

Pakistan to implement int'l border laws to curb terror from Afghanistan

In a major policy shift, Pakistan has decided to stringently enforce international laws at its borders with Afghanistan, to restrict the influx of militants and smuggled goods into the country, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday. (Details on Page 8)



UN chief concerned over Bolivia coup attempt

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "deeply concerned" by reports of an attempted military coup in Bolivia, his spokesman said. "The Secretary-General calls upon all actors of the Bolivian society, including the Armed Forces, to protect the constitutional order and to preserve a climate of peace," Stephane Dujarric said in a statement. (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

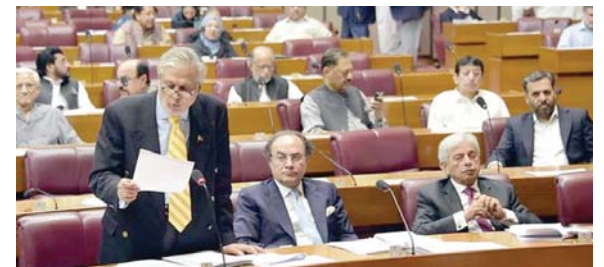
Pakistan-Azerbaijan economic ties

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding promotion of Pakistan-Azerbaijan economic ties on Thursday.



Photo: PID

FM rejects impression of Int'l isolation



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly has approved two demands for grants pertaining to the Foreign Affairs Division. Cut motions moved by the opposition members on these demands for grants were rejected by the house. Winding up discussion on the cut motions, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said the government has taken notice of the resolution passed by the US House of Representatives on Pakistan. He said the government will also pass a resolution in response to the US's resolution and the draft resolution will be shared with the opposition and treasury benches. He asked the treasury and the opposition benches to must show sovereignty and unity. The Foreign Minister rejected the impression that

Pakistan faces isolation at the international level. He said Pakistan has been elected non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, which shows the confidence of the international community on Pakistan. He said the forum will be effectively used to raise the Kashmir dispute and the situation in Gaza. The Foreign Minister said relations with Afghanistan are on the priority agenda of the government. He said the government is in contact with Afghanistan and dates are also being worked out for his visit to Kabul. Ishaq Dar said the government is pursuing the policy of economic diplomacy as it is the way forward to put the country on the growth trajectory. He said Pakistan has the potential to come out of the difficult economic situation.

PM for stronger economic ties with Azerbaijan

Shehbaz Sharif says foreign investment in the country is on the rise

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday instructed the formulation of a comprehensive strategy to strengthen cooperation and trade partnership with Azerbaijan in the fields of economy and investment. Chairing a high-level meeting on enhancing relations with Central Asian States, particularly Azerbaijan, in the areas of economy and investment, the prime minister stated, "Pakistan geographically offers a natural

Steps being taken to provide relief to common man: PM

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said that the government had taken historic measures in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year economic corridor to the sea for Central Asian states." He highlighted the enduring fraternal relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which had spanned decades.

to provide maximum relief to the common man. He was talking to a delegation of young parliamentarians. The prime minister told the MNAs that Allah Almighty had given them a great opportunity to serve the people. He hoped that they would work diligently for the country's development and prosperity, and public welfare. He believed that there were significant opportunities for trade and investment between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. "Foreign investment in the country is on the rise due to

the government's business and investment-friendly policies, the prime minister mentioned. The prime minister directed the development of a comprehensive action plan to boost trade

efficiency and expand current trade between the two countries. During the meeting, the prime minister was briefed on initiatives aimed at enhancing trade volume, capacity, and trade and investment between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. It was highlighted during the briefing that there was substantial potential for energy cooperation with Azerbaijan, and discussions were ongoing for a preferential trade agreement between both countries. APP

SBP aims to double SME financing to Rs1100b: Deputy Governor

KARACHI, JUN 27 (APP): The SBP joined the global community in celebrating the MSME Day by highlighting the pivotal role these enterprises play in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, and creating jobs. The event was attended by Presidents and CEOs of banks, Development Finance Institutions, senior SBP management, government officials, and representatives of trade bodies. Deputy Governor SBP Saleemullah, in his keynote address, stated that SMEs were the lifeline of the country's economy as those were providing employment to 80 percent of the non-agricultural workforce, contributing 40 percent to GDP and accounting for more than

Continued on Page 8

Bolivia coup attempt fails

Ahead of attack, Zuniga addressed reporters, citing growing anger following economic slump in Bolivia

LA PAZ: Bolivian armed forces pulled back from the presidential palace in La Paz on Wednesday evening and a general was arrested after President Luis Arce slammed a "coup" attempt against the government and called for international support. Earlier in the day, military units led by General Juan Jose Zuniga, recently stripped of his military command, had gathered in the central Plaza Murillo square, home to the presidential palace and Congress. A Reuters witness saw an armored vehicle ram a door of the presidential palace and soldiers rush in. "Today the country is facing an attempted coup d'etat. Today the country faces once again interests so that democracy in Bolivia is cut short," Arce said in comments from the presidential palace, with armed soldiers outside.



Bolivian General Juan Jose Zuniga is presented following his arrest by the authorities for a coup attempt in La Paz, Bolivia. — Reuters "The Bolivian people are summoned today. We need the Bolivian people to organize and mobilize against the coup d'etat in favor of democracy." A few hours later, a Reuters witness saw soldiers withdraw from the square and police take control of the plaza. Bolivian authorities arrested Zuniga and took him away, though their destination was unclear.

Continued on Page 8

CEC directs to ensure arrangements for LG polls in Punjab, ICT

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Chief Election Commissioner Sikanandar Sultan Raja has instructed the authorities concerned to fulfill all constitutional and legal requirements regarding local government elections in

Punjab and Islamabad. Chairing a meeting in Islamabad on Thursday, he said the delimitation of constituencies in Punjab has already been done and this process for the Islamabad Capital Territory will be completed by 23rd of next month.

China lauds establishment of SPU in Islamabad for foreigners

Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: China has appreciated establishment of Special Protection Unit (SPU) in Islamabad for the protection of foreigners, particularly the Chinese nationals. The appreciation came during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his Chinese counterpart Qi Yanjun in New York. During the meeting, the training of law enforcement agencies and use of modern equipment and technology came under discussion. The Chinese Interior Minister also expressed satisfaction over the progress



achieved in the probe of Dasu incident. He also lauded the professionalism and expertise of the Pakistani law enforcement agencies to investigate the incident. It was agreed in the meeting the advisory group of the Chinese Interior Ministry will visit Pakistan soon to provide all possible support and assistance to the local administration for the training and capacity building of the security institutions.

SIC reserved seats case

CJP Isa questions ex-President Alvi's polls date decision

KARACHI: Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faes Iza has questioned as to why former President Arif Alvi had not set a date for elections on behalf of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) despite being associated with the party. The chief justice made the remark as he led a 13-member full court hearing the petition filed by

the Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) against the denial of reserved seats. Earlier during the hearing, Justice Jamal Mandokhel had stated that it is every candidate's right to get a symbol in election. "A candidate participates in the elections, not the party, the candidate only shows his affiliation with

the party, the candidate has the right to get the symbol for the election," he added. Today's court session followed Attorney General, Mansoor Usman Awan's submission of the government's written reply to the apex court. The reply opposes the SIC's plea to allocate reserved seats

for women and minorities in the National and provincial assemblies. In the detailed 30-page submission, the government argues that reserved seats for minorities and women should be allocated to political parties that participated in the elections and won at least one seat.

The allocation should be based on the party's total number of seats won, as stipulated by the law. The attorney general said that the approval of the SIC's appeal would be an "antithesis to the democracy" and "will weaken the political parties who participate in the electoral process". Agencies

Introducing skill based program

Punjab govt conducting first school census: Minister

Says all-out measures would be taken to standardise the education system

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Punjab's Education Minister, Rana Sikandar Hayat Thursday said that all-out measures would be taken to standardise the education system in public schools of Punjab where for better policies, the first school mapping programme to collect data about all school kids will be conducted soon transparently.

Talking to a Private news channel, he stressed on conducting school census at the national level, adding that the Punjab government is taking the lead among all other provinces and recently with the direction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif school mapping was being conducted to count kids.

Through NADRA data will be checked about the enrollment data of students at every district level, he said, adding that long-term policy-making for government schools and enhancing the quality of educa-



tion will be the top priority of the Punjab government.

He also praised that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has also announced the formation of a 19-member Education Task Force to address the pressing issues related to the national educa-

tion emergency which is another historic step.

He said that collective efforts of all provinces related to out-of-school children's need of hour, adding, that Punjab government authorities are collaborating with other provinces in

this regard.

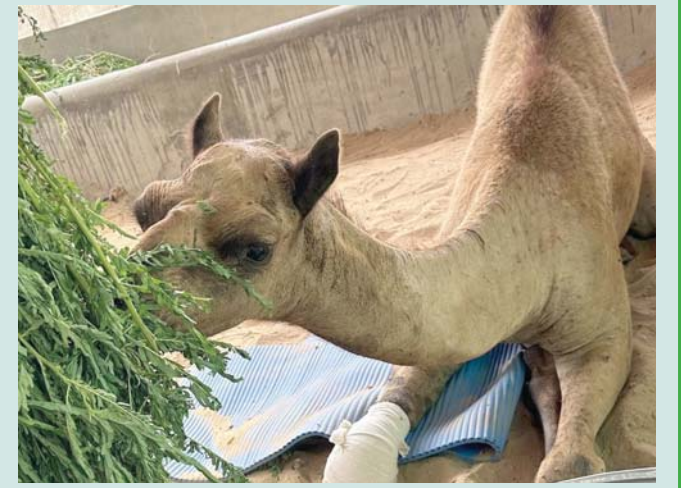
Replying to a question, he mentioned that the government is also conducting an inter-provincial education conference next month to devise a national strategy to bring improvement in the education system across the country.

He said education ministers of all the provinces and other stakeholders would be invited to the conference and to find out consensus-based solutions to address the education system.

To another question, he stressed the need to devise a strategy for education and skill-based training programmes for public schools, adding that the prime minister had a vision of creating employment opportunities for the youth.

Skills-based programs for students completing 8th class will also be conducted in public schools, he said, adding that skill education will only play a critical role in the economic prosperity of the country.

Sanghar's amputated camel, Cammie, on path to recovery



SUKKUR: Cammie, the camel from Sanghar who had her leg amputated earlier this month, is set to stand for the first time after receiving an artificial leg.

The camel, named Cammie, was brought to Karachi for treatment after the incident, allegedly carried out by a landlord and his people.

The camel is under the care of CDRS Benji, a local non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Karachi.

Sarah Jahangir, Director of the CDRS Benji Project for Animal Welfare, had earlier stated that Cammie would receive an artificial leg once her injury healed.

Significant progress has already been made in her treatment.

Bioniks Pakistan, a prosthetics manufacturing company, built a support structure with a harness to help the camel stand.

"We will try to get Cammie to stand up with the help of the structure by this evening," the team announced on Thursday.

The NGO thanked the Department of Livestock and Bioniks Pakistan for their support in treating the camel.

