions are not acceptable to certain influential circles which will keep country dependent on loans and masses poor.

ICCI all set to host 'All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conclave' on June 25, 26

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) is organizing an "All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conclave" (APCPC) on June 25, 26, 2024, which will hopefully be attended by Federal Ministers of government's economic team and Presidents of over 70 Chambers of Commerce & Industry. In a statement issued here on Thursday, President ICCI Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that it is at the credit of the ICCI that it took the initiative to organize first APCPC in 2020 to bring Presidents of all Chambers of Commerce & Industry at one platform to discuss the key issues of business community and put forward proposals to the government for resolving them and now it is once again all set to convene the second APCPC on June 25, 26, 2024. He said the event aims to discuss important issues, share ideas and collaborate on initiatives that promote economic growth and development. The Conclave will feature keynote speeches, panel discussions, and networking opportunities,



providing a platform for business leaders to engage with each other and with policymakers. He said that at the moment, the economy of the country is facing multiple challenges, which have slowed down the business activities, therefore, the ICCI felt the need to bring the leadership of the entire business community at one place and give comprehensive as well as workable proposals to the government for the revival of business and economic activities. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari added that on the occasion, the concerned federal ministers would also take the business community into confidence about the government's measures to promote ease of doing business in the country. He expressed optimism that APCPC would prove instrumental in building more confidence between the government and the business community to put the economy of Pakistan on the path of sustainable economic growth.

PTCL & Huawei conduct first symmetric 50G-PON trial to pioneer next generation fiber optic broadband in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), country's largest telecom and ICT services provider, proudly announces Pakistan's inaugural trial of Symmetric 50G-PON technology, marking a significant stride towards ushering in next-generation fiber-optic broadband services in the country. This achievement is the culmination of PTCL's strategic collaboration with Huawei, a global leader in information and communication technology. Symmetric 50G-PON can provide 50 Gbps connectivity in downstream as well as upstream transmission simultaneously. Symmetric 50G-PON provides an edge over the Asymmetric 50 G-PON which supports 50 Gbps in downstream transmission only. PTCL also inaugurated Asymmetric 50G-PON for the very first time in Pakistan at the beginning of the year. 50 GPON is recognized by ITU-T as the next frontier in Passive Optical Network-based broadband technology, which is poised to revolutionize Pakistan's digital landscape. With substantially enhanced capabilities surpassing those of existing GPON and XG(S)-GPON technologies, 50G-PON delivers an impressive 50 Gbps per PON port. This advancement holds the promise of reshaping future demands across industries, enterprises, businesses, campuses, and residential settings, unlocking the boundless potential for bandwidth-intensive and low-latency next-generation services. Group Chief Technology and Information Officer (GCTIO) at PTCL & Ufone 4G, Jafar Khalid expressed his enthusiasm for this milestone, stating, "PTCL has achieved yet another remarkable milestone with the successful trial of 50G-PON Symmetric technology in Pakistan. This initiative represents a significant stride towards the future evolution of fiber broadband connectivity in Pakistan, and signifies PTCL's sustained commitment to enhance connectivity, and digital lifestyles of its customers." As PTCL continues to spearhead innovation in Pakistan's telecommunication sector, the successful trial and future commercial deployment of Symmetric 50G-PON technology underscore PTCL's unwavering commitment to delivering cutting-edge solutions that will propel Pakistan into a digitally advanced era.

foodpanda enhances delivery partners' work experience with 'panda cares'

