

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے امتحان نے ان سے ابو اسد نے اور  
ان سے ابو موسیٰ نے کہ ایک شخص نبی کریم  
ﷺ کے پاس آیا اور کہا کہ کوئی شخص میت  
کی وجہ سے لڑتا ہے، کوئی بہادری کی وجہ سے  
لڑتا ہے اور کوئی دکھاوے کے لیے لڑتا ہے۔  
تو ان میں سے کون اللہ کے راستے میں ہے؟ نبی  
کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ جو اس لیے  
لڑتا ہے کہ اللہ کا نام ہی بلند ہے۔  
(بخاری ص 7458)

Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited



CAPTAIN KARNAL SHER KHAN  
(SHAHEED)  
Nishan-i-Haider  
5 July, 1999 (Gultari Sector)

## Heartfelt tribute to Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed

The Armed Forces of Pakistan, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and Services Chiefs pay a heartfelt tribute to the indomitable Captain Karnal Sher Khan Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on the 25th anniversary of his supreme sacrifice. His exemplary leadership and unwavering courage inspire us to defend Pakistan at all costs.



## Pakistan to host SCO Heads of Governments summit in October: FO

Pakistan will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Heads of Governments meeting in October this year, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said on Thursday. During her weekly press briefing, she stated that before the October summit, there would be a ministerial meeting and multiple rounds of senior officials meetings to concentrate on fostering cooperation in finance, economics, ... (Details on Page 8)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Addressed

ASTANA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Plus Summit on Thursday.



Photo: PID

# PM reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to SCO objectives

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to SCO objectives of peace and prosperity, urged the member states to put in their collective efforts against terrorism, poverty alleviation and dispute resolution, particularly the ongoing Israeli barbarism in Palestine. "I reaffirm Pakistan's commitment to working together to strengthen SCO as an active and integrated regional forum to achieve the common objective of peace and prosperity in line with the Shanghai spirit," the prime minister said addressing the 24th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which

commenced here in the capital city of Kazakhstan. Titled "Strengthening Multilateral Dialogue - Striving Towards a Sustainable Peace and Prosperity", the summit is being attended by leaders from Pakistan, China, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkiye, Uzbekistan, Belarus, Iran, Kyrgyzstan, India and others. The prime minister's address encompassed all major regional and international issues, including terrorism and extremism, Islamophobia, instability in Afghanistan, poverty, climate change, regional connectivity, and resolution of disputes. The prime minister said that Astana held significance for Pakistan where the country had formally joined the SCO in 2017 and congratulated Belarus for

being the newest member. He also felicitated Chinese President Xi Jinping on assuming the SCO chairmanship for 2024-25 and expressed confidence that under his visionary leadership, the SCO would continue to grow and prosper. Highlighting Pakistan's ideal geostrategic location, the prime minister said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)—a flagship project of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)—also supplemented the SCO's vision of regional connectivity and economic integration. Coming to the climate change challenge, he called for a collective and urgent global response and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working for a sustainable and nature-positive world.

He told the gathering of SCO leaders that the rise in political and military conflicts across the globe and consequent hike in energy and food prices worsened the post-COVID recession seriously affecting the member states' ability to address poverty. He said Pakistan would do its utmost to provide impetus to raise the living standards of people in the SCO member states. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, calling the lasting peace and stability in Afghanistan the linchpin to achieving the SCO objective, urged the international community to meaningfully engage with the interim Afghan government to help meet their economic needs. Similarly, the interim Afghan government must also take effective measures

to prevent the use of its soil for terrorism against any other state, he stressed. "Recent terror activities have been a matter of great concern for all of us. Terrorism and extremism by individuals, groups or states must be fought collectively in a comprehensive fashion. Terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including state terrorism, must be condemned in clear and unambiguous terms. There can neither be any justification for killing innocent people nor should the bogey of terrorism be used for political point-scoring," he said and emphasised outlawing Islamophobia universally. He said Pakistan opposed divisive policies based on prejudice and discrimination, inciting hate on racial and religious basis.

## Govt approves massive hike in fixed charges on power bills

### Naveed Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday approved massive increases in fixed charges on power bills in Pakistan, citing sources.



Sources close to the development revealed that the federal cabinet has decided to increase the fixed charges by 184 percent for Industrial power consumers. For commercial consumers, the fixed charges of electricity will rise by 150 percent, while customers using electricity for agricultural tube wells will face a 100 percent increase in fixed charges. The cabinet also approved measures to address power outages at the summit, sources added. Following the hike, the fixed electricity charges for industrial consumers will jump from Rs 440 to Rs 1250, and for commercial consumers, from Rs 500 to Rs 1250, while the Agricultural tube well charges

will see an increase from Rs 200 to Rs 400. These increases are set to take effect from July 1, 2024, sources added. Earlier in the day, the Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan said that the government is committed to openness and transparency in all of the privatization transactions. He was speaking at a media briefing in Islamabad during which the senior journalists were briefed regarding the government's policy and strategy for privatization. He said the government has decided the privatization of DISCOs and the Ministry will initiate the process in consultation with Power Division.