Six suspects, accused of amputating the camel's leg on June 14 in the Mundh Jamrao area, are currently in custody with their trial underway at a local court. Agencies

Peace, security during Muharram to be ensured

Spokesman Report

ATTOCK: To ensure peace and security during Muharram, all possible protective measures will be taken. Scholars from all sects should foster an atmosphere of brotherhood and thwart the evil plans of enemies. The police are always ready for your protection and will provide foolproof security for processions and gatherings.

Organizers are urged to adhere to the code of conduct and conclude processions on time. These views were expressed by SDPO Sanaullah during a meeting held at Model Police Station Attock, addressing the organizers of processions and esteemed scholars of the Sunni community. Present at the meeting were DSP Hafiz Niazi, SHO City Malik Safdar, SHO Sadar Circle Mujahid Abbas, and law enforcement officers.

Scholars from the Sunni community, including Maulana Sher Zaman, Mufti Amir Zaman, Maulana Yasir Zaman, President of Panjtni Imam-bargah Raza Naqvi, President of Hussainia Imam-bargah Attock Cantonment Syed Muhammad Aqeel Naqvi, Secretary General Athar Zaidi, procession organizer Syed Mustajab Naqvi, Syed Akbar Hussain Kazmi, Syed Ijaz Shah, Syed Zafar Abbas Zaidi, Syed Asif Naqvi, and Sardar Muhammad Iqbal were also present. On this occasion, Maulana Sher Zaman highlighted the significance of the days of Muharram and said that sectarianism has vanished in Attock due to our brotherhood. Terrorism is a curse, and foreign enemies are trying to disrupt our peace. This is the first month of the Islamic calendar, and in addition to the martyrdom of Hazrat Umar (RA), the sacrifices of 72 souls related to the grandson of the Prophet are revered by every Muslim. He emphasized that every Muslim should act according to their beliefs. Mufti Amir Zaman also spoke about the importance of this month and the need for mutual brotherhood, expressing confidence that the days of Muharram will pass peacefully. SDPO Sanaullah individually sought feedback from the procession organizers regarding any issues or obstacles they might face and assured them that their concerns would be conveyed to higher authorities.

LHC Upholds CCP Powers to Initiate Enquiry

Spokesman Report

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Lahore High Court has dismissed the writ petition filed by M/s Mezan Beverages Pvt. Ltd against a show-cause notice issued by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on alleged deceptive marketing practices.

Under section 37(2) of the Act, CCP initiated the enquiry after receiving a complaint from Pepsi Co Inc. The complaint stated that Mezan was copying the overall packaging of Pepsi's energy drink 'Sting' for its own energy drink 'Storm'. The subsequent completion of enquiry report recommended the issuance of show-cause notice to Mezan Beverages.

Mezan swiftly responded with legal maneuvers, filing a writ petition against the CCP's enquiry process and issuance of show-cause notice. In August 2021, Lahore High Court in its order suspended the show-cause notice, therefore, proceedings before the CCP were stalled. However, after hearing the parties at length, the Hon'ble LHC held that the Supreme Court of Pakistan in its judgement rendered in 'CCP v. Dalda Foods Ltd', unanimously, upheld the statutory powers of the CCP relating to initiation of enquiries and gathering of information.

It is pertinent to mention here that on the issue of CCP's jurisdiction vis-a-vis the Tribunal created under Intellectual Property Organization of Pakistan Act, 2012 (IPO Act), it has been held that both the enactments i.e. the Act and IPO Act have conspicuously distinct in purpose, scope, and mandate. The Act relates to competition law, whereas, the IPO Act pertains to intellectual property laws. Each enactment has created a specialized regulatory body and has put in place a self-contained regulatory framework to administer duties and obligations imposed by law. The IPO Act consciously excludes the Act from its Schedule and as such, the legislature has intentionally kept the Act beyond the purview of the IPO Act. Hence, 'deceptive marketing practices' under section 10 of the Act constitute a necessary and essential element of competition law, jurisdiction of which is vested with the CCP under the Act.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's statue permanently installed at Kartarpur

Our Correspondent

NAROWAL: The statue of first Sikh ruler of Punjab Maharajah Ranjit Singh has been permanently installed at Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib.

Punjab's Minister for Minority Affairs and Pardhan of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, along with officials from the Project Management Unit Kartarpur and Sikh pilgrims from India, attended the installation ceremony.

On this occasion, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora emphasized the importance of protecting the statue. Sikh pilgrims from various countries, including India, are in Pakistan to commemorate the 185th death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh on Saturday in Lahore.

Rain water

KARACHI: Rain water accumulated on University Road, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

40-day Summer Sports Camps get underway

Tahir Amin Malik

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar inaugurated the 40-day Summer Sports Camps at Punjab International Swimming Complex on Wednesday.

DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal, Sports Coordinator Malik Anosh Khokhar, Director Admin M Kaleem, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar and a large number of young camp probables and their parents and their parents were also present on this occasion.

Talking to media on this occasion, Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that Summer Sports Camps have started today across the Punjab province in which more than 1,200 male and



female children are participating. "The participating children will be trained in more than 16 games in the Summer Sports Camp".

He said that more than 400 children have been registered in the swimming alone. "A team of experts will monitor the performance of all participants and select the talented players for further grooming purely on the basis of their performance".

He said that top performing female athletes of recently held Pink Games are being given monthly stipends. "Punjab Sports Department is taking effective steps for the development of sports across the performance. Through these steps, we are preparing a nursery of talented players in every sport. We will continue to organize such events in the future under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz," he added.

Final Thesis Display of Fashion Design Students Session 2020-24

Our Correspondent

FAISALABAD: The Fashion Design students of the 2020-24 session proudly presented their final thesis in a vibrant two-day display on 26-27 June 2024. The event highlighted the diverse and innovative talents of 52 graduating students. The exhibition was graced by the presence of the Vice Chancellor of GCWUF, Prof. Dr. Zill-i-Huma Nazli, who served as the chief guest. The Director of Academics Dr. Salma Shahid, the Head of the English Department Saira Akhter, and the Additional Director of Media Amara Javed accompanied her.

Held at Laylppur Galleria, the event showcased a wide array of themes, ranging from the revival of traditional Indo-Pak embroidery to designs inspired by Gothic architecture and African jewelry. The primary objective was to create unique designs that displayed a rich diversity in embellishments, strongly emphasizing draping and cutlines. Each collection was thoughtfully accessorized with headgears, shoes, and jewelry, adding a comprehensive



flair to the presentations. Laylppur Galleria generously sponsored the event, continuing their tradition of unwavering support. Additional sponsors included Cakes and Bakes, Misaq ul Mall, Data Developers, and GuzalKadin, all of whom contributed significantly to the event's success.

The public reception was overwhelmingly positive, with many students

receiving orders for their designs on the spot, marking the beginning of their entrepreneurial journey. The exhibition celebrated the culmination of years of hard work and opened up promising prospects for budding designers. This successful event underscores the potential for these students to make significant contributions to the fashion industry, both locally and globally.

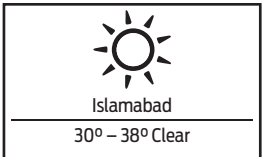
First tourism delegation sets off from Kashgar to GB

GILGIT: A total of 18 tourism industry insiders from Kashgar, city of China's Xinjiang province, set off on their 5-day visit to Pakistan.

This is the first outbound tourism team from Kashgar invited by the Travel Agents Association of Pakistan (TAAP). They traveled to Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan via Khunjerab port in Xinjiang.

Since the beginning of this year, the number of tourists to Kashgar has risen sharply. The consumption enthusiasm of domestic tourists has extended to overseas destinations, and Kashgar is also attracting an increasing number of international tourists.

According to the statistics from the Khunjerab entry-exit border checkpoint, since the port opened on April 1 this year, the number of entry-exit passengers has been steadily increasing, surpassing 5,000 people, marking a 454% increase. Out of these, 246 passengers traveled to Pakistan and other South and Central Asian countries, with 69% being Chinese citizens and 31% foreign citizens, local media reported.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:16 am
Zohr	12:11 pm
Asr	5:11 pm
Maghrib	7:22 pm
Isha	9:06 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

'Collective action' needed

Romina for safeguarding GB's significant natural heritage

Pakistan's northern region is home to unique biodiversity and ecosystems

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday underlined urgency of 'collective action' for safeguarding the Gilgit Baltistan (GB)'s globally significant natural heritage.

Romina Khurshid Alam said, "Pakistan's northern region is home to unique biodiversity and ecosystems of global repute. But, they are grappled with several significant threats stemming from both natural and human-caused factors."

Addressing as a keynote speaker at a national seminar on the 'Biodiversity Safeguarding Initiative: Global Assessment of the State of Nature and Biodiversity Safeguarding Actions in Northern Pakistan' here, the PM's climate aide stressed that tackling escalating risks to the resource-rich biodiversity and ecosystems was a need of the hour to protect the biodiversity and resource-rich ecosystems for overall environ-

mental and human sustainability and development.

Spelling out the threats to the sustainability of biodiversity and ecosystems, Romina Khurshid Alam said, "Continuing loss of habitat and fragmentation, deforestation and land degradation, soil erosion, water and soil pollutions and contamination, illegal wildlife poaching and trade, unsustainable agricultural practices, use of chemical fertilizers in farming, unsustainable production and consumption patterns and climate change are among the key pressing challenges facing the unparalleled biodiversity in the country's north."

She emphasized the need for urgency of collective action for safeguarding the region's natural heritage comprising unique biodiversity and natural ecosystems.

"Northern Pakistan is blessed with unparalleled biodiversity, but it is under threat. Through collaboration and shared responsibility, we must work together to protect our ecosystems and conserve the biodiversity in the country,

particularly in the northern parts for sustainability of the environment, of our own and future generations," PM's coordinator Romina Khurshid told the participants.

She also hailed the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN-Pakistan) for organising an important seminar on the Biodiversity Safeguarding Initiative for sharing the project achievements and collectively focuses on the conservation of biodiversity in the country.

"On behalf of Government of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt gratitude to Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), Government of Italy, Government of GB, IUCN Pakistan and local communities for making this possible to achieve important benchmarks in safeguarding the biodiversity of the fragile ecosystems of northern Pakistan through the joint initiative of national importance," the PM's climate aide said during her address.

Gilgit-Baltistan is the biodiver-



sity rich region of Pakistan, being home to the national animal of Pakistan Markhor. Unique flora and fauna of this region is exceptional with the highly conservation orientated local communities. Community based Trophy hunting programme has become most interesting and rewarding initiative that has not only increased the population of key Cites species and in-turn elevated the lives of local communities.

"However, I consider this Biodiversity Safeguarding Project a

major milestone in establishing collaborative initiatives by key stakeholders in the environmentally-sensitive region of Gilgit-Baltistan," Romina Khurshid said.

"Assessment of key wildlife species has been a remarkable advancement with regards to status of biodiversity in the country," she highlighted.

She also highlighted that establishment of biodiversity corridors in the Khunjerab National Park jointly with the local community and GB Forest, Parks and

Wildlife department is another unique initiative, which would significantly help for biodiversity conservation.