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Leading delivery platform foodpanda is doubling down on its commitment to its delivery partners with 'panda cares', its flagship programme aimed at uplifting and supporting delivery partners in five core areas: safety, well-being, personal development, community, and welfare perks. Over the years, foodpanda has through regular dialogue worked closely with its delivery partners in finding ways to best support and enhance their delivery experience. foodpanda has refined its delivery partner initiatives to consistently deliver on what they value. 'Panda cares' will house existing and new welfare and engagement initiatives. "We are committed to creating a positive and supportive environment for our delivery partners, and 'panda cares' is a key part of that effort. Through 'panda cares', we aim to build a strong community of partners who feel valued and empowered to succeed. As gig work becomes more commonplace, so does our responsibility to enhance their work experience. It's important that we continually step up the care and support we provide to our frontline heroes," says Muntaqa Peracha, CEO of foodpanda. Ensuring the safety and well-being of delivery riders is one of the top priorities at foodpanda. In Pakistan, efforts in this regard include a series of road safety awareness sessions in partnership with Sindh and Punjab traffic police which will continue to be held regularly and expand to other major cities. With 'panda cares', foodpanda Pakistan will build on existing efforts to further empower its delivery partners in operating safely and confidently on the roads, ultimately contributing to a safer working environment for all.

CAT dismisses appeals by electric cable manufacturers against CCP fines

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has dismissed the appeals filed by electric cable manufacturers against the Competition Commission of Pakistan's (CCP) order, which fined these manufacturers for hiding cash coupons in their products without informing consumers. CCP conducted an enquiry against 18 electric cable manufacturing companies for inserting cash/cash coupons inside bundles of electric wire without disclosing this on the packaging or promotional material. This practice only benefited electricians who typically open the packs, deceiving end consumers who paid for the value of the coupons without being aware of it. During the hearings, most of these manufacturers admitted to the deceptive practice and committed to ceasing it in the future. On 26 March 2019, CCP imposed penalties of PKR 5 million each on M/s. Fast Cables and M/s. G. M Cables, and PKR 500,000 each on M/s. E-flux Cable, Gold Royale Cable, Hero Cables, Alfa Plus Wires & Cables, and Falcon Cables for engaging in deceptive marketing practices by distributing false and misleading information to consumers, in violation of Section 10 of the Competition Act, 2010. These companies had deceptively inserted tokens/cash coupons in their product packaging without disclosing their existence, at the expense of consumer benefit. The companies appealed the CCP's order before the Competition Appellate Tribunal. After hearing the parties at length, the Tribunal dismissed the appeals filed by M/s. E-Flux, Gold Royale Cables, Hero Cables, Alfa Plus Cables, and Falcon Cables, without modifying the penalties imposed by the CCP. However, the appeals filed by M/s. Fast Cables and G. M Cables were partially upheld, with the penalties reduced to PKR 500,000 each.

Hjulmand strikes as Denmark hold England for stalemate

Sports Desk

LAHORE: England failed to guarantee their place in the knockout stages of Euro 2024 after Morten Hjulmand's spectacular strike earned Denmark a 1-1 draw on Thursday.

A point was the least the Danes deserved as England again flattered to deceive in Frankfurt after an underwhelming 1-0 win over Serbia to open their tournament.

Harry Kane had given the Three Lions an early lead as England pounced on a Danish defensive error.

Hjulmand's rocket from outside the box levelled before half-time and Denmark were left to rue missing late chances to secure a famous victory.

England remain on top of Group C of the ongoing Euro 2024, two points clear of Slovenia, who they face in Cologne on Tuesday, and Denmark.

Serbia's late equaliser in a 1-1 draw with Slovenia earlier on Thursday also keeps their destiny in their own hands.

England boss Gareth Southgate said on Wednesday that he avoids media coverage during tournaments to escape negative stories.

But will be braced for more criticism after another flat display from one of the pre-tournament favourites.

Denmark coach Kasper Hjulmand and goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel claimed on the eve of the game they would not be fuelled by revenge for



their Euro 2020 semi-final heartbreak to England three years ago.

However, the Danes were a different beast from the side that disappointed at the 2022 World Cup and in drawing against Slovenia to open their tournament in Germany.

Denmark had made the brighter start as both sides struggled to cope with a bobbly pitch in Frankfurt that cut up badly in just its second game of five at Euro 2024.

Yet, England capitalised on a howler from Hjulmand's men to take the lead on 18 minutes.

Victor Kristiansen was caught unaware of Kyle Walker's run down

the right and his deflected low cross fell perfectly for Kane to roll in his 13th goal at major tournaments.