## PTI nominates candidate for PAC chairman

### Naveed Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The PTI-backed opposition nominated their candidate for the chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). Following the nomination of Sheikh Waqas Akram as PAC chairman, the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) decided to consult allies regarding the nomination. Sources claimed that the federal government is all prepared to appoint an opposition leader as PAC chairman. Meanwhile, sources within the government stated that if the nomination is proposed outside the opposition leader then a four-member panel should be nominated by the opposition. Earlier to this, the federal



government contacted the PTI-backed opposition in the National Assembly (NA) for the appointment of a new Chairman of the PAC. Sources told that Chief Whip Tariq Fazal has written a letter to the Leader of Opposition in the National Assembly, Omar Ayub, seeking four names for the position of PAC Chairman. The letter stated that the government wants senior and experienced individuals to be considered for the position and that the selection will be made through mutual consensus. A copy of the letter has also been sent to PTI Chief Whip, Amir Dogar.

## Petrol pumps to remain close today

### Commerce Desk

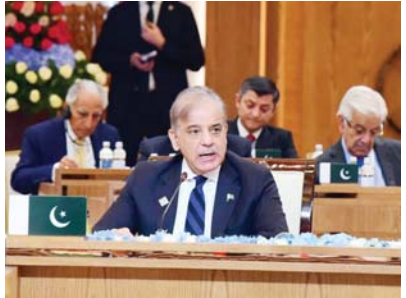
LAHORE: The petrol stations in Pakistan will be remain closed on July 5 as the dealers announced strike over 'unfair' tax in the recent budget 2024-25. According to the details, Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association continue with their strike call on July 05 as their talks with the government failed to reach consensus. Following a meeting with the government officials, the dealers announced a strike after which the petrol pumps across the country will be closed from 6 am on July 05. The association's central leader stated that the government has imposed a variety of 'unfair' taxes, making it increasingly difficult for the petrol pump business to operate.

## PM demands Israel's accountability for war crimes in Palestine

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday took Pakistan's clear and blunt position regarding the situation in Palestine at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit and the SCO Plus Summit, stressing the international community to make Israel accountable and bring it to justice. The prime minister, vigorously fighting the case of Gaza at the SCO and SCO Plus summits, said that Israel was involved in the genocide of Palestinians. The International Court

of Justice, he said, had also declared Israel's heinous actions as genocide of the Palestinians. "Israel is wreaking havoc in Gaza and committing war crimes," the prime minister said. The international community should speed up its efforts for an immediate ceasefire and access of humanitarian aid in Gaza. Pakistan's position was that all long-standing disputes should be resolved according to the United Nations resolutions, he added. PM Shehbaz deplored that around 37,000 innocent people had been martyred in Palestine — most of whom were women and children, while over two million Palestinians were displaced by Israel. "Pakistan is in favour of a two-state solution to the Palestinian issue on the lines of pre-1967 borders with the establishment of a Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital," he added.



## Senate passes Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024 with majority vote

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Thursday passed the Elections (Amendment) Bill, 2024 with a majority vote amid the opposition uproar, seeking restoration of original provision to allow retired judges of high courts for appointment as members of the tribunals for hearing of petitions in respect of elections to the National Assembly, Senate and provincial assemblies. Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, while tabling the bill, requested the House to pass the bill as passed by the National Assembly. Speaking on the occasion, the minister said that many amendments were made in the said bill during the year 2023. He said an amendment was proposed for speedy disposal of election-related petitions referred to the election tribunals within six months. The minister said in the previous legislation, the appointment of retired judges as members of the election tribunals was replaced with sitting judges. But, now, the government restored the original provision of Section 140 of the Election Act, 2017.

## SC suspends LHC decision on election tribunals

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development, the Supreme Court of Pakistan has suspended the notification for the formation of election tribunals and the Lahore High Court's decision regarding the same. The decision was made by a

five-member larger bench led by Chief Justice Qazi Faez Isa. The court's decision comes after the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) appealed against the establishment of election tribunals, arguing that it falls under their jurisdiction. During the hearing, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders

raised objections against Chief Justice Isa, leading to a heated exchange. PTI's lawyer, Niazullah Niazi, attempted to challenge the bench's composition, demanding that the case be transferred to another bench. Chief Justice Isa dismissed this objection, stating that the

current bench would continue the hearing. He questioned Niazi's interest in the case, highlighting that it was a matter between the ECP and the Chief Justice, not a private individual. The Chief Justice, along with other bench members, expressed strong disapproval of Niazi's actions, noting that he

had raised no objections during previous hearings. They deemed his current objection as an attempt to create headlines and discredit the court. The Chief Justice even threatened disciplinary action against Niazi, suggesting that his case be referred to the Pakistan Bar Council.