"Establishing the corridors has proved a positive step because the Khunjerab National Park has been selected as a candidate for the IUCN Green List of Protected and Conserved Areas, which will help draw global support to protect and conserve the globally-important unique biodiversity in the national park," The PM's coordinator Romina recalled.

Int'l conference on Pak-Turk relations held at AIU

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: A one-day international conference on "Turkiye-Pakistan relations in the context of literature, history and culture in the 21st century" was organized at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU).

This conference was organized in collaboration with Yunus Emre Institute Pakistan, the Department of Urdu, Allama Iqbal Open University, and the Institute for Promotion of National Language, Islamabad.

Director General, National Language Promotion Department, Prof. Dr. Saleem Mazhar, presided over the first session while fiction writer and novelist Hameed Shahid was the chief guest.

Other speakers included Director, Yunus Emre Institute, Dr. Khalil Toqar, Dr. Sofia Khushk, Dr. Farooq Adil, Dr. Sher Ali, Erin Measoglu and Head, Department of Urdu, Dr. Arshad Mahmood Nashad.

The speakers shed light on the historical background and relations between Turkey and Pakistan. They said that both the countries supported each other not only at the government level but also at the public level in difficult times.

The speakers further said, "The two great poets of Pakistan and Turkey, Allama Iqbal and Muhammad Akif, were poets of the same era and both have similarities in their poetry and philosophy."

The speakers also hailed the efforts of Yunus Emre Institute for the promotion of Turkish language and culture in Pakistan.

Half a million women in Pakistan suffer from blindness due to cataracts

Eighty percent of women can regain their vision: Al-Shifa Trust

RAWALPINDI: The Al-Shifa Trust (AST) said on Thursday that there are at least 2.2 billion blind or visually impaired people in the world and the complication may have been avoided in at least 1 billion of these cases.

Vision impairment is four times higher in low- and middle-income areas than in high-income areas and according to WHO estimates, vision impairment results in an annual global productivity loss of \$411 billion, posing a significant financial burden.

The prevalence of blindness and vision impairment is higher in females than males; presently, almost half a million women in Pakistan are suffering from blindness and vision problems. impairment, said Brig. (R) Prof. Dr. Sabihuddin, Head of the Cataract Department at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, Rawalpindi.

In a ceremony to celebrate June as Cataract Awareness Month, Brig. (R) Prof. Dr. Sabihuddin said that AST annu-



ally performs 52 thousand surgeries, free of charge.

He added that the government should step up, as existing facilities are insufficient to handle the influx of eye patients.

He noted that, with the rising population and an increase in average age, the number of cataract patients is increasing in the country, and a large number of women have blindness as they have no access to eye facilities.

According to Dr. Sabihuddin, Pakistan is one of the top countries when it comes to diabetes, which is also driving up the rate of eye disease. He said cataracts are age-related degeneration and cannot be controlled.

Therefore, the government

should strengthen the eye departments in all state-run hospitals, including those established at the district level, and support all such initiatives.

He added that AST performs almost 100 to 120 surgeries daily, it has thirty air-conditioned operation theaters, twenty-five expert doctors, six anesthetists, and state-of-the-art diagnostic facilities.

He stated that the outreach program frequently organizes surgical camps in remote areas, conducting almost 100 surgeries daily.

"We have the best facilities and expert doctors to treat the complicated cases," he said, adding that ophthalmology and cataract surgery are the largest

departments of the hospital, providing specialized care to patients with different conditions.

Dr. Sabihuddin said AST has all the latest technologies and expertise, and our hospitals in Sukkar, Kohat, Muzaffarabad, and Chakwal are performing 52 thousand cataract surgeries annually, free of charge.

He announced that the Cataract Department has completed one million surgeries since its founding.

Resource Generation and Communication Department of AST, Cataract Surgery and General Ophthalmology Department organized an activity in which students from the School of Public Health and Department of Optometry, Pakistan Institute of Ophthalmology participated.

Staff members, and media personnel also attended the cataract awareness event. Ms. Suman Hammad, GM of Resource Generation and Communication at the trust, also participated in the event.

Our Aim Foundation distributes meals

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD:

Our Aim Foundation, a US-based non-profit organization, has successfully distributed meals to children at a school in Chitral, providing nutritious meals to all enrolled students.



The school is adopted by Our Aim Foundation to enhance the quality of its facilities and educational delivery. This initiative is part of Our Aim Foundation's ongoing efforts to combat hunger, a critical focus area for the organization.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly exacerbated food insecurity globally. Since the pandemic's onset, many developing nations have experienced rampant food inflation. Currently, 63.2% of low-income countries are facing inflation rates exceeding 5%, further straining the ability of vulnerable populations to access basic necessities. Our Aim Foundation is dedicated to combatting this inflation and alleviating hunger.

Pakistan, particularly in South Asia, is a primary geographical area where Our Aim Foundation is actively addressing food insecurity. The region has seen rising food prices due to various geopolitical and socio-economic factors. Malnutrition remains a severe issue, with over 40% of children under the age of 5 in Pakistan suffering from stunted growth.

"Our mission is to ensure that no child goes to bed hungry," said Nisha Mandani, Founder & CEO of Our Aim Foundation. "By distributing meals at Chitral School, we are not only providing immediate relief but also supporting long-term health and fostering the development of mind, body, and soul."

Our Aim Foundation calls on the global community to support its efforts in combatting food inflation and ensuring food security for all. Contributions and support are crucial in helping us continue our mission to fight hunger and promote well-being in vulnerable regions.

ANF recovers 344 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations countrywide here on Thursday, nabbed three accused and recovered 344 kg drugs.

According to an ANF Headquarters spokesman, about 316.7 kg of ice and 17.2 kg of opium were recovered from Nokundi Chagai.

Around 6 kg of hashish was recovered from a motorcycle rider intercepted near Sohrab Goth town in Karachi.

ANF recovers 344 kg drugs in four operations

In the third operation, 2.9 kg of hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near Qayyumabad in Karachi.

In the fourth operation, 1 kg of ice was recovered from the possession of an accused arrested on DG Khan Road in Multan.

Cases have been registered against the arrested accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act. APP

Tajikistan's Somon Air starts direct flights between Islamabad & Dushanbe

ISLAMABAD: Tajikistan's Somon Air on Thursday started its flight operations in Pakistan as its inaugural flight from capital Dushanbe landed in Islamabad.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi and Ambassador of Tajikistan in Pakistan Yusuf Sharifzoda received 14 passengers of the flight SMR-129 on their arrival at the Islamabad International

Airport.

Fire tenders from the Civil Aviation Rescue and fire-fighting service presented a traditional cannon salute to the aircraft.

The flight was handled by the Shaheen Airport Services, a subsidiary of the Pakistan Air Force.

A cake-cutting ceremony was also held on the occasion. Shaheen Airport Services Exec-

utive Director Air Commodore (R) Wasim Ahmed Khan, General Manager Shaheen Airport Services Islamabad Air Cdre (ret) Shahid Nadeem and the Chief Executive Officer of the Somon Air expressed satisfaction over the milestone.

Airport Manager, Director SAPs and other dignitaries were also present at the ceremony.

The return flight of Somon

Air, SMR-130, departed from Islamabad to Dushanbe on same day in the afternoon with 52 passengers on board.

The launch of Somon Air's flights will facilitate direct travel between Islamabad and Dushanbe, saving travel time.

The flight will operate once a week on Thursday, utilizing the comfort of Boeing 737 aircraft. The frequency of the flights will be increased subsequently.

ICCI hosts networking dinner for participants of All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry organized a 2 day All Pakistan Chambers Presidents Conference entitled, "Reforming Pakistan's Economy for Inclusive and Sustainable Development, participated by Presidents of Chambers from all across Pakistan, industry, trade leaders, diplomats, educationists, think tanks and media persons in large number. Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry also hosted a networking dinner in honour of the participants at Pir Sohawa, Margallah hills, a spot that offers an extensive and impressive view of the Capital.

On the occasion, in his opening speech, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry greeted all the participants for attending the event and explained in detail the

objectives of the Conference.

While throwing light on the key issues confronting the business community, he said that ICCI always remained in forefront in highlighting the problems of the community and this paramount initiative is also the part of the same drive. He expressed the hope that the conference will go a long way in addressing the grievances of the community which are badly hurting the economic condition of the country. He also explained that at the end of the conference a joint declaration will be issued and forwarded to all the relevant quarters including the Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Commerce Minister and the Army Chief.

In his address, former Provincial Minister Punjab and Patron in Chief United Business Group, S. M.

Tanvir described the conference as an important milestone for the interaction and networking of the business community. He said that this is the best way to apprise the government of the community's problems and find viable solutions of the economic problems. He, through facts and figures, stated that Pakistan enjoys immense investment potential and a number of foreign investors are keen to come and invest and the government is offering all the necessary facilities in this regard.

Member National Assembly and renowned businessman Mirza Ikhtiar Baig termed the ICCI initiative as a credible job which brought together Chambers Presidents from all over Pakistan and enabled the business leaders to unite put forward suggestions for the revival of the coun-



try's economy. He also extended his congratulations to ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and his team for organizing this significant event. He said that in the result of

this important conference, the business community will put forward an important message to the government for much needed measures for level playing field. As a PPP MNA from

Karachi he assured that the budget will be passed without any hurdle and that the IMF package will also have a smooth sail.

Chairman Founder Group ICCI Khalid Iqbal Malik called upon the government to simplify all the procedures pertaining to trade and remove all bureaucratic hurdles for ease of doing business.

Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari underlined the need for reforming the country's foreign policy aligned with friendship with all the countries instead of indulging in enmities for pulling the country from the existing economic turmoil. He said that the business community by sharing its vision and thoughts will continue to fulfill its responsibilities for the betterment of the country.

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Deployment of Frontier Constabulary in AJK - II

From the design and construction of dams and reservoirs to the installation of turbines and transmission lines, their proficiency in hydropower technology ensures the smooth and efficient execution of these vital infrastructure endeavors. Through knowledge transfer and capacity-building endeavors, Chinese workers empower local engineers and technicians, nurturing skills development and fostering innovation within the region.

Their presence expedites the progress of hydropower projects in AJK. Their disciplined work ethic, meticulous planning, and adherence to strict timelines help surmount logistical hurdles and streamline construction activities. Leveraging their experience from similar projects worldwide, Chinese workers optimize project management processes, ensuring the timely completion and commissioning of hydropower facilities. This accelerated progress translates into tangible benefits for AJK, including enhanced energy availability and reduced reliance on imported fuels.

The participation of Chinese workers in AJK's hydropower endeavors generates significant economic stimulus and employment opportunities within the region. Their involvement across construction, engineering, and related fields creates jobs for local laborers and skilled workers, driving income generation and poverty alleviation. Furthermore, the ripple effect of hydropower investments stimulates secondary industries and ancillary services, further bolstering economic growth and prosperity in AJK.

Collaboration between Chinese workers and local communities in AJK fosters cultural exchange and mutual understanding. Through interpersonal interactions, language acquisition, and shared experiences, they bridge cultural gaps and cultivate bonds of friendship and cooperation. This cultural interchange not only enriches the social fabric of AJK but also strengthens bilateral ties between China and Pakistan, paving the way for enhanced cooperation in other developmental spheres.