Failing to build on early 1-0 leads has been a consistent criticism of England under Southgate.

In the 2018 World Cup semi-final and final of Euro 2020, Croatia and Italy were able to wrestle away momentum from the Three Lions.

This time Denmark were not deterred by conceding, although it took a spectacular strike to bring them level.

Hjulmand was given far too much room by the England midfield to take aim but he took full advantage from long range with a blistering shot that

clipped the inside of the post on its way in.

Southgate made no changes at the break, but the future of his experiment of playing Liverpool right-back Trent Alexander-Arnold in a midfield role is in doubt after he was hooked for Conor Gallagher on 55 minutes.

Phil Foden's form for England had been a source of much debate after he again failed to shine at international level against Serbia.

The Manchester City playmaker looked much more like the man that won Premier League player of the year awards this season and was inches away from restoring England's lead with a low drive that came crashing back off the post.

Southgate's caution has been criticised in the past, but he was bold with his changes in the search for a winner as Kane, Foden and Bukayo Saka were sacrificed for Eberechi Eze, Ollie Watkins and Jarrod Bowen.

Watkins nearly made an immediate impact as he was denied by Schmeichel after a brilliant through ball from Jude Bellingham.

Yet, it was Denmark who had the better chances to take all three points in the closing stages.

Andreas Christensen spooned over when unmarked from a corner before Pierre-Emile Hojbjerg curled inches wide.

'Umar Akmal, Ahmed Shehzad were more talented than us,' Azhar Ali



A Sports

Former Pakistan captain Azhar Ali made a massive claim about Umar Akmal and Ahmed Shehzad as he termed the duo more talented than the rest of the players.

Ali, however, highlighted that their problem was they could not flourish in international cricket.

"Umar Akmal and Ahmad Shehzad were more talented than the rest of us. They just could not flourish in international cricket like they should have, stated Ali on a local sports channel.

He further blamed the then management for not handling them well. He maintained if Akmal and Shehzad had disciplinary issues then they should have been counselled.

"A bit of the responsibility and blame lies on the management. Did they utilise methods through which Akmal and Shehzad could have gotten better? And if they believed that the two players had other issues then they should have been counselled," Azhar Ali concluded.

Ahmed Shehzad and Umar Akmal, who made their respective debuts for Pakistan in 2009, were integral parts of the national team till 2016.

Their last appearance, however, came in the three-match home T20I series against Sri Lanka in 2019.

Shehzad managed modest scores of four and 13 in the opening two T20Is of the home series respectively while Akmal even failed to score a run as he got out on back-to-back golden ducks.

The duo was subsequently dropped from the third T20I of the series and has not represented Pakistan since then.

Ex-Indian cricketer dies after 'falling off balcony'

In a shocking development, former Indian cricketer David Johnson, 52, passed away after falling from the balcony of his apartment in Kanaka Sri Layout, Kothanur, which prompted a police probe.

As per multiple reports aired on Indian media, Johnson was struggling with depression and was not in good health recently.

The incident took place under the jurisdiction of Kottanur police station. It is also revealed that he jumped from the balcony while family members were at home.

The local police are currently investigating the case to find out if it was a suicide or not. Johnson was running a cricket academy in his hometown and left a wife and two children.

"We were informed that he had fallen from the fourth floor of his apartment building. He was taken to a hospital, but the doctors declared him brought dead," a KSCA official told PTI.

Indian cricketers expressed their sadness on the passing of Johnson with prominent names like Anil Kumble, Gautam Gambhir and others offering their condolences on Johnson's demise.

"Saddened to hear the passing of my cricketing colleague David Johnson. Heartfelt condolences to his family. Gone too soon " Benny!" Anil Kumble posted on X.

"Saddened by the passing away of David Johnson. May god give strength to his family and loved ones," Gambhir wrote.

"Deepest condolences to the family and friends of our former Indian fast bowler David Johnson. His contributions to the game will always be remembered," BCCI secretary Jay Shah also posted on X.

