



**Pakistan, China poised to embark on new phase of cooperation in IT, Telecom sector: Minister IT**  
Minister of State for IT Pakistan and China are Iron brothers and share a deep rooted friendship which has been nurtured over decades by successive generations of leaders and peoples of the two countries. (Details on Page 5)



**Reform UK's Pak origin leader denies racist, Islamophobic allegations against party**  
Pakistan origin leader of the far-right Reform UK Ben Haffar has denied that his party is full of racists, Islamophobes and extreme right-wing elements who hate Muslims, immigrants and people of ethnic minority origins. Reform UK has surged in polls in recent weeks and could come second or third in vote shares on 4th of July as its ranks swell by voters who previously supported Conservatives but are now adrift.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

**Trilateral Summit**

Astana: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the President of Turkiye H. E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of Azerbaijan H. E. Ilham Aliyev on the occasion of an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit.



**PM proposes tripartite mechanism to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan economic, commercial cooperation**

**Spokesman Report**

ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday proposed to establish tripartite institutional mechanisms particularly in economic and investment areas to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan trilateral economic and commercial cooperation. Sharing his views during an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit held on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit, the prime minister underscored

that Pakistan deeply valued its fraternal ties with Azerbaijan and Turkiye which were grounded in deep-rooted cultural, historic and religious bonds as well as mutual respect and support towards each other on core issues. PM proposes tripartite mechanism to further strengthen Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan economic, commercial cooperation. Astana: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in an inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Summit alongside President of Turkiye H. E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan and

President of Azerbaijan H. E. Ilham Aliyev, on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit. The summit was attended by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, President of Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Heydar Aliyev. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the convening of inaugural session of Pakistan-Turkiye-Azerbaijan Trilateral Meeting at the summit level, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He termed it as a natural

progression of trilateral engagements amongst the three brotherly Muslim countries which shared a similar outlook on a host of issues of mutual interest and common concern. While noting excellent trilateral cooperation in political, parliamentary and defence domains since the First Trilateral Meeting of Foreign Ministers of the three countries held in Baku in 2017, he affirmed Pakistan's commitment to working together with Turkiye and Azerbaijan to elevate the tripartite cooperation into a strong multifaceted partnership across all areas of mutual

interest including economic, energy, tourism, cultural, educational, technology and innovation, healthcare and environmental cooperation. Emphasizing strong bonds of friendship and robust people-to-people contacts amongst the three countries, the prime minister also outlined significant potential for collaboration in the areas of culture, tourism, academia as well as science and technology. Pakistan, Turkiye and Pakistan have previously held trilateral consultations at the level of foreign ministers, speakers of parliaments and defence personnel.

**President for women empowerment, improving access to financial services**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for financial autonomy of women and improving their access to financial services and credit to encourage women entrepreneurs. He added that economic empowerment of women would not only strengthen them financially but would also help uplift their families, besides contributing to the national economy. He said that banks should support women entrepreneurs as well as enhance their representation in the banking sector. The President gave these remarks while talking to the Group Chief Executive of the Standard Chartered Bank (SCB), Mr Bill Winters, who along with his delegation called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The delegation briefed the President about SCB's contributions to Pakistan's economy, the development and evolution of the banking industry, and the socio-economic development of the country. Welcoming the delegation, the President highlighted that Pakistan had taken steps to protect the environment and promote forestation. He informed that the Govern-



ment of Sindh had planted mangrove forests and earned millions of dollars by trading carbon credits in the international market. He suggested that investing in the climate sector would help protect the environment. He also called for investing in the agricultural sector as well as financing infrastructure projects in the country, especially small dams, barrages and power plants. He said that banks should extend financial services and loans to farmers to increase their access to agricultural inputs. The President congratulated the bank on the completion of 160 years of successful operations in Pakistan. He said that the bank had played a commendable role in the evolution of the country's banking sector. He expressed the hope that SCB would continue to play a crucial role in Pakistan's economy, besides expanding its operations in the country.

**All parties to be taken on board on 'Azm-e-Istekham' operation: Rana Sana**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to Prime Minister on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Wednesday said that all the political parties would be taken on board before launching "Azm-e-Istekham" operation. Keeping in view the wave of terrorism in KPK and other parts, "Operation Azm-e-Istekham is need of the hour", he said while talking to a private television channel. Opposition parties should bring their point of view regarding operation at the forum of Parliament, he said. We hope that all the political parties including Opposition would have the same opinion on launching the operation, he added. Commenting on dialogue with Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI), he said that the Prime Minister on the floor of the house had given clear statement and offered dialogue with the PTI for resolving political issues.



Expressing dismay over the stubborn attitude of PTI chief, he said his negative agenda is the main hurdle in talks process. He advised PTI's party to avoid politics of agitation and come forward for talks with the government. In reply to a question about flaws in the system, he said it is the responsibility of all the political parties to bring the suggestions at the parliamentary forum so that we could amend the system for bright future of Pakistan. He said dialogue is the only way out to address all the issues.