Chinese workers prioritize environmental stewardship and sustainability in AJK's hydropower ventures, adhering to stringent environmental standards and best practices. Their focus on eco-friendly construction techniques, biodiversity preservation, and watershed management minimizes the ecological impact of hydropower infrastructure. Moreover, by advancing the development of clean and renewable energy sources, they contribute to combating climate change and curbing carbon emissions, aligning with global endeavors towards a more sustainable future.

Nevertheless, alongside the opportunities afforded by this collaboration, there are significant security challenges confronting Chinese workers in Pakistan. This piece aims to illuminate the security threats encountered by Chinese workers in Pakistan and explore potential strategies to mitigate these risks.

One of the foremost security threats

facing Chinese workers in Pakistan is the persistent risk of terrorism and insurgency. Various extremist factions operating within the country have targeted infrastructure projects, particularly those linked to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). These attacks not only directly jeopardize the safety of Chinese workers but also undermine trust in bilateral cooperation and hinder progress on critical development endeavors. Additionally, kidnapping for ransom poses a severe security risk to Chinese workers in Pakistan. Criminal syndicates and militant organizations regard foreign nationals, including Chinese workers, as lucrative targets for ransom demands.

Past incidents of abduction and ransom demands underscore the vulnerability of Chinese workers to such criminal activities. These occurrences not only jeopardize the lives of those affected but also discourage foreign investment and tarnish Pakistan's reputation as a secure destination for international labor. Ethnic and sectarian tensions within Pakistan amplify the security challenges confronting Chinese workers, especially in areas with a history of inter-communal strife. While Chinese workers typically remain insulated from local conflicts, they may inadvertently become targets or find themselves caught in the crossfire of ethnically or religiously motivated disputes. Navigating the intricate socio-political terrain of Pakistan is essential to ensure the safety and security

of Chinese workers across diverse settings. Inadequate security infrastructure and transportation networks in certain Pakistani regions pose additional hazards to Chinese workers. Remote project sites, poorly maintained roads, and limited law enforcement presence heighten the susceptibility of workers to criminal activities like theft, vehicle theft, and ambushes. Moreover, the absence of reliable communication and emergency response systems exacerbates the difficulties in providing timely assistance and protection to Chinese workers during emergencies.

Addressing the security risks faced by Chinese workers in Pakistan necessitates a multi-pronged approach encompassing proactive measures at governmental, organizational, and individual levels. Enhanced security cooperation between Pakistan and China, involving intelligence-sharing and joint security operations, is crucial for effectively countering terrorism and insurgency threats. Augmenting law enforcement capacities, particularly in regions with significant concentrations of Chinese workers, can deter criminal activities and foster a safer environment. Additionally, investing in security training and awareness initiatives for Chinese workers, implementing robust risk assessment and management protocols, and furnishing adequate security escorts and facilities can bolster their resilience against security threats. Furthermore, fostering community involvement and establishing trust with local stakeholders can facilitate early warning mechanisms and support networks to mitigate potential risks.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Political stability pivotal for economic prosperity

Political stability ensures a predictable environment where businesses can operate with confidence. When a government is stable, it is able to implement and maintain consistent policies, providing a reliable foundation for economic planning. Investors, both domestic and international, are more likely to commit their resources to stable countries, knowing that their investments are less likely to be jeopardized by abrupt policy shifts or political turmoil. This influx of investment is crucial for economic growth, as it leads to job creation, infrastructure development, and increased productivity.

It is a very positive gesture shown by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif by inviting the opposition to sit with the government to sort out the issues and take the country forward on the path of development. It is not for the first time when such offer was made in fact PM Shahbaz always remained very vocal about resolution of all issues by dialogue even when he was in opposition. He called for Charter of Economy amongst all political forces several times in past also. It is very important to understand that the political leadership must show some maturity and work together for achieve much-needed unity and cooperation to steer the country towards economic stability. The opposition parties especially Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf should take advantage of this offer and reciprocate it positively in the larger interest of country.

Investor confidence is a critical component of economic prosperity. Political instability breeds uncertainty, deterring investment and stymieing economic progress. Conversely, stable political conditions encourage long-term investments. For instance, multinational corporations are more inclined to establish operations in countries with predictable political environments, leading to technology transfer, skill development, and enhanced economic activity. Moreover, stable governance attracts aid and grants from international organizations, further bolstering economic development.

Moreover, Political stability is also instrumental in fostering social cohesion, which is essential for economic prosperity. A stable political environment reduces the likelihood of civil unrest, strikes, and protests, which can disrupt economic activities. Social cohesion promotes a sense of shared purpose and collective effort toward economic goals. When citizens have confidence in their government, they are more likely to participate in the economy, pay taxes, and support national development initiatives.



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

Iranians go to the polls but policy shifts are unlikely

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

Iran's presidential election is scheduled to take place on Friday. Currently, no specific timeline has been established for the counting of votes and the subsequent announcement of the result. There is a strong possibility that the elections will proceed to a second round. In the event that no candidate achieves a majority — defined as 50 percent of the votes plus one — there will be a runoff election. This runoff will feature the two candidates who received the highest number of votes in the initial round. The tentative date for this runoff election is set for a week's time, July 5.

The presidential candidates have taken part in several debates, with discussions primarily centered on the economy, foreign policy and various cultural issues. Among the most contentious topics were the government's treatment of women and the country's stringent internet restrictions. Candidates engaged in heated exchanges over these issues, particularly focusing on the brutal crackdown on women who defy the mandatory hijab laws and the severe limitations imposed on internet freedom.

Nazanian, 28, a teacher from Tehran, pointed out: "I did not see a major difference between the candidates' views. Even the so-called reformist (Masoud Pezeshkian) believes that mandatory hijab should be in place. All these candidates come from within the political establishment. They are not going to change anything. So I, like many Iranians, am not going to vote to show our dissatisfaction."

Three candidates appear to be leading the polls: Pezeshkian, Saeed Jalili and Mohammed Baqer Qalibaf.

Qalibaf, who is the speaker of parliament, has an extensive background, having held multiple senior command positions within the Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Jalili has had a long political career, with experience in various high-profile roles, including positions in the Office of the Supreme Leader, the Foreign Ministry and the Supreme National Security Council.

Meanwhile, Pezeshkian stands out as the sole so-called reformist candidate allowed to run in this election. A heart surgeon by training, Pezeshkian previously served as health minister in the administration of former President Mohammed Khatami. The Guardian Council permitted one reformist candidate to participate in the election, likely with the strategic aim of boosting voter turnout and demonstrating the government's legitimacy and popularity.

Nevertheless, the history of the Islamic Republic has demonstrated that, even when a reformist president is elected, significant policy changes do not often materialize. A prime example is the election of Khatami in 1997, which inspired considerable hope among young Iranians. Khatami secured nearly 70 percent of the vote, with turnout reaching an impressive 80 percent, one of the highest in the country's electoral history.

He campaigned on a platform that promised freedom of expression, tolerance and the development of civil society. Additionally, Khatami advocated for constructive diplomatic relations with other nations, including those in Asia and the EU, and supported an economic policy favoring a free market and foreign investment. Despite these progressive and hopeful promises, the expected policy changes largely failed to materialize, illustrating the challenges reformists face within the Islamic Republic's political system. This historical context serves as a reminder of the complexities and limitations that reformist candidates encounter even after achieving electoral success.

In fact, the election of a reformist often triggers a counter-reaction from hard-liners, who intensify

their crackdowns on society. This response serves as a message to the public that the hard-liners remain firmly in control and that any attempts to empower reformist elements will be met with increased repression.

Iran's domestic and foreign policies are primarily dictated by two powerful entities. The first is Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, who holds the ultimate authority and has the final say in all major policy decisions. The second influential entity is the senior cadre of the IRGC. The IRGC is far more than just a military institution; it exerts significant influence across nearly every sector of Iranian society, including the economy, telecommunications, manufacturing and shipping. This extensive reach allows the IRGC to play a pivotal role in shaping and enforcing both domestic and foreign policies, further consolidating its power and ensuring that its interests are deeply embedded in the fabric of Iranian governance.

The combined influence of the supreme leader and the IRGC creates a formidable structure of control that significantly impacts the direction of the country's policies and its interactions with the rest of the world.

In essence, the president's role predominantly involves shaping the national and international agenda, providing a framework within which the supreme leader and the senior cadre of the IRGC can execute their policies. It is crucial to note that the president operates within strict boundaries defined by these influential figures; he must navigate them carefully to avoid crossing any established limits or red lines.

In conclusion, historical precedent and Iran's entrenched power structures suggest that substantive policy shifts are unlikely, no matter who wins the presidential election. (Courtesy: Arab News)

Majid Rafizadeh is a Harvard-educated Iranian American political scientist.

Far-right surge in EU elections signals major shift

Seyid Ould Abah

The June 9 European Parliament elections saw a significant shift in European politics, which is likely to have a lasting impact on the future of the EU.

Far-right parties emerged as the leading force in five EU member states — France, Italy, Belgium, Austria and Hungary — and also improved their electoral performance in key countries such as Germany and the Netherlands.

With 180 seats secured, conservative and populist far-right parties, though still a minority and internally divided, will now wield considerable influence in the European Parliament.

Already in power in Hungary, Italy and the Netherlands, far-right movements are gaining momentum across Europe. Despite their diverse backgrounds and ideologies, these political groups share three core beliefs:

First is a nativist, ethnic-based concept of national identity. This vision of national identity is confined to an organic bond within a homogeneous blood community.

Second is a strong culturalist notion of the nation. They view their nations as an ahistorical civilizational entity to be protected from external influences, leading to anti-immigration policies and widespread Islamophobia.

Third is a radical sovereigntism that challenges the rule of law and independent institutions. American political scientist Fareed Zakaria has dubbed these far-right regimes "illiberal democracies," noting their disconnection between formal electoral mechanisms and the liberal values underpinning pluralistic, open democracy.

It is crucial to distinguish the far-right movement from the liberal conservative parties that once formed a solid component of Western democracies. These parties were characterized by skepticism toward progressivism, attachment

to traditional religious values and adherence to order and authority, yet they upheld basic liberal principles (private and civil liberties, equal citizenship, separation of powers).

Sociologists and political scientists have explored and analyzed these phenomena, but this does not diminish the significance of the recent electoral event that has shaken EU countries.

This event occurred in a volatile context, marked by the ongoing Ukraine war, intense confrontations with emerging global powers and uncertainty in Euro-American relations as Donald Trump eyes a potential return to the White House.

Some researchers view these trends as signaling the "decline" or "defeat" of the West (Michel Onfray, Emmanuel Todd) and the end of European global hegemony (Bertrand Badier).