Johnson made his red-ball debut against Australia in Delhi in 1996. After playing the Aussies, he went on a tour of South Africa and appeared only in the first Test which was his last as well.

He bagged 125 wickets in 39 matches in first-class cricket and despite being a lower-order batter, he scored a hundred in FC cricket.

Babar Azam, Shadab, others limit public interactions in US after Haris Rauf's brawl

PORT LAUDERHILL: After Pakistan fast bowler Haris Rauf engaged in an ugly altercation with a fan, members of the national men's cricket team are keeping their distance from fans in the United States following the team's early exit from the T20 World Cup 2024.

According to The News, the team's T20 captain Babar Azam, Shadab Khan, and a few others — all of whom prolonged their stay in the US, despite the team's elimination from the tournament's league stage — have limited their public interactions and are only meeting with people they are familiar with.

This change in the team members' attitude towards fans follows a widely circulated video on social media, which showed Rauf, 30, engaging in a confrontation with a fan who made negative remarks targeting him.

In the video, the pacer was seen strolling around with his wife, Muzna, when he suddenly became aggressive towards a fan, accompanied by a group of youngsters.

India thump Afghanistan to kick off T20 World Cup Super Eight with a win

A Sports

BRIDGETOWN: Suryakumar Yadav's blistering half-century, followed by a combined bowling display led India to a comfortable 47-run victory over Afghanistan in the 43rd match of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 here on Thursday.

Chasing a daunting 182-run total, Afghanistan's batting unit unfolded on just 134 on the final delivery of the innings.

Afghanistan got off to a dismal start to the pursuit as they lost three wickets upfront with just 23 runs on the board in 4.1 overs.

Following the early slump, Gulbadin Naib partnered with Azmatullah Omarzai in a bid to launch recovery.

The duo added 44 runs for the fourth wicket but both perished in successive overs as Afghanistan slipped to 71/5 in 11.1 overs.

Gulbadin Naib scored 17 off 21 balls, hitting two boundaries including a six while Omarzai remained the top-scorer for Afghanistan with 20-ball 26 which included two fours and a six.

Veteran all-rounder Mohammad Nabi stitched a resilient sixth-wicket partnership with Najibullah Zadran.

Their sixth-wicket stand yielded 31 runs and lasted with Zadran's dismissal in the 16th over after scoring 19 off 17.

Nabi followed him back to the dugout



in the next over after scoring a run-a-ball 14.

Afghanistan's batting tail then crumbled against India's dominant bowling attack despite Noor Ahmad's valiant 12.

Jasprit Bumrah and Arshdeep Singh led the bowling charge for India with three wickets each, followed by Kuldeep Yadav, who bagged two while Ravindra Jadeja chipped in with a wicket.

Sent into bat first, India registered 181/8 on the scoreboard, courtesy of Yadav's brisk half-century, followed by Hardik Pandya's blitz.

India, however, had a shaky start to

their innings as captain Rohit Sharma (8) fell victim to Fazalhaq Farooqi in the third over with just 11 runs on the board.

Virat Kohli then joined forces with Rishabh Pant and together they raised 43 runs until the latter perished on the last delivery of the seventh over.

Pant was the core aggressor of the stand, scoring a brisk 20 off 11 deliveries, while Kohli anchored through before perishing in the ninth over. He scored a run-a-ball 24.

Top-ranked T20I batter Suryakumar Yadav then took the reigns of India's batting charge.

He put together a brief partnership with Shivam Dube, who could score 10 off seven deliveries, before finding subtle support at the other end in the form of Hardik Pandya.

Yadav and Pandya turned the tide in India's favour with a quickfire 60-run partnership.

India's crucial fifth-wicket stand lasted in the 17th over when Farooqi outclassed Yadav with a leg-cutter to provide a much-needed breakthrough to Afghanistan.

Suryakumar Yadav remained the top-scorer for India with a 28-ball 53 which featured five fours and three sixes.