**PM expresses satisfaction at growing Pak, Russian ties marked with shared desire**



**Spokesman Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that it was heartening that ties between Pakistan and Russia were growing and strengthening through a shared desire and mutual resolve of both countries. On X account, the prime minister posted, "Had a cordial meeting with President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation on the sidelines of SCO meeting in Astana today. We exchanged views on bilateral cooperation in multiple areas of mutual interest."  
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**No option but to tax agriculture and property: Aurangzeb**

**Monitoring Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, has reiterated the government's determination to impose taxes on agriculture and property, asserting that the current system cannot function without these sectors contributing to the tax net. Speaking on the news program "Spotlight" today, Aurangzeb emphasized the need for provinces to participate in social protection initiatives and contribute to the national revenue pool. He highlighted that 60% of the federal government's collected revenue is allocated to the provinces. Aurangzeb described the current budget as a roadmap for the future, stating that Pakistan cannot sustain a tax-to-GDP ratio of 9.5%. The government aims to increase this ratio to 13%. He acknowledged public concerns regarding the category of non-filers, stating that it is a unique phenomenon in the world. Aurangzeb reiterated his previous statement, emphasizing that the government has pushed prices to such a level that non-filers will be forced to reconsider their status. He expressed his intention to eliminate the term "non-filer" from the Pakistani lexicon in the coming years.  
Continued on Page 3

**Imran Khan, Qureshi, others acquitted in ECP protest case**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The District and Sessions Court in Islamabad has acquitted former Prime Minister Imran Khan, former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, and other accused persons in an Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) protest case. When the Election Commission of Pakistan disqualified Imran Khan in the Toshakhana reference in 2022, PTI workers took to the streets in various parts of the country and blocked roads by burning tires at multiple locations. However, the situation escalated when clashes broke out between the police and PTI workers with also usage of tear gas at the border between Punjab and the federation Faizabad Interchange. Judicial Magistrate Yaser Mahmood had filed cases against Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rasheed, Shehryar Afridi, Faisal Javed, Raja Khuram Nawaz, Ali Nawaz Awan, and Asad Qaiser at the Aabpara Police Station. Advocate Sardar Masroof Khan and Ansar Kiani represented Khan, Rasheed, and the others in the court proceedings. Meanwhile, the Anti-Terrorism Court has sought a report from the Adiala Jail superintendent regarding the production of Imran Khan in the judicial complex vandalism cases at the Judicial Complex.

**Naqvi pays tribute to policemen martyred in Kandhkot attack**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday condemned the attack on a police check post in the Kacha area of Kandhkot and paid tribute to the two policemen who laid down their lives in the line of duty. He praised the police who valiantly countered the attackers, resulting in the death of one of the attackers. The minister expressed his heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred policemen, saying, "We equally share their grief". He prayed to the Almighty for early recovery of the injured and patience to the bereaved families of martyred policemen.

**Former senator Hidayatullah killed in Bajaur blast**

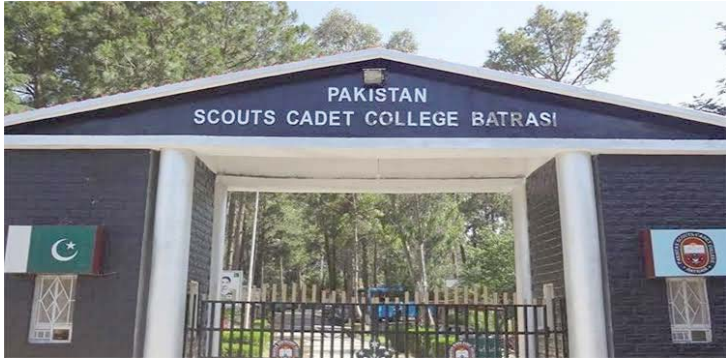
**Correspondent**

BAJAUR: A remote controlled bombing claimed the lives of a former senator and at least four others in Bajaur on Wednesday. The bombing targeted former Senator Hidayatullah, who lost his life. The attack took place in Damadola. Four other men, identified as Irfan, Yar Muhammad, Sami-ur-Rehman and Nazir Deen were also killed in the attack. All five bodies were shifted to the District Headquarter Hospital. Hidayatullah was travelling for an election campaign for his nephew in PK-22 when his vehicle was attacked. He remained a member of the Senate from 2012 to 2024 and also served as the chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Aviation. He was elected as an independent candidate.

# In Scouts cadet college, contract for mess given to wanted persons without proper checks

Nasir Ali Tanoli

MANSEHRA: In Scouts Cadet College Batrasi, the contract of cadet mess was given to the desired persons with the collusion of the college administration. Sources said that the principal of the cadet college and others had given the contract to the people they liked by disregarding the role regulation, which was first complained about by the other employers on the citizen portal. After which the district administration has immediately started an inquiry against the contract of cadet mess given in the Scouts cadet college while the Assistant Commissioner Manshehra has summoned the cadet college administration yesterday along



with the complete records and the form according to NIT. They are sent in the mail, but received here by hand. According to the sources, the admin-

istration had earlier technically failed these contractors, but after the alleged laxity, the contract was issued to them. A case of 420 has already been regis-

tered in Aparu police station.

Technical Engineer of C&W Department was not called in this tender Manshehra. According to sources, the local theaters were returned from the college gate without the form and told that the tender has been cancelled.

The most important thing is that checks are never made with any tender, call deposits are made, but here two checks are made with two tender forms, and one is made with a call deposit, while other such things are done. There are many things in this contract from the Cadet College administration which makes it very suspicious. Yesterday the Assistant Commissioner called the college administration after which the real facts will come out.

## Government of Punjab seeks cooperation from religious scholars for Muharram peace



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Government of Punjab seeks cooperation from Religious scholars of all sects for peace. The district administration has been given full authority for the prevalence of peace. Commissioner Multan Division, Marryam Khan, expressed these views while presiding over a meeting of the Divisional Peace Committee. She stated that the Municipal Corporation has been tasked with preparing the routes for Muharram processions.

Tenders for repairing the procession routes have already been issued to ensure quality work. The C&W Department has been brought on board, and the Punjab Highway Department will handle all the patchwork. Coordination with MEPCO officials is ongoing to correct improperly hanging wires along the routes, and instructions have been given to avoid load shedding and address low voltage issues in the relevant areas. Commissioner Marryam Khan emphasized the installation of street lights along the procession routes for the convenience of mourners. WASA has been tasked with replacing manhole covers.