The far right, with its euroskeptic and sovereigntist stance, fails to provide credible solutions to Europe's pressing challenges. It mirrors a genuine social and political unease, manifesting in tangible changes, yet it lacks the conceptual tools and practical mechanisms needed to address the continent's multifaceted crisis. French writer Paul Valery famously remarked in 1919: "We modern civilizations have learned to recognize that we are mortal like the others." This phrase, uttered during the grim aftermath of the First World War, resonates strongly today; Europeans, who once held the status of the "conscience of humanity" and led the world, now find themselves in the modest position of "spectators of history," as German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk put it. As Europe grapples with its diminished global role, the rise of the radical right appears more a symptom of historical regression than a path forward for the continent. (Courtesy: Arab News)

Seyid Ould Abah is a professor of philosophy and social sciences at the University of Nouakchott, Mauritania, and a columnist in several media outlets. He is the author of several books on philosophy and political and strategic thought.

US, Japan, S. Korea to enhance security, economic ties

Ministers vow to "focus joint efforts on strategic areas to enhance security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific"

WASHINGTON DC: Commerce and trade ministers from the United States, Japan and South Korea vowed on Wednesday to cooperate on strategic issues including artificial intelligence (AI) safety, export controls, clean energy and semiconductor supply chains.

"We're doubling down our efforts to work together," US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said at the start of the meeting in Washington.

"As we three are leading economies in manufacturing, services, technology and innovation and we have to work together to the benefit not just for our countries, but the safety and security of the world," Raimondo said.

She was joined at the inaugural trilateral meeting by Japanese Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry Ken Saito and South Korean Trade, Industry, and Energy Minister Ahn Duk-geun. The meetings were decided by the countries' leaders at an August summit at Camp David.

The ministers said in a statement



after the meeting they would "focus our joint efforts on a set of strategic areas designed to enhance the security and prosperity of our people and the Indo-Pacific region. We aim to prioritize cooperation to strengthen

the resilience of supply chains in key sectors, including semiconductors and batteries," as well as artificial intelligence safety, critical minerals, cybersecurity and technical standard setting. Saito said the three "agreed to realize

a strong and reliable supply chain for strategic materials by working together with like-minded countries, including Japan, the United States, and South Korea, and designing a market where factors other than price are fairly evaluated."

Last month, President Joe Biden vowed to sharply increase tariffs on critical minerals from China as Washington vows to reduce China's dominance of critical mineral supply chains.

In March, a Commerce Department official said the United States was asking allies to stop domestic companies from servicing certain chipmaking tools for Chinese customers, a key part of United State push to hobble China's chipmaking capabilities.

"We expect the South Korea-US-Japan industry ministers' meeting to serve as an institutional basis for deepening and developing industrial cooperation among the three countries and jointly responding to global risks," Ahn said. Reuters

14 dead in Nepal due to landslides, floods



KATHMANDU: Torrential monsoon storms in Nepal have triggered landslides, lightning and flooding killing at least 14 people, a disaster official said Thursday.

Monsoon rains from June to September bring widespread death and destruction every year across South Asia, but the numbers of fatal floods and landslides have increased in recent years.

Experts say climate change and increased road construction are exacerbating the problem.

Among those killed on Wednesday were four people, two of them children, who were buried alive when three homes were swept away in a landslide in Lamjung district, west of Kathmandu, disaster official Dujan Bhattarai told AFP.

Other landslides killed four more people, while five people died after being struck by lightning, Bhattarai said, a spokesman at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority.

One more person drowned in floods, he said. Six others have died in floods since the monsoon began this month. AFP

UN condemns Israeli soldiers for attacking Palestinians with dogs



NEW YORK: UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) spokesperson Jeremy Laurence on Thursday criticized Israeli soldiers for unleashing dogs on detained Palestinians.

Laurence responded in writing to questions from Anadolu about Israeli soldiers using dogs to attack Palestinian prisoners, engaging in acts of sexual violence, and using a wounded Palestinian as a human shield in the West Bank.

"We are aware of reports that dogs have been released on detainees, in some cases resulting in attacks and bites," said Laurence.

"Such actions constitute serious violations of Israel's obligations under occupation law concerning protected persons and under international human rights law concerning individual rights to life and health, the absolute prohibition of inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment," Laurence noted.

Laurence also responded to a question about Israeli soldiers tying a wounded Palestinian, who had been shot in the West Bank city of Jenin, to the front of a military vehicle and using him as a human shield, noting that the regional office of the OHCHR had issued a press release condemning the incident.

"In the occupied West Bank, OHCHR condemns continued and flagrant violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law binding on Israel as the occupying power," said the press release.

On June 22, Israeli soldiers raided a house in the El-Jabariyyat neighborhood of Jenin, injuring three young men with gunfire.

They tied one of the wounded men to the hood of a military jeep, using him as a human shield, and prevented medical teams from reaching the injured Palestinians. AA

Spain arrests four Colombians

MADRID: Spanish authorities intercepted another submarine suspected of transporting drugs to Europe from South America and arrested four Colombian nationals who were crewing the vessel, officials said Thursday.

Police rescued the occupants after they had scuttled the 20-meter (65-foot) long narco-submarine 518 kilometers (312 miles) west of Cadiz on Tuesday, when it was heading for the mainland.

Due to the characteristics of the boat and the crew's behavior, authorities believed that it transported cocaine, the Civil Guard said in a statement on Wednesday.

The crew surfaced safely while the submarine flooded and sank with its cargo, the statement added.

The Civil Guard told the Associated Press that they would not try to retrieve the vessel which is believed to be at a depth of 1,000 meters (0.6 miles).

The submarine, which departed from Colombia, is similar to those intercepted by authorities in previous operations in northwestern Spain in 2019 — when three metric tons of cocaine were confiscated — and last year.

Similar vessels have been discovered in the Atlantic Ocean, especially near Central and South America. They usually sail underwater at shallow depths and are rarely able to submerge.

The Colombian and Ecuadorian authorities have been working on the seizure of this sort of semi-submersible. The Colombian Navy said that in 2024 they have uncovered 13 such vessels laden with illicit drugs in the Pacific. Arab News

North Korea says successfully tested multiple-warhead missile

SEOUL: North Korea claimed to have successfully tested its multiple-warhead missile capability, state media said Thursday, as dozens more trash-laden balloons from Pyongyang landed in the South.

Relations between the two Koreas are at one of their lowest points in years, with Pyongyang ramping up weapons testing while bombarding the South with balloons full of trash it says are in retaliation to similar missiles sent northwards by activists in the South.

The balloons briefly forced Seoul's major hub Incheon Airport to close on Wednesday, and in response to the successive launches, South has fully suspended a tension-reducing military treaty and re-started propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts and live-fire drills near the border.

North Korea claimed it had "successfully conducted the separation and guidance control test of individual mobile warheads," the state-run Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said Thursday.

UN chief concerned over Bolivia coup attempt

Guterres called on all actors in Bolivian society to protect the constitutional order and maintain peace

NEW YORK: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is "deeply concerned" by reports of an attempted military coup in Bolivia, his spokesman said.

"The Secretary-General calls upon all actors of the Bolivian society, including the Armed Forces, to protect the constitutional order and to preserve a climate of peace," Stephane Dujarric said in a statement.

The statement came after Bolivian President Luis Arce faced down a coup attempt as the armed forces withdrew after occupying the central square in La Paz and entering the government palace.

The military uprising began in the afternoon after



a tank that carried ousted General Juan Jose Zuniga was seen forcibly entering the government palace.

Arce then warned of "irregular military mobilizations" and in a speech alongside his ministers on national television minutes after the coup attempt invited citizens

to mobilize against it and to defend democracy.

"Today the country once again faces interests so that democracy in Bolivia is truncated," he said. "We need Bolivian people to organize and mobilize against the coup."

The Bolivian head of state

said the country was "going through an attempted coup d'état" led by Zuniga.

Zuniga had been removed from his position on Tuesday after a series of threats against former President Evo Morales.

Arce confronted the leader of the attempted military coup in the hallway of the government palace after an armored vehicle rammed through the entrance.

"Withdraw all these forces immediately! It's an order," he howled at Zuniga.

The coup attempt failed after Arce appointed Gen. Jose Wilson Sanchez to lead the military, who ordered military units to return to their bases. Anadolu Agency

China sets to expand int'l coop in lunar exploration missions

BELJING: China is set to expand its international collaborations in upcoming lunar exploration endeavors following the successful operation of payloads from the European Space Agency (ESA), France, Italy, and Pakistan in China's Chang'e-6 mission.

The country's Chang'e-7 lunar exploration mission will carry six international scientific instruments, and Chang'e-8 will offer 200 kilograms of international payload capacity and has garnered over 30 applications, said Liu Yunfeng, deputy director of the China National Space Administration's (CNSA) international cooperation department.

The Chang'e-7 mission, scheduled for launch around 2026, is poised to survey the



lunar south pole region. The Chang'e-8 probe will be launched around 2028 to carry out experiments on lunar resource utilization and, along with Chang'e-7, constitute the basic model of an international lunar research station by 2035.

The CNSA has signed cooperation documents with more than ten countries and

international organizations on the International Lunar Research Station project, said Liu at a press conference on Thursday.

In the Chang'e-6 mission, China has fulfilled its commitment to allocate 10 kilograms of payload capacity on the lander and another 10 kilograms on the orbiter for interna-

tional cooperation, said Hu Hao, chief designer of the Chang'e-6 mission, at the conference.

According to Liu, the international collaborative tasks in the mission have been going well. The French payload DORN worked for 32 hours, and ESA payload NILS worked for 3 hours and 50 minutes on the moon's surface.

Liu also said that the Italian laser retroreflector installed on top of the lander operated normally.

China delivered data provided by a CubeSat aboard its Chang'e-6 spacecraft to Pakistan on May 10. The cube satellite, ICUBE-Q, was developed by Pakistan's Institute of Space Technology and China's Shanghai Jiao Tong University.

Ukraine's president urges EU leaders to make good on their arms promises

BRUSSELS: Ukraine's president called on European Union leaders on Thursday to make good on their pledges to provide military equipment to his war-ravaged country, just days after the bloc launched membership talks with his government.

"We have to work on next steps," President Volodymyr Zelensky told reporters in Brussels as he arrived to attend a summit of EU leaders. He said he and the leaders would discuss "the urgent things — air defense, that is one."

Zelensky thanked countries that have promised equipment, weapons and ammunition, but underlined that "we need them urgently on the battlefield."

Russian forces are seeking to press their advantage in troop numbers and weaponry before Ukraine's armed forces are bulked up by promised new



Western military aid, some of which is trickling to the front line, analysts say. The EU launched membership talks

with Ukraine on Tuesday, a decade after Russian troops seized the Crimean Peninsula to deter the country from

moving closer to the West, part of a chain of events that set the two neighbors on the path to war.

"We waited for this, a long period of time," Zelensky said, thanking the EU for its approval.

The leaders are expected to sign a document of security commitments to Ukraine, which in essence encapsulates what the 27-nation bloc has been doing for the country in terms of financial, military and other assistance since Russian forces invaded in February 2022.