India then sustained another massive blow to their batting expedition when set batter Hardik Pandya and Ravindra Jadeja perished in the same over, bringing the total down to 165/7 in 18.4 overs.

Pandya remained a notable run-getter for India with 32 off 24 deliveries, laced up with three fours and two sixes.

Later, Axar Patel and Arshdeep Singh made notable contribution to India's total with a 16-run stand which lasted with the former's run out on the final delivery.

Patel scored 12 off six deliveries while Singh made two not out.

Fazalhaq Farooqi, the leading wicket-taker of the ongoing T20 World Cup 2024, and Rashid Khan bagged three wickets each for Afghanistan while Naveen-ul-Haq took one.

Dale Steyn predicts T20 World Cup 2024 semi-finalists

A Sports

Legendary South Africa pacer Dale Steyn named four teams, he foresees in the semi-finals of the ongoing ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024, co-hosted by the United States of America (USA) and the West Indies.

Sharing his predictions via a video on Instagram, Steyn made a bold move by excluding defending champions England.

Notably, England, who were at one stage, on the verge of an early exit from



the T20 World Cup 2024, pushed hard for the Super Eight qualification by registering thumping victories over Oman and

Namibia.

Despite the 2022 champions' current form, Dale Steyn does not foresee them making it into the knockouts.

"I think from this group (Group 2) I am going to go with South Africa and West Indies. I gotta go with South Africa because they are my team. England is a tough team, but I think South Africa and West Indies," said Steyn.

Dale Steyn then termed former champions India and Australia favourites from Group 2 to advance to the semi-finals but

predicted that Afghanistan could push hard. "And then from the other group (Group 1), it is a tough group but Australia because they just know how to win these tournaments and I have a feeling Afghanistan could push, but it is gonna be India," Steyn added.

It is worth mentioning here that two teams from each group of Super Eights will qualify for the T20 World Cup 2024 semi-finals, scheduled on June 27. Whereas, the final of the tournament will take place on June 29.

Suryakumar, Bumrah shine as India defeat Afghanistan at T20 World Cup

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Suryakumar Yadav smashed a fine half-century before India's bowlers slammed the brakes on Afghanistan's flamboyant shot-makers to romp to a 47-run win in the T20 World Cup on Thursday.

Suryakumar's 53 was his 19th fifty in the format and helped India post a challenging 181-8 in their second round Super Eights opener.

Experienced fast bowler Jasprit Bumrah then combined with spin trio Axar Patel, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja to strangle Afghanistan, seen by many as dark horses for

the title, who were dismissed for 134 off the last ball.

"We adapted well and got 180, which was a great effort from the batters," said India captain Rohit Sharma.

"We had class bowlers who defended it perfectly. Everyone came in and did their job."

Afghanistan slipped quickly to 23-3 losing openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz (11) and Hazratullah Zazai (two) to the wily Bumrah while Patel sent back Ibrahim Zadran (eight).

Gulbadin Naib (17) and top-scorer Azmatullah Omarzai (26) put on 44 for the fourth wicket but once they fell to Kuldeep and Jadeja respec-

tively, Afghanistan wilted in their chase.

Bumrah finished with a career best 3-7 from his four overs while fellow seamer Arshdeep Singh took 3-36.

Afghanistan, who won their opening three games in the group stage, have now lost back-to-back matches.

In their last first round fixture, they suffered a humbling 104-run setback to the West Indies at St Lucia.

"We knew we'd be chasing 160-170 given it was against a bigger team. We could've done it had we executed smarter," admitted Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan.

India and Afghanistan will face Australia and Bangladesh in their remaining Group 1 fixtures with the top two teams making the semi-finals.

Suryakumar made 53 from 28 balls with five fours and three sixes and shared a 60-run fifth-wicket partnership with Hardik Pandya.

"I don't mind giving this player of the match award to a bowler as well," said Suryakumar.

Rashid Khan and left-arm fast bowler Fazalhaq Farooqi both took three wickets for Afghanistan.