RPO Multan Captain (Retd.) Sohail Chaudhry announced that during the first 10 days of Muharram, 910 processions and 3182 gatherings will take place. A comprehensive security plan has been formulated to ensure peace and order during Muharram, with over 10,000 personnel on duty across the division.

Qari Hanif Jalandhari highlighted that Muharram teaches tolerance, patience, and brotherhood. Pakistan is a land of peace. Ali Raza Gardizi stressed that eliminating religious extremism is essential for peace. Mazhar Gilani emphasized the crucial role everyone must play in maintaining a peaceful atmosphere. Allama Farooq Khan Saeedi called for action against the spread of unverified, inflammatory content on social media. Mazin Abbas Chawhan stated that Muharram is a sacred month, and peace is the need of the hour.

Members of the Divisional Peace Committee affirmed their commitment to promoting peace. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Waseem Hamid Sindhu, CPO Sadiq Dogar, Additional Commissioner Abdul Jabbar, Syed Asghar Ali Naqvi, Engineer Sakhawat Ali, Sahibzada Anwar ul Haq Mujahid, Khawar Hussain Bhutta, Inayat Ullah Rehmani, Allama Abdul Haq Mujahid, Syed Aoun Raza Shamsi, Maulana Zubair Ahmed Siddiqui, President of the Chamber of Commerce Mian Rashid Iqbal, along with DCS, DPOs, and scholars via video link. The meeting concluded with prayers for the country's peace and progress.

## Enforcement of new criminal laws will lead to further erosion of civil liberties in Kashmir: DFP

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has expressed serious concern over the passing of three criminal laws by the Indian parliament saying that the enforcement of these laws would lead to further erosion of civil liberties especially in disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued here today the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal said that these new criminal laws grant unfettered powers to the law enforcement agencies that have been already enjoying blanket immunity under various draconian laws.

While referring to the misuse of anti-terror laws in Kashmir by the Indian security agencies, Iqbal said that there was an apprehension that induction of these laws would lead to further erosion of civil liberties in the restive region where human rights situation had exacerbated due to lack of proper accountability mechanism.

He said that the most worrying aspect of these laws was that there were no checks and balances or safety provisions to prevent the misuse of these criminal laws by the security agencies. "Granting sweeping powers to the security agencies under these laws can open up floodgates to human rights abuse in Kashmir where draconian laws such as PSA, UAPA, AFSPA and other anti-terror laws are grossly being misused", he said.

The DFP spokesman appealed to the human rights bodies to take effective notice of the matter and raise the issue with the government of India and other relevant international forums.

Terming Kashmiris' ongoing struggle as a legitimate political struggle, he said, it was high time that the Indian government should accept the ground reality in Kashmir and realize the fact that genuine freedom movements with a massive public support cannot be subdued or suppressed by the dint of force.

Urging the Indian government to shun its policy of intransigence, he said that a meaningful and result oriented dialogue between all the stakeholders to the Kashmir dispute was the only way forward to resolve this lingering dispute once and for all.

## CABI organizes Review and Validation Workshop for Organic Standards and Framework of Accreditation for Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: CABI International, an international inter-governmental non-profit organization dedicated to enhancing livelihoods through the application of scientific expertise in agriculture and environmental problem-solving, convened a significant workshop in Islamabad on July 2-3, 2024. The workshop, titled "Review and Validation of Organic Agriculture Standards and Framework Accreditation for Pakistan," brought together a diverse group of representatives from various organizations including MNFS&R, PARC, PNAC, PSQCA, academia, BCI, testing laboratories, NGOs, textile industries, OCA, WWF, Lok Sanjh Foundation, Control Union, GCL, and Fair Trade.

Dr. Babar E. Bajwa, CABI's Senior Regional Director Asia, underscored the critical need for a well-defined and actionable plan to implement the accreditation process at the national level. CABI reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the growth of organic agriculture in Pakistan and expressed its eagerness to continue collaborating with stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation of the revised standards and accreditation framework.

Vice President of Pakistan Central Cotton Committee, Dr. Yousaf Zafar stated that the government is actively engaged in the promotion of organic cotton. An organic policy is currently in progress and is anticipated to be finalized within the coming months. This policy is expected to facilitate the establishment of domestic regulations and standards in this regard.

## Alert

KARACHI: During the protest demonstration under the Sindh Journalist Alliance at PID Chowk, the roads leading to the Chief Minister's House are blocked with containers while the policemen are on alert.