## UN Secretary General calls for 'positive' development in Imran's imprisonment

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has expressed a desire to see former Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan's current situation "evolve in a much more positive way," according to his spokesperson. During a press conference, when asked about the UN chief's stance on the United Nations rights group's recommendation for Imran Khan's immediate release, his spokesperson Stephane Dujarric stated: "It's a recommendation from an independent panel. We want to see the current political situation, the current situation of Mr Khan, evolve in a much more positive way." The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, which investigates cases of deprivation of liberty by governments, recently declared the cases against Imran Khan "without legal basis" and politically

motivated to exclude him from the political arena. The panel recommended his release and compensation, marking the second international disapproval of the government's actions against Khan and his political party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), within a week. This follows a US resolution urging Pakistan to investigate allegations of irregularities in the February 8 elections. However, on Tuesday, the Pakistani government and its allies rejected the UN working group's recommendations concerning Imran Khan's detention, labelling it a "conspiracy against the institutions." Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar dismissed the working group's non-binding recommendations, stating that Imran's detention was an "internal matter" and that legal actions were taken in accordance with the Constitution and prevailing laws.



# Azad Kashmir Information minister announces cash reward for recapture of escaped prisoners

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALAKOT: Azad Kashmir Information Minister Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah has said that the police operation is going on to recapture the prisoners who escaped from District Jail Poonch Rawalakot and in the meantime two dangerous prisoners Muhammad Usman and Faizan

Aziz who escaped during the police operation last night have been recaptured and Have been arrested. The Information Minister of Azad Kashmir said that the escaped prisoners were involved in murder and terrorism cases. The government had fixed Rs. one crore and Rs-30 lakh, respectively - police officers were also injured during the operation. He said that the

arrested prisoners are being interrogated. All resources are being used to break the jail and recapture all escaped prisoners and their facilitators. Police teams are raiding their hideouts in the entire Poonch region. The Azad Kashmir government has also announced a cash reward for providing information about escaped prisoners. Soon all escaped prisoners will be arrested.



## Flood control plan reviewed in Faisalabad after predicted heavy rains



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Silwat Saeed regarding the flood control plan. The Commissioner directed the Department of Energy to complete all preparations to deal with the possible flood situation. The level of water should be closely monitored while there should be continuous inspection of protective dams. He said that measures should be taken for early evacuation of the population around the rivers. The duty roster of the staff and the machinery should be fully functional and fixed at relevant places. He said that the flood control room should be established in the four districts and tehsils and the staff of the relevant departments should be present on duty and ensure the exchange of information. Even the slightest omission or negligence will not be tolerated. The commissioner stressed that Anhar, Livestock, Police All the departments, including health, should have coordinated links with each other. The encroachments should be cleared immediately. He clarified that in case of urban flooding in urban areas, WASA's disposal stations should be kept running 24 hours.

Alternative arrangements should be made for electricity, directed WASA to perform its duties beyond expectations and asked that officers of WASA should be visible in the field during monsoon season. Dewatering sets should be installed in low lying areas. There should be no obstruction in the rapid drainage of rainwater. He urged the Municipal Corporation to take measures to issue notices to the occupants of dangerous buildings and to vacate the buildings. The implementation should be ensured. The Deputy Commissioners gave a detailed briefing on the flood control plan, while the Department of Inhar, Vasa and other departments informed about the available resources and progress. Anhar was directed to complete all the arrangements by meeting DC Jhang and to check the arrangements by visiting the Deputy Commissioners of the four districts.

## Successful Public Defense of Two PhD Scholars at Women University Multan



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Two PhD Scholars of the Department of English of Multan Women's University, Fatima Ali and Fareeha Jabeen, were publicly defended. According to the spokeswoman Dr Anum Zahra Said Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Kalsoom Pracha, to extreme happiness; A Comparison of Arundhati Roy's Novels' was her thesis supervisor Dr. Ismat Shaikh and external supervisor was Dr. Naveed Ahmad Chaudhry.

On this occasion, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kalsoom Pracha said that the scholar's ground-breaking research explores Arundhati Roy's novels. Exposing Themes of Justice Happiness is not just a fleeting emotion, but a deeper pursuit that shapes our lives. Through Arundhati Roy's novels, we can gain a deeper understanding of the human experience and the power of small moments to bring us the greatest happiness, while PhD scholar Fareeha Jabin's paper, titled "The Elite Class of South Asia" A Critical Study of Migrants' Identity Conflicts in Fiction: A Postcolonial Perspective" was under his thesis supervisor Dr. Mubeya Talat and external supervisor was Dr. Naveed Ahmad Chaudhry. Responding to questions, he said that this paper offers a critical examination of identity conflicts experienced by South Asian immigrants in immigrant fiction, seeking to explore through a colonial lens I present my research to the academic community in the hope that my findings will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex identity struggles that immigrants face and the ways in which they From whom literature can illuminate their experiences." It was recommended to award PhD degrees after the successful defense. On this occasion, the Chairperson of the Department of English Prof. Dr. Maimona Khan congratulated the two scholars on their successful defense. Teachers participated in the ceremony.