Farooqi, Rashid strike Farooqi struck first for Afghanistan by having Sharma

caught by Rashid for just eight.

It was the 23-year-old Farooqi's 50th career T20 international wicket.

Virat Kohli and Rishabh Pant put on 43 for the second wicket with Pant hitting three successive boundaries off Mohammad Nabi.

His 11-ball cameo had yielded 20 runs when he was lbw to Rashid attempting an ill-judged reverse sweep.

That left India on 54-2 before Rashid struck again in his next over, claiming the prestige scalp of Kohli who was caught by Nabi at long-off for 24 off 24 balls.

Kohli had at least made it to double figures after a miserable



run of just five runs in his first three matches at the tournament.

At the halfway point India were 79-3. Rashid was hit for a boundary and a six in the 11th over by Suryakumar.

But the leg-spinner was soon celebrating his third wicket when he had Shivam Dube trapped lbw for 10. Rashid finished with impressive figures of 3-26.

Suryakumar and Pandya threatened to take the game away from Afghanistan.

But Farooqi dismissed Suryakumar in the 17th over before Pandya, who made 32 from 24 balls with three fours and two sixes, fell to Naveen-ul-Haq off the last ball of the 18th over.

Farooqi also sent back Jadeja to finish with 3-33 and take his tournament total to 15 wickets.

Group photo with President of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a group photo with Minister for Interior Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MNA Malik Shah Gorgaj, Home Minister Mir Ziaullah Langov, MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, senior civil and military officials during his visit to Gwadar on 20-06-2024.



Photo: PID

President for enhanced capacity of LEAs to counter terror in Balochistan

Bureau Report

GWADAR: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for enhancing the capacity of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), posting competent officers in Balochistan, and improving the prosecution mechanism to effectively counter terrorist elements in Balochistan.

The President expressed these views while chairing a meeting on the security/law and order situation in Balochistan, in Gwadar, on Thursday.

Minister for Interior, Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Chief Minister Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti, MNA Malik Shah Gorgaj,

Home Minister, Mir Ziaullah Langov, MPA Maulana Hidayat-ur-Rehman, senior civil and military officials attended the meeting.

The President was briefed about the overall security situation of the province as well as the role of LEAs in successfully countering terrorist attacks in various districts of Balochistan.

It was informed that the provincial government had adopted a targeted approach to improve the security and law-and-order situation in Balochistan. It was further apprised that the initiatives taken by the LEAs had resulted in improving the security situation in the province. The President was

informed that the provincial government was taking steps to provide fool-proof security to Chinese and foreign nationals.

The President appreciated the efforts of the provincial government as well as the sacrifices of the LEAs in combatting terrorism.

Speaking on the occasion, the President said that the prosecution system needed to be improved so that the terrorist elements could not escape justice. He said that compensation for the families of martyrs of LEAs in Balochistan should be enhanced bringing it at par with the rest of the provinces. The President said that competent and brave police

officials needed to be posted in Balochistan that would help improve the law-and-order situation of the province. He also called for taking effective measures to ensure the safety and security of Zaireen.

The President also called for promoting the fishing industry of Balochistan by providing financing and equipment to local fishermen, apart from promoting sustainable fishing practices and checking the production of illegal fishing nets.

Chief Minister Balochistan thanked the President for visiting Gwadar, saying that it would give the people of Balochistan a sense of ownership as well as strengthen the

resolve of the LEAs to eliminate terrorism. He informed that the provincial government was according top-priority to the capacity building of police and levies. He underlined the importance of equipping people residing in border areas of Balochistan with marketable skills to help them find employment in the country and abroad. He highlighted that all stakeholders needed to make collective efforts to stamp out terrorism, besides evolving a national consensus for the development of Balochistan.

The meeting also urged the need for completing the Kaehi Canal project to fulfil the food requirements of the province.

Several civil servants face axe as Punjab approves restructuring plan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Several government employees in Punjab are facing the axe as the provincial government decides to shut down many public institutions to reform the governance system.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has formed a 14-member special "high-level" committee and tasked it with preparing recommendations within 60 days.