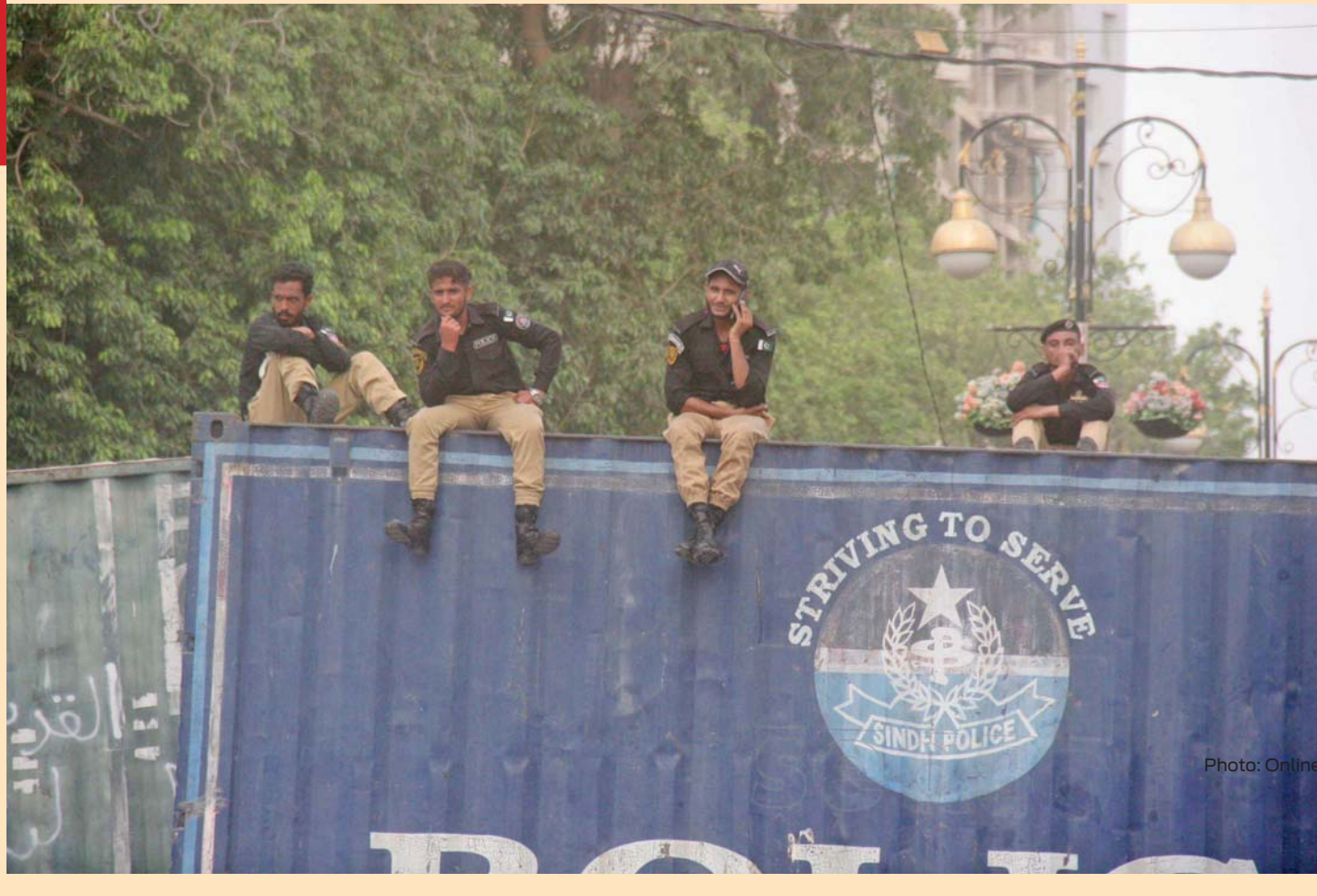


Photo: Online

# "Mineral deposits of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa"



Analysis

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

Allah Almighty has given Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in particular and all Pashtuns in general such light in the form of natural landscapes that add to its beauty and charm—go to any country in the world, the beautiful valleys of Pakistan. It is found in hot deserts, deep seas, icy rocks and vast deserts, and the blessings that have been expressed in this country of God are impossible to find in any other country in the world. According to local media and reports, there are more than 10,000 billion dollars worth of natural resources on Pashtun land, including Balochistan's natural resources, coastal areas and geographically important areas. And even there is no mention of unrest on the state writ stake as much as it is regarding these areas. At present, Kacha area is connected with India. No, while the situation in the Pashtun Baloch land is different, in this regard, in the southern Pashtun areas, where oil and gas, chromite, fluorite, marble or emerald, coal, uranium, gold, copper, nephrite, etc. There are vast reserves of natural ore in the corner i.e. currently Shaban Quetta, Qamar Din, Loralai, Harnai Shahr, Sibi, Daki while North Kirk Swat has 70 million carats of the best emeralds and 220 carats are worth \$4000 to \$6000 in the market. up to 40 tons of fluorite was extracted from Khyber in one year. 65000 million mcf of gas was extracted from Kirk in six months. 1935 tons of nephrite were extracted

in Mohmand this year. Malakand has 200 million tons, Swabi block has 100 million tons of marble. Mohmand has 1,360,000 tons of marble exported. Chitral, South Waziristan and South Pashtunkhwa produce 640,000 kg of Chalgoza annually, which fetches Rs 18,000 per kg in China. 30,000 to 35,000 vehicles pass through the Kohat tunnel daily and the tax per vehicle is 80 to 450 rupees, and it is controlled by NLC. 5000 tons of coal per day from Dhaka district of North Pashtunkhwa, 350,000 tons of coal per year from Dara Adam Khel. Similarly, five to ten thousand tons of coal, marble, and various minerals including

annually. The quantity available is unknown, the success rate of an oil well being about one in ten of oil in the Arab countries. Well whereas in Pashtun Khwaja Waziristan every third well is successful. According to unconfirmed estimates, there is so much oil in Miran Shah Dawar Tapi and Khadri Seeman that can meet the needs of the entire Pakistan for 40 years. While the estimate of oil and gas reserves in Musakhel Lawalai, Zhub of South Pashtun Khwa is unknown. Similarly, 36000 million tonnes of copper is found in Datta Khel Tehsil of North Waziristan Dawar Mohammad Khel. Battani's valley oil field produces 1,000

every year, which is controlled by an organization. Pashtunkhwa homeland is full of blessings. There are millions of tons of marble and other metals in the areas of South Pashtun Khwaja from Boston to Zhub, while their agriculture, livestock and gardens can be exported not only to the entire country but also to neighboring countries. If it is reviewed, with a small part of its reserves, many countries like Pakistan can be changed into the most prosperous in the world And as much water as the Baloch belt is from the sea. By saving ten billion dollars spent on imports, he could get many times more dollars by exporting, but that would have been the case. Because these areas have the worst unrest in history. And all the time the state has to take the help of the army in these areas. It is justified about the areas rich in these natural resources that a neighboring country has a hand in, while now it is also being said that it also includes the Khawarij, whose elimination is mandatory wherever it is. Presently, the satisfactory answers to the questions of Pashtun Baloch are not coming out due to which it is impossible to utilize these resources. Among these many questions, one question is that if Pakistan is with India, which has occupied the power of occupied Kashmir. And India has been made equal to all the angry forces against the integrity of Pakistan, that is, India is responsible for all the unrest in the country.



chromite are extracted annually from Quetta, Daki, Shahragh and other areas of South Pashtunkhwa. Bunir and Mardan have 2 billion tons of marble.