## Jamaat-e-Islami's caravans will fully participate in the sit-in on July 12 in Islamabad



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jamaat-e-Islami Multan District President Dr. Safdar Hashmi Talking to Media He Said that the system of oppression will not be able to continue anymore. Jamaat-e-Islami has raised the awareness of the right against this system. Electricity bills have worried everyone. The current fake government has increased taxes. He further said that elites and families are imposed on us, these elites and landlords change political affiliations daily for their own interests. PML-N and PPP are responsible for this inflation in the country. All the anti-people cruel decisions of the government have been endorsed by the People's Party. They are friends during the day and opposite each other at night. These tyrannical rulers have deprived the common man of food, even a loaf of bread, while even their dogs eat malai and drink milk. Dr. Safdar Hashmi made it clear that we are not going to be oppressed, nor should we be tried to be suppressed. The government should come to its senses and reverse these cruel decisions.

Reacting to Khawaja Asif's statement, he said that Khawaja Asif has no respect among his workers, he himself became a so-called politician with the flattery of Musharraf and Zia-ul-Haq. It was decided in the meeting that timely participation in the sit-in of July 12 will be ensured. On July 9, campuses will be set up in Shujabad and Jalalpur, including 5 places in the city. The meeting was attended by Vice-Ameer Khawaja Asim Riaz, Mian Asif Akhwani, Deputy Secretaries Sheikh Israr Hussain, Abdul Rehman Haidari, Hafiz Owais Advocate and Hasan Akhwani and other officials.

## Protest

KARACHI: Teachers from Interior Sindh protest in front of Sindh Assembly in the Provincial.



Photo: Online

## Pakistan must improve the compliance of UNCRPD

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The government must ensure that no person with disabilities is left behind in policy-making and development plans. The state must create an accessible and disability-friendly environment and eradicate all barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from entering the mainstream of development. State authorities must also ensure the protection of women with disabilities and take measures to eliminate gender-based discrimination.

These demands were raised by disability rights activists during a media briefing titled "Pakistan Response to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)." The event was organized by the Association of Women for Awareness and Motivation (AWAM) in collab-

oration with the Disability Rights Action Group (DRAG), the Community-Based Inclusive Development (CBID) Network, and the Chanan Network on completing 13 years of ratification to UNCRPD by Pakistan. Keynote speakers included Shazia George, Sonia Patras, Al-Haaj Latif Gill, Mian Iftikhar Ahmed, and Muhammad Younis (PWD), expressed their concerns regarding Pakistan's disability rights protection mechanisms in light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Shazia George, Executive Director of AWAM and former member of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (PCSW), stated, "Women with disabilities are the most marginalized group within the disability community and require special attention

from authorities and political decision-makers." Sonia Patras, Deputy Director of AWAM, commented, "It is commendable that the Punjab government approved a new law for persons with disabilities in 2022 and incorporated the recommendations of the UNCRPD committee. However, appropriate resources have not been allocated, nor have further measures been taken to implement it." Al-Haaj Ch. Latif Gill added, "State authorities have failed to establish a disability-friendly environment and accessible social infrastructure to ensure social inclusion. Successive governments have introduced numerous services and reserved facilities for persons with disabilities, but these are conditional on obtaining a disability certificate - a cumbersome process that many in the

PWD community bypass." Mian Iftikhar Ahmed, journalist and general secretary DRAG, remarked, "The existing services and facilities are insufficient for the population of persons with disabilities due to the lack of an accurate count of PWDs. The government must comply with Article 31 of the UNCRPD to collect data on persons with disabilities using scientific methods and ensure compliance with Article 34 to establish local committees that increase the visibility and social inclusion of persons with disabilities." Representative of the persons with disabilities community, Muhammad Younis, concluded, "Persons with disabilities are a diverse group who should be treated as productive human resources instead of being excluded from social activities and relegated to begging."

## Pakistan Army organizes free medical camps in remote areas of Line of Control



Bureau Report

HAVELI: Free Medical Camps were organized by the Pakistan Army in remote areas of the Line of Control. Free Medical Eye Camp was organized in Rakh Chakari and village Dhara Khas of Tehsil Mumtazabad. Doctors of Pakistan Army and Al Shifa Eye Hospital participated in the Medical Eye Camp. 1000 patients were treated free of cost in Rakh Chakari and 1500 patients in Dhara Khas. In the medical camp, 600 patients underwent eye examination and treatment, while 200 patients were provided free spectacles. The local people appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Army in organizing the medical camp. The Pakistan Army won the hearts of its people.