Several countries already have similar agreements with Ukraine, offering a long-term commitment to help Kyiv, including once its war with Russia is over. Zelensky and US President Joe Biden signed one such pact earlier this month which will run for the next decade. Arab News

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
78,528.25	78,275.64
Day's High	Day's Low
78,978.60	78,294.22
Index Value	Change
8,216,497,185	+252.61
Percentage	Time
+0.32%	27 Jun, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,179.68	-45.65
Percentage	Time
-0.55%	27 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,204.63	+76.83
Percentage	Time
+0.20%	27 Jun, 1:14 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
39,341.54	-325.53
Percentage	Time
+0.82%	27 Jun, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.2	184
Bahrain Dinar	740.56	748.56
Canadian Dollar	203	205
China Yuan	38.32	38.72
Danish Krone	39.87	40.27
Euro	293.5	297
Hong Kong Dollar	35.66	36.01
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.44
Japanese Yen	1.9	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.51	916.51
Malaysian Ringgit	59.13	59.73
New Zealand \$	169.22	171.22
Norwegians Krone	26.38	26.68
Omani Riyal	723.24	731.24
Qatari Riyal	76.5	77.2
Saudi Riyal	73	73.8
Singapore Dollar	202	204
Swedish Korona	26.34	26.64
Swiss Franc	311.34	313.84
Thai Bhat	7.58	7.73
U.A.E Dirham	74.9	75.7
UK Pound Sterling	349	352.55
US Dollar	277.6	280.5

Gold, silver rates on 27-June-2024

Gold rate in Pakistan today on June 27, 2024 is Rs241,000 per tola for 24 carat of the precious metal, while the price for 10 gram gold is Rs206,619 in the local bullion market.

On Thursday, the price of 1 tola gold increased by Rs400 and 10-gram gold rose by Rs343.

These are live gold prices in Pakistan, including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Multan, and others. However, a change of a few hundred rupees may be observed.

Internationally, the rate of the yellow metal decreased by \$9 to settle at \$2,304 per ounce (with a premium of \$20 in Pakistani market).

Silver 24kt rate in Pakistan on Thursday is Rs2,850 per tola. The price of 10 gram silver is Rs2,358.

PPDA protests OMCs for hoarding fuel

OMCs should be stopped from creating artificial shortage

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) is agitating against the hoarding of fuel supply by all oil marketing companies operating in Pakistan, including Pakistan State Oil, Shell Pakistan Limited, Total Parco Pakistan Ltd, and Attock Petroleum Limited, among others.

"Whenever there is an expected price rise in fuel prices, these companies hoard fuel supply, causing artificial shortages and undue hardship to petroleum dealers and the general public," said Hassan Shah, spokesperson for PPDA.

He added, "Despite clear orders and 100% payments made, these companies are not releasing fuel stock, citing excuses like 'capping' or offering only average fuel stoking instability in the in the petroleum product market."

He said this is a clear violation of rules and

regulations, and we demand immediate intervention from the relevant authorities like the OGRA and the Competition Commission of Pakistan.

PPDA has requested the Chairman of OGRA (Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority) to intervene in the matter and direct oil marketing companies to release fuel stock to petroleum dealers.

Petroleum dealers are also meeting Chairman of the Senate on (Friday June 28) to apprise him about the issue so that he can direct the Ministry of Petroleum and OGRA to hold inquiries into the matter at the highest level.

As soon as the news of a likely gas price hike is aired on TV channels, the customers swarm to filling stations to buy fuel. Many petrol pumps cannot satisfy the needs of the public owing to low inventories, which results



in complications, he informed. The OGRA teams should check to see if the fuel order has been placed and payment has

been made before fining petrol pumps for not supplying fuel to consumers.

If the filling stations did not get oil despite paying in advance, OMCs should be penalized for suspending fuel supply, and the petroleum dealers should be spared, he demanded.

He added that OGRA should mobilize its enforcement team to ensure that all the OMCs keep their retail outlets wet and well-supplied with petroleum products.

He demanded that any attempt at hoarding must be strongly discouraged by the authorities to avoid panic, and actions may be taken against OMCs that maintain stocks lower than the mandatory requirement.

"We will not tolerate this exploitation of petroleum dealers and the public," said Hassan Shah, adding that we demand a fair and transparent system and will take all necessary steps to meet our justified demands.

Queue for ration

FAISALABAD: Women standing in a queue to get ration at Darul Hussan Town in the city.



Photo: Online

Budget proposals of Senate, FPCCI should be considered: Mian Zahid

Says taxing the public to solve economic issues won't work

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of FPCCI Policy Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President of Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance and former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain on Wednesday said that the budget proposals presented by FPCCI and Senate deserve serious consideration.

All the recommendations made by FPCCI are concrete and actionable, aiming to reduce the burden on the commoner and avoid adverse effects on production and exports, he said.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the budget has unnecessarily burdened the salaried class, association of persons and SMEs.

The government says that an additional 75 billion rupees will be collected from them in taxes, while economists believe that this collection will be more than 100 billion rupees, he added.

People are being squeezed while some other sectors are taxed mildly or not, which is a clear violation of the principles of justice.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the government has also imposed taxes on



many sectors, which will directly affect the people, and the problem of food security will become serious.

The business leader said that the Senate has sent 128 recommendations to the National Assembly, including reducing the tax burden on the salaried class, in which a 50% reduction in indirect taxes and an increase in direct taxes are the most important. Still, there is a clear lack of political will in this regard.

It is the government's responsibility to prioritise the weaker sections and the people's interests, which should be addressed. Solving the economic problems by breaking the back of the masses will not

work, but it will increase the difficulties, so relief should be given in the proposed taxes.

Mian Zahid Hussain lauded the Federal Minister of Finance, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb's announcement to reduce pension expenses, advance structural reforms, and bring simplicity and reduce government expenses.

The finance minister has also announced that there will be a tax exemption on certain essential items, including stationary, packed milk, hybrid electric vehicles, and charitable hospitals which is commendable, he added.

The decision to keep the exporters' local supply for the export facility scheme at zero and to take action against the vendors not part of the FBR's merchant scheme is also correct.

The decision to give non-filers a chance to have a personal hearing before blocking their SIMS and banning them from travelling abroad is also correct.

Similarly, he said, exporters should be maintained in fixed tax, he demanded. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that the decline of big industries has stopped, and the process of their rehabilitation has started, but the pace is very slow. In this regard, the government needs to take measures to improve things.

SLB collaborates with OGDCL on geothermal resource dev in Pakistan

Pilot project to evaluate geothermal potential of 25 fields across three basins

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: SLB (NYSE: SLB) is collaborating with Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's largest oil and gas exploration and production company, to develop a strategy for exploiting geothermal resources in hydrocarbon fields across Pakistan.

As part of the collaboration, SLB will help OGDCL develop a plan for evaluation of the geothermal potential of 25 fields in the North, South and Central basins in Pakistan that have been pre-selected by OGDCL. SLB experts together with the OGDCL team will assess surface, subsurface, and well data for the fields to identify focus areas and estimate their geothermal potential using regional models and well productivity calculations.

The scope of the initial OGDCL pilot project includes screening, evaluation and selection of nine fields for detailed analysis, evaluation of geothermal potential, wellbore modeling and determination of

next steps. "OGDCL is committed to exploring innovative avenues for energy development in Pakistan, and our collaboration with SLB marks a significant step toward harnessing the country's geothermal potential. By leveraging SLB's expertise and technology, we aim to not only evaluate the potential of geothermal resources but also contribute to sustainable energy solutions for the nation," said Ahmed Hayat Lak, MD/CEO of OGDCL.

"Governments across the region are seeing the potential of geothermal as an alternative clean energy source that can support their net zero initiatives," said Karim Badawi, MENA development director for SLB's New Energy business. "This geothermal pilot project study encompassing fields across the country's three basins is an important first step in Pakistan's journey to develop its geothermal resources and we are excited to work with OGDCL on exploring renewable, lower carbon energy sources."

PSX stays bullish, gains 252 more points

ISLAMABAD: The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Thursday, gaining 252.61 points, a positive change of 0.32 percent, closing at 78,528.25 points against 78,275.65 points on the last working day.

A total of 283,542,503 shares were traded during the day as compared to 469,756,007 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 11.067 billion against Rs

19.777 billion on the last trading day. Around 426 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 211 of them recorded gains and 150 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 65 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were WorldCall Telecom with 27,558,409 shares at Rs 1.25 per share, K-Electric Limited with 21,974,252 shares at Rs 4.67 per share, and Oil and Gas Dev with 16,928,743 shares at Rs137.17 per share.

MWCS 2024

Huawei Embraces Commercial 5G-A for the Mobile AI Era

In 2024, leading operators in the Middle East and China have started to deploy 5G-A networks

Naveed Ahmad Khan

SHANGHAI, CHINA: Huawei is attending MWC Shanghai 2024 under the banner of "Advancing the Intelligent World" and offering "Commercial 5G-A Experience Tours". At its booth in SNIEC Hall N1, Huawei is showcasing its latest products and solutions that support both commercial 5G-A deployment and AI devices required for the mobile AI era.

Huawei has also announced that it has successfully reached six separate consensus with pioneering 5G-A operators from around the world, and launched a joint initiative for high-quality mobile video development in the AI era alongside global operators, industry customers, and other relevant organizations. Over the next three days, Huawei is expected to meet with global operators and other industry players to discuss the development paths for F5G-A and Net5.5G.

In 2024, leading operators in the Middle East and China have started to deploy 5G-A networks, with some of them already launching differentiated experience-based 5G-A packages.

During today's event, Huawei's Executive Director of the Board and Chairman of the ICT Infrastructure Managing Board David

Wang delivered a keynote speech titled "Accelerating 5G-A and Shaping the Mobile AI Era". During the keynote, he said, "This month marks the fifth year since 5G's commercial launch in China. Over the past five years, commercial 5G has achieved remarkable success and made an unprecedented impact on the global mobile industry. 2024 marks the beginning of the mobile AI era thanks to the commercial launch of 5G-A and other AI devices.

These technologies will be the key to making intelligent services ubiquitous. This era will transform not only human-machine interaction, but also content production and mobile devices, and will revitalize society and create opportunities for the mobile industry. At Huawei, we will continue to accelerate 5G-A development from both the 'Networks for AI' and the 'AI for Networks' perspectives to create new business value. Huawei looks forward to working with all industry stakeholders to seize the enormous opportunities presented by the mobile AI era to shape the intelligent world."

The number of global 5G users has exceeded 1.8 billion, and many operators have already seen the first wave of benefits from 5G. Consumer services like New Calling, cloud phones, and glasses-free 3D have many higher network

requirements, such as higher speed and lower latency. In terms of industrial services, the RedCap ecosystem has matured, passive IoT is now available to an even broader market, and Internet of Vehicles (IoV) applications require higher uplink speeds. Soon, we will see a second wave of commercial benefits as we see 100 billion connections driven by services in all scenarios and industry upgrade driven by new business models.

Leading operators around the world are already looking to capitalize on 5G-A. More than 30 operators have already completed 5G-A technical verification. There are nearly 20 mobile phone models on the market that can currently support multi-carrier aggregation, with a number of them supporting activating the feature by default. Around 10 operators have also already announced commercial 5G-A plans, which include the launch of 5G-A packages and other related services. Multiple operators in the Middle East and China have started to deploy 5G-A three-carrier component (3CC) aggregation networks at scale targeting 5 Gbit/s downlink rates, and many operators are introducing a new experience-based monetization model as they transition to 5G-A.