Chitral has one billion tons of marble. Korma alone has 2 million tonnes of coal, along with iron gas and good marble. Pirghar in Upper Waziristan has vast deposits of copper, gold and uranium. A ton of copper costs \$7,000. There are large deposits of coal in the mountains of Gomal. In Bajaur, 85,000 tons of marble, and 1,550 tons of chromite are exported

to 3,000 barrels of oil and 1 to 5 million cubic feet of gas. In addition, Amen Tarbela Dam produces 4,000 to 5,000 MW of electricity, which can be used in 50 large factories and Tarbela. Pashtunkhwa can earn billions of dollars from the dam. Not only that, if several power plants are built on the Abasin river, thousands of megawatts of electricity can be generated at extremely cheap rates. 1 to 2 rupees per unit. While the electricity generated from the water of Gomal is separate, gas worth one and a half billion dollars is extracted from Shivi in Waziristan

If there can be negotiations instead of war, then how can these nations be talked about in the form of operations instead of negotiations while staying within the country's constitution, at that time the parliament or the leaders kept away from the parliament were invited for negotiations. can be By which the country can start its stalled journey towards peace and prosperity and surpass the advanced countries in the region. In this regard, if the constitution can be suspended for dictatorship, then a new For social contract because Parliament cannot suspend.





# Pakistan, China poised to embark on new phase of cooperation in IT, Telecom sector: Minister IT

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT Pakistan and China are Iron brothers and share a deep rooted friendship which has been nurtured over decades by successive generations of leaders and peoples of the two countries.

The relationship between Pakistan and China is not merely one of bilateral cooperation but also a proof to the power of collaboration in nurturing economic growth and technological advancement, she said while addressing 'EuroAsia Digital Economy Forum' in Beijing, China on Wednesday.

She said CPEC remain a central pillar of our bilateral cooperation and stands as a testament to the enduring friendship and strategic cooperation between our two nations underpinned by mutual respect and shared goals of prosperity.

As we look towards the future, it is clear that the integration of digital technologies and the promotion of a robust digital economy will play a key role in propelling this monumental initiative to even greater heights, she said.

She said CPEC is a beacon of our shared vision for a prosperous future and a model for international coop-

eration.

"As we embark on the next phase of CPEC under the guidance of the leadership of our two countries, the government of Pakistan is taking a holistic approach by involving the private sector alongside government entities. With the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) on board to ensure security and utmost facilitation, both Pakistan and China are poised to embark on a new phase of cooperation in the IT and Telecom sector." Minister of State for IT said through strategic partnerships, joint ventures, and knowledge exchange initiatives, we aim to leverage each other's strengths to unlock new opportunities for growth and development.

The realm of Information Technology and Telecommunications holds immense promise for both Pakistan and China. In an increasingly interconnected world, where digital innovation drives progress, our collaboration in this field is not just beneficial but essential, she maintained.

Shaza Fatima said Pakistan's IT and Telecom sector has witnessed remarkable growth in recent years, fueled by a vibrant ecosystem of startups, skilled professionals, and supportive govern-

ment policies. Similarly, China's technological prowess is globally recognized, with its innovative companies leading the way in areas such as telecommunications, artificial intelligence, and e-commerce.

She said under the new government, we are working towards our digital transformation in three verticals: the digital economy, digital governance, and digital society. Pakistan is increasingly adopting digitalization to keep up with the fast-evolving environment. This provides a huge investment and collaboration opportunity for Chinese companies in Pakistan particularly in the areas of IT infrastructures, Cloud computing, IT & IT enabled Services, BPOs and Call Centers, and Chip/smart devices manufacturing, and smart cities, among others, she added.

She said both Pakistan and China can work together to serve internationally by leveraging each other's strengths.

She said this EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum serves as a catalyst for fostering meaningful collaborations as this forum will provide a platform for companies from both countries to explore joint ventures, share best practices, and engage in knowledge exchange.



# Saudi eases access for Pakistani tourists with revised visa requirements

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi, one of the top international destinations for Pakistani travellers, has eased tourist visa requirements with immediate effect, where applicants can now submit a bank statement showing a minimum monthly credit amount of USD 750 or its equivalent.

Pakistani tourist arrivals to Saudi grew 43% in 2023 compared with the previous year. Saudi is aiming to welcome 2.7 million Pakistani visitors in 2024. To accommodate this growing demand, Saudi is making it easier for Pakistani travellers to obtain the visa prior to travel through one of six Tasheer offices established across Pakistan in Peshawar, Quetta, Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, and Multan.

The Tasheer offices offer a convenient and user-friendly experience, including visa application guidance, biometric enrolment, status tracking, and passport delivery. Travellers can schedule



an appointment on the Tasheer website prior to their visit.

In addition, Saudi has introduced the transit visa which is available for travellers arriving in Saudi via Saudia and Flynas, where they can transit and explore Saudi for up to 96 hours. Visa

as attending weddings or functions or visiting friends or family. Holders of this visa can enjoy multiple visits to Saudi within a 12-month period, allowing them to explore the country's vibrant cities, cultural richness, and natural wonders all year round.