## DC for implementation of code of conduct during Muharram

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza has vowed to implement a code of conduct with full spirit to maintain peace during the holy month of Muharram across the district. He was presiding over a meeting related to security measures and maintaining religious harmony during the holy month of Muharram-ul-Haram at the committee room on Thursday. Additional Deputy Commissioner Revenue Waqas Aslam Marth, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed, all six assistant commissioners and chief officers besides Chief executive district Health authority Dr. Asad Ismail, Chief executive district education authority Ms Sajida Mukhtar, representatives of police, revenue and other law enforcement agencies were also present on this occasion. The meeting reviewed arrangements to maintain law and order during the sacred month of Muharram



so as to avoid any untoward incident. He directed the officers concerned to ensure strict security arrangements in the district during Muharram ul Haram in order to avert any untoward incident. It was decided that provocative speeches should not be allowed because these speeches spread hatred among various sections of people. The district admin-

istration has also banned entry on some speakers who deliver such speeches, it was further stated.

Speaking on this occasion, the Deputy Commissioner said that strict security arrangements will be made to maintain peace and order during Muharram. No one will be allowed to take the law into their hands, strict legal action will be

taken for violation of the code of conduct. Mr Raza has directed the police officials to make foolproof security arrangements during Muharram and implement government orders and not to allow anyone to carry weapons during Muharram days. Besides, keep a vigilant eye on suspects likely to create disturbance. The DC directed the municipal officers to make better cleanliness arrangements and give special attention to streetlights. The Ulema also assured their full cooperation to maintain law and order.

Meanwhile, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed visited the routes of processions. He directed the officials to take immediate steps for the removal of garbage from the main roads and especially from the routes of the processions. He also directed the municipal officer (infrastructure) to cover the open manholes, and the anti-encroachment officer to immediately remove temporary encroachments.



Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**  
Fajr ..... 3:20 am  
Zohr ..... 12:12 pm  
Asr ..... 5:12 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:22 pm  
Isha ..... 9:05 pm

**Women Police Stations**  
Islamabad ..... 9222596  
Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

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

**Despite millions of claims of PM, inflation in Multan is not letting up: Dr. Rubina Akhtar**



**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: Tehreek-e-Insaf candidate for NA-148 Constituency Dr. Rubina Akhtar has said that despite the millions of claims of the current government of the Muslim League-Nawaz and the PPP, there is a storm of inflation which is not letting up. First, the prices of Sui Gas increased by 400%, while the current government has dropped an inflation bomb on the people by increasing the prices of electricity. He said that the people are living in extreme hardship and it is a pity that the parliamentarians are increasing their privileges which is unacceptable. They don't think about the people, but if they are worried, they just give their privileges. They said that it has become difficult for the common man to earn two meals a day due to the high prices of petrol, gas and flour. If this trend of inflation continues, the people will be forced to go on strike, he expressed these views while leading a protest rally against inflation in NA-148 Cantt.

# Agriculture presents a promising domain for bilateral collaboration between the two Nations, Turkish envoy

**Amjad Mehmood**

ISLAMABAD: Prof. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman PARC, Vice president of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Dr. Umit Naci YORULMA, Country head TIKA Pakistan Muhsin BALCI, Inaugurated the Bee Hive Products Laboratory at the Honeybee Research Institute (HBRI), and Green House for Fruit Plants Germplasm Handling at Horticultural Research Institute (HRI), National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC), Islamabad. These laboratories are established in collaboration and support from TIKA. Dr. Mehmet Paçacı said that these labs will serve as a center for training and capacity building, equipping beekeepers, researchers, and students with the knowledge and skills they need to excel. Chairman PARC extended heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Türkiye TIKA for their invaluable contribution and unwavering commitment to strengthening our agricultural research capabilities.

He further stated that this state-of-the-art laboratory marks a significant milestone in country's ongoing efforts to advance Honeybee research and development in Pakistan. Already TIKA has established an artificial queen insemination Laboratory at HBRI which is of great importance for quality queen production. Dr. Umit Naci YORULMA said that through cooperation and collective efforts, we can build a vibrant and sustainable apiculture industry that benefits all stakeholders.

The inauguration of the labs marks a significant advancement for Pakistan's apiculture and Horticulture sectors. The Bee Products Laboratory demonstrates our commitment to enhancing the quality and productivity of bee products. This facility will help ensure these products meet the international standards, paving way for increased exports and economic growth. Meanwhile, the new Green House at Horticulture Research Institute (HRI) is equipped with controlled temperature and humidity system. These conditions will improve the survival rate of both exotic



and local fruit germplasm, expediting the selection process for developing new and promising varieties. Scientists at HRI have already begun experimenting with various fruits in the green house, yielding successful results.

## Performance

ISLAMABAD: Attendees experiencing an evening of inspiring classical dance performance by Fatima Amjed and her talented troupe, and poetry recitation by the illustrious Moazzam Ali Khan at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Empowering Mobility: Serena Hotels and Chal Foundation Partner for a Fundraising Event

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, under the initiative of Cultural Diplomacy collaborated with Chal Foundation for a fundraising event titled "Harmonies of Hope." This event, dedicated to the theme "Safar Mein Dhooop To HoGi, Jo Chal Sako To Chalo," aimed to raise funds to provide artificial limbs and mobility devices to those most in need. The proceeds from the event will directly support Chal Foundation's mission to enhance the quality of life for individuals with mobility challenges by offering critical support and resources.