Last week, the provincial government unveiled a Rs5.3 billion budget for the fiscal year 2024-25. The government plans to collect nearly Rs472 billion in direct and indirect taxes during the next fiscal.



Under this initiative, "redundant, inefficient and loss-making government departments and agencies" would be downsized or shut down. Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb would be the convener of the Restructuring Committee

while Finance Minister Mujtaba Shuja and the law minister would also be part of the committee.

While the restructuring holds the promise of improved governance, it also poses risks to the jobs of civil servants, as the downsizing of government institutions could lead to layoffs.

The aim is to streamline the governance system by merging or eliminating duplicate departments performing the same functions, according to the provincial government's statement.

The volume of ministries would be reduced and overlapping organisations would be consolidated to improve efficiency in handling official matters.

Israeli tanks push deeper into Rafah, forcing people to flee again

Reuters

Israeli tanks backed by warplanes and drones advanced deeper into the western part of the Gaza Strip city of Rafah on Wednesday, killing eight people, according to residents and Palestinian medics.

Residents said the tanks moved into five neighbourhoods after midnight. Heavy shelling and gunfire hit the tents of displaced families in the Al-Mawasi area, further to the west of the coastal enclave, they said.

Some eight months into the war, there has been no sign of let up in the fighting as efforts by international mediators, backed by the United States, have failed to persuade Israel and Hamas to agree to a ceasefire.

Twelve Palestinians were also killed in an Israeli strike that hit a group of citizens and merchants in the south of the Gaza Strip, medical sources told Reuters on Wednesday.

The people were hit as they waited for convoys of aid trucks carrying goods through the Kerem Shalom crossing in Salahuddin Road northeast of Rafah, the sources added.

Israeli forces have laid waste to much of Gaza and seized most of the Palestinian territory but have yet to achieve Israel's stated goal of wiping out Hamas and freeing Israeli hostages.

Medics and Hamas media said eight Palestinians were killed in Al-Mawasi and many families fled north in panic. They did not identify the fatalities, and the Israeli military said it was looking into the report.

Residents said Israeli army forces blew up several homes in western Rafah, which had sheltered over half of Gaza's 2.3 million people before last month, when Israel began its ground offensive and forced most of the population to head northwards.

Some United Nations and Palestinian figures put those who remained

at under 100,000 people.

"Another night of horror in Rafah. They opened fire from planes, drones and tanks on the western areas to cover for their invasion," said one Rafah resident, who asked not to be named.

"Bullets and shells landed in the Mawasi area near where people slept, killing and wounding many," he told Reuters via a chat app.

An Israeli commander briefing military correspondents in Rafah on Tuesday named two more locations there - Shaboura and Tel Al-Sultan - where the army planned to take on Hamas fighters.

"The Hamas battalions there are not yet well worn down and we need to dismantle them completely. We estimate it at more or less a month, at this intensity," Colonel Liron Batito, head of the Givati Brigade, told Army Radio.

The Israeli military remained in control of the border between Rafah and Egypt. Footage circulated on social

media showed the Rafah crossing, the only window for most of Gaza's population with the outside world, was destroyed, buildings burnt, and Israeli tanks positioned there with the flag of Israel flying over some places.

The Israeli military said aid into Gaza had not been impeded by the damage.

Further north, Israel sent a column of tanks back into the Zeitoun neighbourhood in Gaza City, and residents reported heavy fire from tanks and warplanes but also sounds of gun battles with Hamas-led fighters.

Israel's ground and air campaign was triggered when Hamas stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing around 1,200 people and seizing more than 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies.

The offensive has left Gaza in ruins, killed more than 37,400 people, according to Palestinian health authorities, and left much of the population homeless and destitute.

Bilawal accepts invite to PM house to discuss budget concerns

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has accepted an invitation by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to discuss the party's concerns regarding the 2024-25 federal budget.

According to a report, Shehbaz Sharif extended the invitation to Bilawal Bhutto while conveying Eid greetings.