Pakistani travellers with the one-year multiple entry visa can also perform Umrah, underscoring Saudi's commitment to fostering spiritual journeys and cultural exchanges.

Making it easier to get a visa will encourage more Pakistani travellers to not only visit their friends and family and perform Umrah but will also encourage them to explore Saudi; from Riyadh's vibrant cityscape, Jeddah's cultural richness, hidden treasures of the Red Sea, to the ancient marvels of AlUla. Saudi is a year-round destination with several regions offering a cooler escape in summer while the busy calendar of events through winter is attracting more and more tourists each year.

In the past year, Saudi introduced the one-year multiple entry visa for Pakistani travellers. This is a specific visa for those coming for personal visits such

# Alif Holdings' Toor Hotel Apartments Commence Operations this July 2024 in Bahria Town

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Alif Holdings Pvt. Ltd, a leading real estate and development company is delighted to announce the grand opening of Toor Hotel Apartments, a premier hospitality project, commencing operations in July 2024. Nestled in the pristine area of Bahria Town, Lahore, Toor Hotel Apartments offers an exquisite blend of the flexibility of an apartment with the services of a 3-star hotel.

Toor Hotel Apartments is designed for guests who appreciate the flexibility of apartment living combined with the comprehensive services of a hotel and to provide a home-away-from-home experience, allowing guests to book stays for a day, a week, or longer, similar to the convenience of hotel or Airbnb accommodations.

Alif Holdings is excited to welcome its first guests from July and looks forward to providing exceptional hospitality and a memorable stay at Toor Hotel Apartments.



# Gender policy in Uzbekistan – an important criterion for ensuring human rights

The main feature of a democratic society is the protection of human rights and the provision of equal opportunities for all in public life and administration. Gender equality is an essential component of this, as it ensures equal protection of rights and freedoms for individuals.

The Constitution of Uzbekistan states that all citizens enjoy equal rights and freedoms, regardless of gender, race, nationality, language, religion, beliefs, social origin or social status. Article 58 states that men and women have equal rights, and the state provides equal opportunities for both genders in managing society and state affairs.

These principles of equality and social justice are reflected in all laws and regulations, ensuring that everyone has equal access to opportunities and rights. This includes gender equality, which is essential for a fair and just society.

It should be noted that, in recent years, more than 40 legislative documents and important conceptual programs have been adopted within the framework of which efforts have been made to create equal rights and opportunities for women and men, strengthen the role of women in government and community leadership, provide necessary conditions for education, vocational training, employment, and create decent working conditions. These efforts also aim to increase women's participation in economic life and protect them against various forms of harassment and violence.

In particular, the law "On guarantees of equal rights and opportunities for women and men" provides for the prevention of gender discrimination and the

provision of equal participation for all in public administration. The Law on Protection of Women from Harassment and Violence establishes mechanisms to end various forms of violence against women and to provide protection and assistance to victims.

The "Strategy for achieving gender equality in Uzbekistan until 2030" approved by the decision of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis of the Republic of Uzbekistan on May 28, 2021, envisages a comprehensive approach to the implementation of the principle of equality between women and men in all spheres and levels of decision-making and implementation. Also, the strategy serves to ensure the promotion of gender equality in economic, political, and social life in order to create conditions for the realization of equal rights and opportunities for men and women and to observe fundamental human rights.

Due to this, gender policy in our country has become an important factor in society and state development. Concepts such as "gender equality", "gender and development", "gender balance", and "the role of women in social and political life" are expressed in the development of program documents and all normative legal documents in our country.

In practice, the results are even more significant. In particular, the reason for the gender policy is that in the last seven years, the share of women in public administration in Uzbekistan has increased from 27% to 35%. In his speech at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, summarized the systematic efforts to achieve gender equality in our country and noted that the share of women in public administration



reached 35% for the first time.

Moreover, in our country, 32% of the deputies in the Legislative Chamber of the Oliy Majlis and 25% of the members of the Senate are women. The number of women entrepreneurs has doubled, and the number of women who have started their own business has exceeded 205 thousand. Hundreds of thousands of women were trained in trades and entrepreneurship. Among the population employed in health care and education, the share of women is 77 percent, in the economy and industry, it is 46 percent. The number of girls studying in higher education institutions has increased by six times; more than half of the students are women.

Uzbekistan has ratified the main international human rights treaties and conventions related to gender equality. Our country joined the Convention

on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1995 and undertook to eliminate discrimination and ensure the full development and well-being of women. Uzbekistan has also ratified the Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action, which set strategic goals for achieving gender equality, and has been effectively fulfilling the relevant obligations.

Therefore, the systematic measures taken in this regard are duly recognized by the international community. In particular, in the World Bank index, Uzbekistan was listed among the 5 fastest developing countries in the world in the field of gender equality.

In addition, Uzbekistan ranked 18th out of 195 countries with a score of 69.7 in the "Open Data Watch" organization's Open Gender Data Index, and was ranked among the "Top-20".

In the policy of ensuring

gender equality in the public service, increasing the weight of women in public administration, in particular, issues of forming a team of potential female leaders are of priority.

It should be noted that after the introduction of open competitions by the Public Service Development Agency, practically the same requirements were set for everyone. The human factor between the employer, personnel department representatives, and candidates was limited. Equal opportunities are guaranteed for all.

This, of course, further expanded the opportunities for women to enter the civil service. If we base our opinion on the numbers, earlier women made up 5-8 percent of those who entered the civil service, now women make up about

34 percent of the winners of the competition.