The event featured the commitment to social responsibility and community support which signifies the resilience and hope of individuals overcoming physical challenges. Attendees experienced an evening of inspiring classical dance performance by Fatima Amjed and her talented troupe, and poetry recitation by the illustrious Moazzam Ali Khan.

"At Chal Foundation, our mission is to restore mobility and independence to those who need it most. Partnering with Serena Hotels for this fundraising event is a significant step towards achieving our goals. Together, we can make a lasting impact on the lives of countless individuals and communities," said by Mr. Feroze Ahmed, Chairman, Chal Foundation. Chal Foundation is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals with physical disabilities by providing prosthetic limbs, mobility devices, and rehabilitation services.

Junaid Shafiq, General Manager Marketing & Communication said, "Serena Hotels being a leading hospitality brand committed to excellence, sustainability, and community development, actively supports charitable events and initiatives that aim to improve the quality of life for communities in need."

## Russian Ambassador visits AIOU

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan, His Excellency Mr. Albert P. Khorev, visited Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) and met with the Vice Chancellor AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood yesterday. During the meeting, Mr. Khorev discussed the potential for enhanced mutual understanding and relations between Pakistan and Russia. He also mentioned that establishing the Russian language center at AIOU last year is an example of Russia's excellent relations with Pakistan, especially with AIOU. The Russian Ambassador visited the Institute of Educational Technology (IET) and the Russian Language Center at AIOU and expressed special interest in providing technical support and upgrading both centers.

Albert P. Khorev expressed his desire to provide the latest cameras and equipment to the IET. He also mentioned that they would offer various technical facilities, support, and training. During his visit to the Russian language center, the ambassador stated that the center would be upgraded to provide greater opportunities for Pakistanis to learn the Russian language.

Vice Chancellor of AIOU, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, stated that AIOU is dedicated to enhancing cultural and educational ties between Pakistan and Russia. The establishment of the Russian language center

## PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid lauds Qatar's support to boost Pakistan's climate resilience

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A high-level three-member technical delegation of Qatar, led by Colonel Ahmed Abdullah Al-Abdullah, Thursday called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam.

During the meeting held here at the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, both sides discussed at length the various matters of bilateral interest and collaboration regarding climate risk management, environment conservation, water management, energy, forest and disaster risk management.



PM's climate aide Romina Khurshid briefed the Qatari delegation about Prime Minister's various clean and green initiatives being implemented to boost Pakistan's climate resilience and protect lives and livelihoods of the country's vulnerable communities. "The present government led by Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif

is more focused on engaging with various countries through climate diplomacy to boost global climate action so as to deal with adverse fallouts of the global warming and consequent disasters, particularly heatwaves, floods, land erosion and sea-level rise," Romina Khurshid apprised the Qatar's official delegation.

During the meeting, she also highlighted challenges and impacts of global warming, climate change, heatwaves and devastating floods during monsoon seasons being faced by the country.

Head of Qatar delegation Colonel Ahmed Abdullah Al-Abdullah lauded Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's

initiatives of environment conservation, climate risk management, disaster management, Green Pakistan Programme, Living Indus Initiative, Glacial Lake Outburst flood management and Urban Resilience.

Colonel Ahmed Abdullah Al-Abdullah told the PM's coordinator Romina Khurshid Alam that the government of Qatar is aware of Pakistan's climate vulnerability and efforts being taken by the present government to cope with the exacerbating impacts of climate change on the country's various socio-economic sectors, particularly agriculture, water, energy, food security, health and education."

# Federal Budget 2024-25: Missed Opportunity to Increase Cigarette Taxes for Public Health

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Health advocates expressed deep concern over the government's decision to maintain current cigarette tax rates in the federal budget 2024-25. A session organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) and the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) highlighted the negative implications for public health and revenue generation. Chief Guest Mr. Murtaza Solangi, Former Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting, stated, "The federal budget 2024-25 missed a critical opportunity to generate substantial revenue through increased cigarette taxes. This revenue could have been invested in public health, easing the

economic burden on our healthcare system. Instead, maintaining current tax rates benefits cigarette manufacturers without additional excise tax contributions, undermining tobacco control efforts and worsening the public health crisis caused by tobacco use.

He further added that we must advocate for policies that prioritize public health and urge the government to implement measures that balance revenue generation with health objectives."

Managing Director of SPDC, Muhammad Asif Iqbal, said, "The government's decision to spare the cigarette industry from any tax hike, despite the need to generate additional revenue to address the fiscal deficit, is concerning. The FED revenue target of Rs 324 billion for

2024-25 is unrealistically high without an increase in cigarette taxes, with estimates suggesting a shortfall of over Rs 100 billion. The Finance Act 2024's changes benefit cigarette manufacturers by allowing price increases without additional excise tax revenue. The government should adopt a dual approach of increasing the FED rate and implementing regulations to combat the illegal cigarette trade. Effective tobacco control policies should leverage higher cigarette taxes as a tool to discourage tobacco use and promote public health."