The meeting between the two leaders is expected to take place by Friday at the Prime Minister's Office.

A senior PPP leader Rana Sanaullah stated that the party's objections to the budget are 100% valid and expressed hope that the country will emerge from the economic crisis



through this year's financial budget.

There is a specific agenda between the two leaders, which includes resolving the pending issues, particularly the PPP's concerns, as the party is against imposing heavy taxes on the salaried class.

Bhutto did not attend the budget session on June 12, citing that the government did not consult the PPP during the preparation of the budget.

Govt bringing reforms in energy sector to reduce electricity tariff: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said the government was bringing reforms in the energy sector to reduce electricity tariff.

He was talking to a delegation of foreign experts in the energy sector, led by former Georgian Prime Minister Nika Gilauri which called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister said that circular debt, line losses and electricity theft were the major challenges in Pakistan's energy sector.

Emphasizing the importance of energy sector for the country's economic growth and development, he expressed his government's commitment to implement policies for reducing circular debt and improving the efficiency of electricity bill collection personnel.

He said privatization and outsourcing of the power distribu-

tion companies was the top priority of the government. "In this regard the government desires to take benefit from the Georgian experience."

The prime minister expressed his government's desire to promote alternative energy sources, particularly solar energy, and reduce reliance on expensive energy sources.

He said the government would also promote public private partnership in the energy sector.

The prime minister directed the federal ministers to consult with the delegation regarding the basic reforms of the country's energy sector and to evolve a comprehensive strategy regarding the reforms immediately.

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik, Power Minister Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervaiz Malik, and relevant high officials attended the meeting.

Minister directs for audit of fertilizer companies to determine production costs

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industry and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Thursday directed that a third-party audit be conducted to determine the cost of production of fertilizer companies, in order to ensure transparency and fair pricing in the industry.

He issued the directive while chairing a Fertilizer Review Committee meeting which was attended by Federal Secretary Industries and Production, Dr. Muhammad Fakhre Alam Irfan, said a news release.

The meeting reviewed the stock availability, demand, and prices of

urea in the country.

Rana Tanveer said that there was no shortage of urea fertilizer in the country and added steps were taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of gas to fertilizer companies for smooth production of urea.

He also directed fertilizer companies to review the performance of dealers and agencies, and instructed provinces to verify fertilizer dealers and agencies to be blacklisted.

The minister emphasized that fertilizer companies must ensure the supply of fertilizer to the provinces.

The Fertilizer Review Committee meeting will now be held weekly to monitor the situation.

Govt. taking steps for promotion of ICT: Shaza

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Huawei Pakistan, Ethan Sun on Thursday discussed digitalization, IT & Telecom infrastructure, and skills development.

During the meeting, Shaza Fatima said that the current government is taking effective steps to promote Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the country, said a news release.

She said that, in line with the Prime Minister's vision, the country's youth are receiving training in information technology.

LHC seeks ECP's response on PTI's plea to restore bat symbol

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued notices to the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) and other parties, seeking their response to a petition filed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) requesting the restoration of their election symbol, the 'bat'.

A 5-member larger bench headed by Justice Shams Mahmood Mirza heard the PTI's petition against the Election Commission's decision to withdraw their election symbol.

The bench includes Justices Shahid Karim, Shehram Sarwar Chaudhary, Jawad Hassan, and Risal Hussain.

In their petition filed with the LHC, the PTI argued that of ECP's move to

withdraw their election symbol ahead of the general elections was unlawful.

The PTI has requested that ECP's actions against the party's intra-party elections be declared null and void.

The petition also seeks to declare sections 215, 209, and 208 of the Election Act 2017 as unconstitutional.

The petition further demands that the ECP be restrained from taking any action against the PTI and that the party's election symbol, the 'bat', be restored to them.

Senior Supreme Court lawyer Aziz Bhandari who is representing the petitioner, argued that the Supreme Court had previously directed parties to challenge the sections of the Election Act that allow the Election Commission to withdraw party election symbols.