During the event, Huawei will showcase its latest products and solutions at stands E10 and



E50 in Hall N1 of the Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC).

2024 will mark the first year of commercial 5.5G, and F5.5G gigabit optical network deployment has already begun. Synergies across networks, cloud, and intelligence are set to give rise to pervasive intelligent applications and

increasingly diverse user experiences. Together with global operators, industry professionals, and opinion leaders, Huawei will dive into exciting topics at this year's MWC Shanghai, like how to amplify 5G's success in the 5.5G era and how to tap into the potential of operator revenue growth to bring us even faster to the intelligent world.

South Africa qualify for T-20 World Cup final

56 all-out is the lowest total by a team in a T20 World Cup semi-final match

Spokesman Report

TAROUBA, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO: South Africa demolished Afghanistan's T20 World Cup dream in ruthless fashion on Thursday, thrashing the minnows by nine wickets with more than 11 overs to spare to reach the final of the cricket showpiece for the first time.

Left-arm wrist-spinner Tabraiz Shamsi (3 for 6) and gangling pacer Marco Jansen (3-16) spearheaded the rout of Afghanistan's brittle batting line-up for just 56 off 11.5 overs after they chose to bat.

Fast bowlers Kagiso Rabada and Anrich Nortje maintained the relentless pressure with two wickets apiece at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad.

On a surface which encouraged all bowlers but left Afghanistan with too little to defend, South Africa lost Quinton de Kock early in reply for Fazalhaq Farooqi's tournament-leading 17th wicket.

But Reeza Hendricks (29 not out) and captain Aiden Markram (23 not out) saw them to victory at 60 for one off 8.5 overs to advance the Proteas to Saturday's final in Barbados where they will face the winners of Thursday's second semi-final between title-holders England and unbeaten India in Guyana.

"We assessed pretty early that the wicket was giving us something to work with so it was just about sticking to our plans, keeping it simple and getting the results," Man of the Match Jansen said



South Africa's captain Aiden Markram plays a shot during the ICC men's Twenty20 World Cup 2024 semi-final cricket match between South Africa and Afghanistan at Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba, Trinidad and Tobago, on Thursday. — AFP

of South Africa's bowling display, which effectively ended the match as a contest.

Only Azmatullah Omarzai (10) got into double-figures for the Afghans while their highest contribution to the paltry total was 13 extras in a thoroughly deflating effort following Monday's pulsating drama when they pipped Bangladesh in St. Vincent to reach the final four.

Throughout this dream run to their first semi-final of a senior men's world tournament Afghanistan have been reliant on openers Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran to give them a solid platform and at the same time mask the

frailties of the rest of the batting line-up.

But when Jansen had Gurbaz taken at slip by Hendricks without scoring in the first over of the match, the worst fears of the Afghans and a growing mass of supporters in the Caribbean were realised as the Proteas mercilessly exploited their opponents' technical deficiencies.

"It was a tough night for us as a team, but that how it goes in T20s," said Afghan captain Rashid Khan.

"You need to be mentally ready for any kind of situation. They bowled exceptionally and we just couldn't bat well."

For Markram, who led South Africa

to the Under-19 men's title in 2014 in Dubai, it was all about making the most of good luck.

"I was fortunate to have lost the toss, I guess, because we also would have batted. But still the bowlers had to get it in the right areas and they did that," he explained.

"It's not really the captain who gets you to this stage of a competition. It's a massive squad effort involving those behind the scenes and off the field."

This will be South Africa's first senior men's final since the inaugural Champions Trophy in Bangladesh in 1998 when the side led by Hansie Cronje defeated Brian Lara's West Indies team in the title match.

Afghan skipper Rashid meanwhile said his team would look back on their campaign pride and belief for the future.

"We came here before the tournament and if you told us we would be playing the semi-final against South Africa, we would accept that," Rashid said. "We are capable of beating any side."

"Next time when we participate in a tournament like this, we will have the belief. It's about how you manage yourself in those pressure situations against tough teams."

"There is a lot of hard work to be done, especially in the middle order... We have achieved some good results but when we come back in the tournament, we need to do better, especially in the batting department."

T20 World Cup

Rashid shares insights on Afghanistan's defeat in semifinal

Commends teams' united effort that played a crucial role in their achievements

KARACHI: Afghanistan's captain Rashid Khan has commented on his team's exit from the T20 World Cup 2024 semi-finals, recognizing the difficulties they encountered in their match against South Africa in Trinidad today.

This was the first occasion where both South Africa and the Afghan team advanced to the semi-final stage of this major tournament event.

"It was tough for us as a team. We might have done better, but the conditions didn't allow us to do what we wanted. That's how T20 cricket is; you need to be ready for all conditions," Rashid said during the post-match



The Afghanistan captain emphasized the bowling strength of his team throughout the tournament, also commending their united effort that played a crucial role in their achievements.

conference.

"I think they bowled really well. I think we got good success in this tournament because the seamers bowled really well, you need good starts. I think we were unlucky with Mujeeb's injury, but our seamers and even Nabi bowled brilliantly with the new ball. That made our job easier as spinners," he said. Rashid pointed out the silver linings following the semi-final defeat, stressing that finding enjoyment in the tournament and reaching the semi-finals were accomplishments in their own right.

"We have enjoyed this tournament. We will accept playing a semi-final and losing to a top side like Africa. It is just the beginning for us, we have the confidence and belief to beat any side. We just need to keep our processes. This has been a great learning experience for us. What we take from the competition is the belief. We know we have the skills, it is just about managing tough situations, pressure situations," he said.

South Africa solidified their spot in the final with a commanding nine-wicket triumph over Afghanistan at the Brian Lara Stadium, achieving their maiden qualification for a World Cup final in both T20 and ODI formats. Agencies

Vaughan criticises T20 WC2024 semi-final schedule favouring India

Former England captain alleges bias towards India in T20 World Cup 2024 semi-final scheduling

LONDON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan has voiced his discontent with scheduling the T20 World Cup 2024 semi-finals, suggesting it unfairly benefits India.

Vaughan criticised the decision to hold the first semi-final between Afghanistan and South Africa in Trinidad, highlighting the logistical challenges faced by Afghanistan.

"So Afghanistan qualify for the WC [World Cup] semi winning in St Vincent on Monday night... 4 hr flight delay on Tues [Tuesday] to Trinidad so no time

to practise or get accustomed to a new venue... utter lack of respect to players I am afraid," Vaughan posted on X.

He further claimed that the tournament schedule was biased towards India.

"Surely this [Afghanistan vs South Africa] semi should have been the Guyana one... but because the whole event is geared towards India it's so unfair on others," he said. The second semi-final in Guyana on Thursday features India and England.

However, weather forecasts predict a 60% chance of rain,



likely to disrupt the match. While a reserve day was allocated for the first semi-final, no such provision exists for the

second one.

To mitigate potential delays, the ICC has allowed an additional 250 minutes for the semi-final to be completed, giving ground staff ample time to prepare the pitch if weather conditions improve.

In the event of a washout, the team that finished higher in their Super 8 group will progress to the final.

This scenario favours India, who topped Super 8 Group 1 with a perfect record, over England, who finished second with two wins out of three matches. Agencies

Euro 2024

Turkey defeat Czechs to secure Last-16 spot



HAMBURG: Turkey secured a place in the Euro 2024 last-16 with a hard-fought 2-1 victory over a resilient 10-man Czech Republic on Wednesday. Goals from Hakan Calhanoglu and Cenk Tosun ensured Turkey's progression, while the Czechs were sent packing.

Midfielder Antonin Barak, 28, was shown a harsh second yellow card in the 20th minute, leaving the Czechs with a steep hill to climb. Despite their disadvantage, the Czech team showed impressive spirit and determination throughout the match.

Calhanoglu broke the deadlock in the 50th minute with a precise low shot, marking his first goal in his third Euros. His strike ignited celebrations among Turkish fans, who had turned out in large numbers, creating a raucous atmosphere in Hamburg. Czech goalkeeper Jindrich Stanek, who appeared to injure his shoulder during a save, was unable to continue after Calhanoglu's goal.

The match took another dramatic turn when 19-year-old Arda Guler missed a golden opportunity to double Turkey's lead. Moments later, Tomas Soucek equalised for the Czechs in the 66th minute, pouncing on a chaotic long throw-in to score.

In a thrilling climax, Tosun netted the winner in stoppage time, sparking wild celebrations on the Turkish bench and among their supporters. The victory exorcised the ghosts of Euro 2020, where Turkey had suffered three defeats and conceded eight goals.

"We all fought very well together," said defender Mert Muldur. "We had a hard time against such teams in the past. I think we have improved ourselves."

Turkey finished second in Group F behind Portugal, setting up a last-16 clash with Austria on 2nd July in Leipzig. "When we talked with our friends before the camp, our only goal was to get out of the group. We kept our promise," said winger Baris Alper Yilmaz. "Now we will proceed step by step. We are very happy."

The Czechs, who needed a win to advance, were left to rue their missed opportunity. Captain Soucek expressed his disappointment, criticising the "disrespectful" red card that had tilted the game. "It is a disappointment because we all wanted to advance," he said.

"Everyone did the maximum. The morale was huge. Just a sad end... But that is football."

Portugal, already assured of top place in the group, surprisingly lost to Georgia, who advanced as one of the best third-placed finishers. The Czechs ended their campaign at the bottom of the group with just one point. Agencies

Inter Provincial Netball C'ship kicks off

ISLAMABAD: The Inter Provincial Netball Championship, organized by the Pakistan Netball Federation (PNF), commenced at the Liaquat Gymnasium of Pakistan Sports Complex on Wednesday.



Pakistan Sports Board Deputy Director General Shahid Islam inaugurated the event, which has brought together seven men's and as many women's teams from across the country.

The participating teams include Punjab, Balochistan, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The championship is being played under PNF rules, following a knockout system. The winning teams will receive prizes at the conclusion of the event.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by PNF Chairman Mudassar Arain, Secretary General Mohammad Riaz, Associate Secretary Rana Tanveer Ahmed, Islamabad Netball Association (Women Wing) President Sayeqa Rani, Secretary Rahat Sultana, and a large number of netball enthusiasts.

This championship aims to promote netball in Pakistan and provide a platform for players to showcase their skills and compete at the national level. APP

Ahsan, Hasnain bag victories in ACBS Asian Snooker C'ship

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ahsan Ramzan and Hasnain Akhtar earned victories in the ACBS Asian 15Red U21 & 6Red Men's Snooker Championship 2024 at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.



According to details, Ahsan Ramzan (Pak) beat Talal Alanazi (KSA) 3-0 (83-05, 103-01(70), 107-0 (57) while Hasnain Akhtar (Pak) bt Abdullah Alqabbani (KSA) 3-0 (65-22, 71-07, 89-0 (52). APP

Euro 2024

Georgia shock Portugal with historic 2-0 win, move into last 16

In Euro 2024 knockouts, England will face Slovakia, Romania against the Netherlands, and Portugal against Slovenia

GELSENKIRCHEN: Georgia pulled off a historic upset at the Euro 2024 by defeating Portugal 2-0 on Wednesday, securing their place in the knockout phase of their first major tournament. Khvicha Kvaratskhelia's early strike and a Georges Mikautadze penalty sealed the win.