Renowned tobacco control activist Malik Imran Ahmed, Country Head Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids added, the increase in the FED price tier thresholds only serves to benefit



the cigarette manufacturing firms, allowing them to increase consumer prices without any additional contribution to excise tax revenue. This approach not only undermines our efforts towards tobacco control but also risks exacerbating the public

health crisis caused by tobacco consumption.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad, program manager SPARC said, while the Finance Bill's provision may enhance profitability within the tobacco industry, its implications for public health and fiscal

policy are significant and contentious. The debate underscores the delicate balance governments must strike between economic interests, public health priorities to save Pakistani children and youth from addiction and disease and sustainable fiscal

management. Mr. Mehboob-ul-Haq, CEO Human Development Foundation (HDF), emphasized that higher cigarette taxes are crucial for discouraging tobacco use and protecting public health. Recent budget decisions highlight the need for continued advocacy to ensure public health priorities are not overshadowed by industry interests.

The decision has raised alarms among healthcare advocates and the general public alike, who fear its long-term ramifications on public health and economic stability. As discussions on the Finance Bill progress, stakeholders continue to call for a reconsideration of policies that prioritize short-term industry gains over the broader public interest.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almas Ayoub Sabir**  
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**  
 Managing Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Saleem Zaman Khan.**  
 (mszk786@gmail.com)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**  
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Islamabad Office: Rose Plaza, I-8 Markaz.  
 Karachi office: Flat No.C.3.A.One Comfort, Block No 11.  
 Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Main Rashid Minhas Road.  
 Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.  
 Email: [spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com](mailto:spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com)  
 Whatsapp: 0346-5008408

# The PM's SCO Speech: Key Themes and Takeaways

The Prime Minister's Speech at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)-2024 Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan (3-4, July, 2024) was a mixed bag with a few points aligned with the SCO mandate and those which didn't. The aligned part included trade in local currencies, regional and international connectivity, setting up of development funds to fight climate change and poverty alleviation.

The Prime Minister highlighted that conducting trade and commerce within SCO in local currencies will reduce dependence on major international currencies: US dollar and Euro, and will enhance economic sovereignty by insulating member states from external financial shocks and currency manipulation. Additionally, this would lower transaction costs and foreign exchange fees, providing cost savings for businesses and fostering closer integration among SCO members. This approach he emphasized would facilitate small and medium enterprises (SMEs), making it easier for them to engage in regional trade without the complexities of accessing international financial markets.

However, it is easier said than done. SCO countries will have to overcome many challenges such as currency volatility and high inflation rates in some member states, exchange rate fluctuations, lack of financial infrastructure and underdeveloped banking systems.

The prime minister was apt when he offered SCO countries to utilize the peculiar geopolitical location of Pakistan to connect Central Asian countries with China and through Gwadar port to the rest of the world by using the conduit of CPEC and BRI and benefit from their vast network of railways, highways, and

maritime routes across Asia, Europe, and Africa. Additionally, the International North-South Transport Corridor, which connects India, Iran, Russia, and Central Asia, has been another major opportunity to reduce transport costs and time for goods moving between these regions.

However, this initiative is not without challenges. The SCO will have to address the many obstacles to fully translate connectivity vision into reality such as removing infrastructure deficiencies in some member countries, reducing geopolitical tensions, overcoming regulatory and administrative barriers and economic disparities among member states. Besides, harmonization of regulations to ensure the smooth implementation and success of connectivity initiatives across the region.

The part of the PM's speech which called upon SCO to take tangible steps for poverty reductions was commendable. The SCO has made notable progress in poverty reduction through the establishment of the Special Working Group on Poverty Alleviation and the SCO Centre of Excellence on Poverty Reduction in Islamabad aimed at facilitating the exchange of best practices, research and collaborative projects in agricultural development, vocational training, and economic cooperation, aimed at boosting income levels and improve living standards in the region. As the head of the Special Working Group on Poverty Alleviation.

At the 2024 SCO Summit in Astana, new initiatives to alleviate poverty were envisaged which included comprehensive economic programs, joint agricultural

projects to improve food security, and expanded educational, and vocational training programs to empower vulnerable populations, create job opportunities, and enhance economic resilience in the region. These initiatives with significant contributions from Pakistan, are expected to have a profound impact on poverty reduction across member countries.

The Prime Minister's next important point of the speech addressed climate change and global warming which has threatened many countries in terms of water shortage, rising temperatures, unpredictable heavy and unseasonal rains and snow and natural disasters making Pakistan one of the ten most climate change affected countries of the world. SCO has made

some tangible achievements to arrest climate change such as construction of renewable energy projects, increased use of green technologies and improved regional policies on pollution control. The SCO Summit July 2024 adopted a new framework for regional cooperation on carbon trading, aiming to create a unified carbon market within the SCO, encourage investments in low-carbon technologies and expanding green finance mechanisms to support sustainable projects and infrastructure development.