To be more specific, 2.1 million applications have been received in open competitions to date, of which 20% are women. 56,500 of our citizens won these contests, and 19,670 of them (35 percent) were women.

The first direction of ensuring gender equality in the personnel policy is to attract the most potential women to the civil service, to increase the attractiveness of the civil service for them, and the second major direction is to hire highly skilled people in the management of the civil service – "HiPo" (High potential) is to systematically prepare female

personnel for leadership positions and to form a corps of "Women leaders".

According to many sociologists, a professional leader is a person who has certain characteristics for successful management, regardless of gender. For effective management, it is not the role of the leader in gender relations, but the presence of professional competences such as the ability to correctly set priorities in solving the problem, to direct the team, and to fully achieve the goals based on the rational distribution of resources, is considered important.

However, due to the problem of vertical segregation, the low proportion of women in high-ranking positions, and the problem of the "glass ceiling" – invisible barriers to advancement our women have to work in more middle and senior management positions. As a reason for such a situation, we can point out the high responsibility of leadership, and for this reason, the professional qualifications, knowledge, and potential of women are not in accordance with the relevant leadership position.

In order to form specialists into good leaders, it is necessary to develop the necessary soft skills in effective work with personnel and making optimal decisions in management, development of human resources, innovation, critical and systematic thinking, and leadership competencies.

Therefore, our agency, in cooperation with the Family and Women's Committee and the Academy of Public Administration, launched the "Women's School of Leaders" educational program aimed at preparing the most potential women working in state bodies for leadership.

Until now, on the basis of this program, he has a high professional potential, is active in the implementation of reforms, and is active in various fields of public administration. The qualification of 145 women was improved.

At this point, it should be noted that by the Decree of the President

of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PF-81 dated March 1, 2022, the position of women activists was introduced in every neighborhood in all cities, towns, villages, and towns. In turn, through this, the President created a practical school for the formation of women leaders. Currently, there are about 9,400 women activists at the lower level, and 207 women are working as deputy governors, heads of family, and women's departments at the middle level.

Those who have achieved the highest results according to the KPI system by the State Service Development Agency are included in the National Personnel Reserve and are purposefully prepared for senior leadership positions.

As a result of the above-summarized measures implemented on the basis of today's gender equality policy, a unique national model of preparing women for leadership is being formed in our country.

In conclusion, a strong legal basis for gender equality policy has been formed in our country, and as a result of the full and correct implementation of these norms in life, we are making progress recognized by the international community. On this basis, it can be noted that gender policy in Uzbekistan serves as an important criterion for ensuring human rights.

• **Dilfuza Makhkamova**, Head of the Department of the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan  
• **Farangiz Avazbekova**, Chief Inspector of the Agency for the Development of Public Service under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan; Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Law





## Exercise-2024

Rawalpindi: Group photo of participants during the Pakistan-US Infantry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024 underway at NCTC:



Photo: ISPR

## PM, Uzbek President reaffirm commitment to multifaceted relations between two countries

## Spokesman Report

ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Wednesday reaffirmed commitment to the multifaceted relations between the two countries and expanding of mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and people to people contacts.

The two leaders expressed confidence that operationalization of Preferential Trade Agreement and Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement would further enhance bilateral trade and economic relations.

The prime minister met with the Uzbek president on the sidelines of the Shanghai



Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit being held here in Kazakhstan, PM

Office Media Wing said in a press release. Recognizing the impor-

tance of Uzbekistan as a transit point for trade expansion for other countries the

two leaders agreed to focus on this particular area and to this end initiate an examination of the various options available. Karachi Port connectivity to Tirmez was also discussed to enhance trade between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed Pakistan's eagerness to see a prosperous Central Asia and enhanced regional connectivity.

The two leaders also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the common interest of both Pakistan and Uzbekistan for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan which could be a partner in the development and prosperity of the region.

The early realization of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project was also discussed.

## Sardar Attique called on Prime Minister AJK

## Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan called on Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq here today.

On the occasion, the duo discussed in detail the prevailing political and human rights situation in the Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir and other issues of mutual concern.

Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Haq voiced his serious concern over the worsening situation in Occupied Kashmir and stressed the need for adopting a coherent



and consistent approach to expose barbarism and brutalities inflicted on innocent and

unarmed Kashmiris in the occupied territory. Referring to India's tradi-

tional intransigence, the PM said that Indian government's stubborn attitude amounts to a

violation of the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir.

He said that the Kashmiri people had neither accepted India's illegal control over their motherland in the past nor would they become a part of any such process in the future.

He said that there was a dire need to adopt a unified stand on the issue of Kashmir to raise it effectively at the international level.

The duo agreed to work together with other political stakeholders to sensitize the world about the early resolution of Kashmir in line with wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

## Belarusian President to visit Pakistan for Signing MoUs with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The President of Belarus will visit Pakistan in October to sign multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. This announcement was made by Mr. Sergey Lukashevich, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, during a meeting with Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan.

The meeting, held at the Minister's office, was attended by the Ambassador of Belarus to Pakistan Mr. Andrei Metelitsa, Secretary of Commerce Ahsan Ali Mangi, and other officials and diplomats.

Mr. Lukashevich also announced a Joint Trade Commission meeting in mid-September to enhance bilateral trade relations.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan praised Belarus's advancements in tractor manufacturing and agricultural machinery. He high-

lighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's new approach to building trust within the business community both domestically and internationally.

Additionally, Mr. Lukashevich mentioned that 35 Pakistani businessmen will visit Belarus in July for a food and agriculture exhibition. Minister Khan emphasized the opportunity to attract investments to Pakistan, citing the relocation of Service Tyre Company from China to Pakistan.