At 74th in the world rankings, Georgia faced off against Portugal, ranked sixth and Euro champions in 2016. Despite Portugal fielding a largely second-string team, the victory is Georgia's most significant since gaining independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The match, held in front of thousands of passionate Georgian fans,

began with an explosive start. Kvaratskhelia capitalised on a loose pass from Antonio Silva, racing away to score just 93 seconds into the game. "This is the best day of my life," Kvaratskhelia, the Napoli winger, declared. "We have made history and no one believed that we would beat Portugal."

Georgia's journey to Euro 2024 was anything but straightforward. After finishing fourth in their qualifiers, they won their group in the Euro Nations tournament and defeated Greece in a playoff. Under the guidance of coach Willy Sagnol, Georgia managed to secure third place in Group F, setting up a last-16 clash with Spain.

Reflecting on the challenge ahead, Sagnol stated, "When you are the small team of the competition... you know you have nothing to lose... You have no weight on your shoulders."

Portugal's star, Cristiano Ronaldo, was one of only three starters from their previous win against Turkey. At 39, he was keen to become the oldest goal scorer at a Euro tournament. However, Portugal's defence held firm, and Ronaldo's frustration showed when he was booked for arguing and later kicked a water bottle after being substituted.

Portugal coach Roberto Martinez acknowledged the intensity of their opponents. "We didn't underestimate



Georgia, but Georgia were playing the game of their history," he said.

Georgia's goalkeeper, Giorgi Mamardashvili, made crucial saves to maintain the lead. At full time, the Georgian squad celebrated exuberantly on the field, marking a momentous occasion in their football history.

Elsewhere in Group F, Turkey secured their place in the last 16 with a 2-1 win over the Czech Republic. Georgia's win reshaped the knockout fixtures, with England facing Slovakia, Romania taking on the Netherlands, and Portugal meeting Slovenia.

For Georgia, the road to this triumph was arduous, but their persistence paid off in a night to remember in Gelsenkirchen. Agencies

Call on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Young Parliamentarians calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan to implement int'l border laws to curb terror from Afghanistan

"We must secure our country, and these crossing points compromising our security," says defence minister

ISLAMABAD: In a major policy shift, Pakistan has decided to stringently enforce international laws at its borders with Afghanistan, to restrict the influx of militants and smuggled goods into the country, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif said on Thursday.

The government seeks not only to curb economic losses caused by the smuggling of oil, fertilisers, and other goods from Afghanistan into Pakistan, but also to thwart the infiltration of terrorists, avert potential breaches, and implement security checks at the borders.

"All traffic from Afghanistan will only be allowed entry into Pakistan with a valid passport and visa," said Asif talking to private TV channel, hinting at the end of the longstanding practice of Afghans entering Pakistan without proper documentation.



The statement comes as Pakistan has witnessed a significant surge in cross-border attacks on security forces in recent months with the militants using advanced weaponry and equipment.

Islamabad has time again called on the interim Afghanistan government to prevent its land from being used by the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant organisations for carrying out attacks against Pakistan.

"We must secure our country, and these crossing points have been compromising our security," the defence minister said in today's interaction.

He further pointed out that after the withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan, there had been a spike in terrorism, with most incidents tracing back to Afghan soil. "Currently, all terrorism is emanating from Afghan territory."

Asif said that formal borders, where passports were required for crossing, were a standard global practice, noting that despite Pakistan's repeated requests for cooperation, Kabul was yet to respond adequately.

"Our borders with China, Iran, and India operate with strict regulations, and it should be the same with Afghanistan," he asserted.

Replying to a question, Asif said they were cognisant of the fact that there were families on both sides of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border. Rationalising the decision to implement visa and passport restrictions, he compared them to the families divided in Kashmir since the partition of the subcontinent.

Addressing other divided borders, Asif mentioned that similar issues exist along the Sialkot borders — with India—

and the working boundary, where families are split.

Afghanistan does not recognise the Durand Line, the border between the two countries, arguing it was created by the British to divide ethnic Pashtuns.

The 2,640-kilometre border was established in 1893 through an agreement between British-ruled India and Abdur Rahman Khan, then ruler of Afghanistan.

Both countries share 18 crossing points, with Torkham and Chaman being the most frequently used for trade and movement of people. These crossings connect Balochistan province to Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province.

In 2017, Pakistan started fencing the border with Afghanistan to contain terrorist cross-border movement, a move condemned by Kabul. Agencies

Legal reforms to ensure justice for women: Law Minister



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Thursday said that legal reforms were very important to ensure justice and equality for women across Pakistan.

He said that for the betterment of society, negative attitudes must be abandoned, adding that not only legislation but also its implementation was necessary to solve problems.

He expressed these views a special guest at the concluding session of a three-day National Conference on Women's Health organized by the National Commission for the Dignity of Women.

The minister said that implement-

ation of the laws was the responsibility of the state, but dialogue should also be held to resolve the problems. Monitoring of revenue authorities should be tightened, he said.

He said instead of seminars and ceremonies, focus should be held on constructive work.

He said that violence against women and girls was a very shameful act. However, implementation of the law "is a serious matter and we have to make women a part of the race of national development by our side".

The minister said that laws should be made after deep considerations and the time had come to take urgent steps to solve the problems.

He said that the women should get equal rights in every field.

PUC rejects US Congress resolution

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Ulema Council on Thursday rejected the anti-Pakistan resolution passed in the US Congress, condemning the double standards of the United States.

PUC Chairman Hafiz Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi and other scholars, in a joint statement, said the issue of elections was an internal matter of Pakistan which would have to be resolved by its political and religious parties and people.

They said the Government of Pakistan's decision of tabling a resolution in the Parliament against the US Congress American resolution was a step in the right direction.

"We appeal to the leaders of all the political and religious parties present

in the Parliament to unanimously pass the resolution," they added.

The scholars and Ulema attached with the PUC would condemn the US resolution in their Friday sermons as any interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan could be accepted under any circumstances, they added.

Besides the PUC chairman, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Maulana Muhammad Shafi Qasmi, Maulana Muhammad Asad Zakaria Qasmi, Maulana Nauman Hasher, Maulana Asadullah Farooq, Allama Zubair Abid, Allama Tahirul Hasan, Maulana Tahir Aqeel Awan, Maulana Aziz Akbar Qasmi and others signed the statement. APP

Sustainable research stressed for higher agricultural yields

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal has emphasized adopting productive culture by ensuring increase in agricultural produce.

He was talking to Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council, Ghulam Muhammad Ali, who called on him in Islamabad on Thursday.

During the meeting, adoption of technology and innovation to increase agricultural produce came under discussion.

The Minister said a sustain-

able research is needed to increase production. He said monitoring transparency and research by ensuring the involvement of the private sector is also the need of the hour.

Ahsan Iqbal directed to organize agricultural production competitions at district level to encourage farmers.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman PARC informed the Minister that agricultural potential of the country is low due to ban on seeds. He said farmers also cannot purchase all kinds of seeds due to inflation.

SBP aims to double SME ...

Continued from Page 1

25 percent of total export earnings.

As part of its Vision 2028, SBP aims to double SME financing to Rs1,100 billion over the next five years, with Rs100 billion to be added to the SMEs' outstanding portfolio by the end of June 2025, he said adding that SBP's focus is on creating an enabling environment where SME finance can grow enabling SMEs to thrive and contribute to sustainable economic growth. The Deputy Governor called on all banks to play their part in promoting SME finance and surpass the Rs100 billion estimated increase for FY 2024-25.

To further support SME finance, the SBP has proposed the government to provide risk coverage to banks on their fresh financing to SMEs, whereby 20 percent and 10 percent first loss coverage would be provided to banks' fresh exposures against SEs and MEs respectively, he said and added that the necessary allocations for FY25 have been made in the FY25 budget.

Salcullah urged all the stakeholders to renew their commitment to creating a supportive environment where small and medium-sized enterprises can flourish, thereby driving economic growth and innovation across the nation. APP

Suspension of sentence

Imran, Bushra's pleas in iddat case rejected

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad Thursday rejected the pleas seeking suspension of the sentences handed down to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the iddat case.

The verdict drew strong condemnation from the PTI, which called it "absolutely ridiculous", and its leaders — who were hoping for Imran's release on Thursday — staged a protest outside the Adiala jail, where the court had been set up to ensure the security of

the ex-prime minister. Additional Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka announced the verdict today, reserved on Tuesday, with the hearing on the main plea related to the annulment of their conviction set to take place on July 2.

The PTI founder and Bushra were each sentenced to seven years in prison in February earlier this year after a trial court found their nikah to be fraudulent as Khawar Maneka, Bushra's ex-husband, moved the court against the couple's marriage.

In the 10-page order, the

court mentioned that there was no reason to suspend the sentence.

"...[there is] no ground for suspension of [the] sentence is available to both the petitioners. Accordingly, both the petitions under section 426 Cr. PC are dismissed," it said.

In response to the verdict issued by the lower court, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan said: "[We] will challenge the verdict in the high court immediately."

Following the announcement, PTI workers began protesting outside the district

and sessions court and also blocked the road. The protesters include women, who chanted slogans in favour of the PTI founder.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has slammed the district and sessions court's "ridiculous" decision to reject the pleas seeking suspension of the sentence handed down to party founder Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi in the iddat case.

Speaking outside the court in Islamabad, PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub Khan

said that the party will be challenging the verdict in the Islamabad High Court (IHC).

"We will challenge this verdict in the high court at once," the National Assembly opposition leader said while lamenting the politicisation and weaponisation of private matters between a husband and a wife.

The party's reaction comes after Additional Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka announced the verdict, reserved on Tuesday, with the hearing on the central plea related to the annulment of their conviction set to take place on July 2. Agencies

Swedish companies urged to invest in IT sector of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday urged Swedish companies to invest in Pakistan's Information Technology and Telecom sector.

"The present government is taking steps to promote Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in the country, as the growth of ICT is a vital factor for progress," she expressed these views while addressing the Roundtable on IT and Digitalization with Swedish tech companies held at the Ministry of IT & Telecom.

Ambassador of Sweden to Pakistan Henrik Persson and representatives of Swedish companies including Ericsson, Need Insights, LCC/Talkpool, Quixel, Saab, and Mahaana Wealth Ltd were



present on the occasion.

Shaza Fatima said, "Ministry of IT & Telecom is working on fulfilling Digital Pakistan vision through multiple cross

sectoral initiatives including laws, policies and rules and regulations for enablement of true digital landscape." The Minister of State for IT said,

"Digital Pakistan Policy is paving way for taking Digital transformation to the next level."

She said, "The government is committed for provision of affordable and quality ICT services to masses. Shaza Fatima said that atmosphere for investment in Pakistan is conducive." She said, "Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) is facilitating investment in Pakistan, urging Swedish tech companies to invest in IT & Telecom sector of Pakistan."

Later, detailed views were exchanged with Swedish delegation on digitalization, connectivity, IT & Telecom infrastructure, IT exports, startups, e-governance, e-rozgar, gaming and animation, and skills development.