Furthermore, Malaysia and Gulf countries have shown interest in Pakistan's halal gelatin and meat industries, respectively. Minister Khan also revealed that a Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer plans to enter the Pakistani market through a joint venture with a local power company. He noted the growing interest of mobile phone manufacturers and food industries in investing in Pakistan.

## Minister Briefed Media on Privatization



## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Privatization/Chairman Privatization Commission, Abdul Aleem Khan held an interactive/briefing session with the senior Journalists from leading newspapers today at the Privatization Division, Islamabad. The journalists were briefed regarding the government's policy, plan and strategy for privatization. They were apprised on the developments on the ongoing transactions including PIACL, Roosevelt Hotel, HBFC and the First Women Bank. The Federal Minister declared that the government is committed to openness and transparency in all of the privatization transactions. All the bidding will be telecast live for everyone to see. The Minister expressed that PIA offers a very good opportunity for its buyer to earn profit given that PIA has great potential that only requires fresh

investment. The Federal Minister praised the pilots of the national airline for being thorough professionals and experts in their field. The Federal Minister lamented the delays in privatization of certain entities in the past and pointed to the fact that these delays have already costed losses that amount in billions of Rupees. The Federal Minister also apprised the journalists that the government has made up its mind on the privatization of DISCOs where three entities i.e. HESCO, PESCO and SEPCO will be offered for long term concession while six entities, IESCO, FESCO, GEPCO, LESCO, MEPCO and HAZECO will be completely privatized through sale and the Ministry of Privatization will initiate the process in due course in consultation with Power Division. The Secretary, Privatization Division and the Secretary, Privatization Commission were also present during the interaction.

## Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan-United States Infantry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024 is a bilateral joint exercise in Counter Terrorism domain to exchange tactical skills at combating menace of terrorism at sub unit level.

Two weeks long exercise commenced on 29 Jun 2024 at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi with participation of Infantry

companies from both sides.

The exercise is aimed at sharing Counter Terrorism experiences besides refining drills procedures vital for Counter Terrorism operations.

The scope of Exercise envisages attaining marksmanship skills during urban warfare by understanding best practices adopted at sub unit level. The inaugural event was witnessed by General Officer Commanding Kharian Garrison.

## Minister Finance meets with the CEO of Standard Chartered Bank and Team



## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Group Chief Executive of Standard Chartered Bank PLC Mr. Bill Winters called on Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at Finance Division today. Standard Chartered Pakistan CEO Mr. Rehan Shaikh and Head CCIB Pakistan Mr. Arslan Nayeem were also present in the meeting.

Mr. Bill Winters appreciated the ongoing efforts of the Government of Pakistan to bring about economic stability and the significant improvements in macroeconomic indicators. He also acknowledged the strides made in the banking sector and appreciated the government's initiatives in this regard. Expressing Standard Chartered's commitment to supporting Pakistan's economic aspirations, Mr. Winters highlighted the bank's eagerness to assist Pakistan in accessing international capital markets. He proposed introducing

new products and financial instruments tailored to meet the evolving needs of the Pakistani market.

The Finance Minister appreciated Mr. Winters visit to Pakistan, which signifies Standard Chartered's commitment to the country. He reiterated the government's focus on stimulating economic growth by committing to streamline processes and ensure a stable regulatory environment. He highlighted Pakistan's enhanced foreign exchange reserves and the robust performance of the stock market. The Minister also mentioned the government's focus on areas of mutual interest such as climate financing, SME and youth loan schemes, aimed at promoting inclusive growth and development. The Minister thanked Mr. Winters and his team for presenting his proposals on improving Pakistan's domestic banking industry, partnering with multilateral institutions, and enhancing Pakistan's access to international capital markets.

## Punjab govt greenlights 'luxury housing' for bureaucrats

## Bureau Reprt

LAHORE: Despite a tight budget, bureaucrats in Punjab have been granted approval for luxurious homes, adding to the already existing perks of luxury vehicles.

The decision, which has been met with public outcry, involves the construction of 27 luxurious homes at a cost exceeding Rs1.64 billion.

Plans are in place to increase the number of homes to 29, potentially pushing the total cost beyond Rs2 billion.

The luxurious residences, which

will be built in DHA Phase 9, will be constructed by the Infrastructure Development Authority of Punjab.

The homes will feature double-story structures, as well as water tanks and offices.

The project has a deadline of one year and nine months for completion. The IDAP has been instructed to obtain approval for any necessary amendments to the plan.

The news comes on the heels of the government providing luxury vehicles to senior officials, further fueling public discontent.

## Hafiz Naeem launches JI's movement for people's rights

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman on Wednesday announced to launch "Haq do Awaam ko" movement.

Speaking at a news conference in Islamabad, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Hafiz Naeem demanded decrease in tax rates and power tariff.

Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer said that his party would start a "historical sit-in" in the capital against the government to raise voice for a common man suffering the most from recently passed budget.

"We have a very clear agenda, the sit-in will not be for a single day," JI chief said. "Why don't you slap taxes on landlords?" JI leader questioned the prime minister and the finance minister.

He lamented that people were giving taxes on everything, adding

that the government was dropping bomb on the masses in form of electricity bills.

"Assembly members' salaries have been increased. Now a fake tug of war (Noora Kushti) will start after passage of the budget," he said.

He asked the government to abdicate privileges given to ruling elite, urging that sacrifices should be given by elite instead of masses.

He said, "we are in contact with the alliance named Tahaffuz-e-Aaeen-e-Pakistan," Hafiz Naeem said. "The Jamaat-e-Islami doesn't want to stand by the confused people," he said.

"We will not join any election alliance nor become the part of any alliance," JI leader said. "We don't want the angry people go to some other side. JI doesn't want to be standing with confused people on such a time," he added.