The Prime Minister's reference to Afghanistan was, however, full of contradictions. At one end the Prime Minister termed Afghanistan lynchpin for the success of SCO, but on the other hand Pakistan has catapulted its position with Afghanistan from friendship to adversary by actions such as extraditing Afghan Aliens, imposing strict border

control, impose penalties and levies on the movement of goods across Afghanistan and conducting cross border airstrikes. Pakistan needs a critical rethinking of its engagement with Afghanistan to align them with the SCO objectives.

The Prime Minister assertions regarding genocide committed by Israel in Palestine and calling upon the rest of the world do its bit to ensure permanent ceasefire in the region were though apt, but were hollow and without any consequence. He knew very well that the SCO forum by and large has a narrow mandate and its voice, even if raised against Israel, will have no consequence or impact.

The Prime Minister also stressed the need to resolve all outstanding regional and international dispute and conflicts on the basis of the United Nations' resolutions with an obvious reference to dispute of Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir knowing very well that the United Nations is nothing but a pawn in the hand of the powerful nation who finance and foot major chunk of its budget like USA. Perhaps SCO was formed in reaction to the US influence on UN, and UN inability to resolve conflict fairly and justly.

Though the PM's speech resonated well with the SCO objectives, moving forward the effectiveness of these initiatives will depend on sustained cooperation and addressing the outlined challenges besides putting our own house in order by achieving political and economic stability, following the constitution and rule of law in letter and spirit without any exception.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## KP Govt to utilize receipts from oil, gas on concerned districts

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to further improve the production bonus guidelines issued for the better utilization of the receipts in the districts with oil and gas production capacity and to involve the district administrations of the respective districts in the consultation process for the purpose.

Work has been started on forming committees for the utilization of using the income from oil and gas reserves discovered in Dera Ismail Khan and North Waziristan in the development process in the respective districts so that the population related to the natural resources of oil and gas could be benefited to maximum extent.

In this connection, the Energy and Power Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in light of the instructions of the KP Chief Minister organized a one-day consultative seminar was organized in a local hotel regarding the improvement of the guidelines of production bonus funds in the oil and gas producing districts here on Thursday.

The special guest at the seminar was Tashfeen Haider, Special Secretary Energy and Power while Additional Secretary Oil and Gas Akhlaq Ahmed, Deputy Secretaries Asif Ali, Javed Afridi and the representative of companies working for the production of oil and gas, Mari Petroleum, Al Haj Petroleum Companies, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Oil and Gas Company and district administration were also present in the consultation seminar.

Speaking on this occasion, Special Secretary Tashfeen Haider said that out of the total national crude oil production 42 percent of the about 30,000 barrels of oil per day, is being produced in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He said that oil and gas are produced at 16 places in the southern districts of the province, Kohat, Karak, Hangu and Lakki Marwat, which is earning receipts to the tune of billions of rupees for the province in the form of royalties and federal excise duty.

Tashfeen further said that KP Energy department is determined to increase the production capacity of oil and gas to usher development and economic stability in the province.

On this occasion, the Additional Secretary Akhlaq Ahmed Khan said that after the discovery of oil and gas in Lakki Marwat, Dera Ismail Khan and North Waziristan, the provincial government has started work on forming committees under consultation to improve production guidelines bonuses.

The development funds will be utilized in a transparent manner through the local representation of these districts.

Meanwhile, a group discussion was also organized to include the consultation and suggestions of the seminar participants.

At the end of the seminar, Special Secretary Tashfeen Haider said that a dashboard of including members of district administration, Energy & Power, Planning and Development and Finance Departments to be made soon.



Cartoon by Anjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awsat)

## Motives behind Initiating Operation Azm-e-Istehkam - II

Balochistan province has seen a troubling rise in targeted killings, particularly of ethnic and religious minorities, journalists, and activists critical of militant ideologies. These incidents not only destabilize the region but also exacerbate ethnic and sectarian tensions, presenting significant obstacles to efforts aimed at achieving peace and reconciliation.

Furthermore, in November 2020, a deadly attack on a university campus in Peshawar resulted in the deaths and injuries of several students and faculty members, further highlighting the persistent threat of terrorism in the country. The assault underscored the vulnerability of educational institutions to terrorist activities and its profound impact on Pakistan's youth, who are often targeted by extremist recruiters. The recent escalation in terrorist incidents across the country has resulted

in significant losses among our armed forces, law enforcement personnel, and innocent civilians. These tragic events serve as stark reminders of the complex security challenges confronting the nation, emphasizing the critical need for ongoing vigilance, resilience, and coordinated efforts at local, national, and international levels to address the underlying causes of extremism and foster enduring peace.

On June 22, 2024, in response to the heightened wave of terrorism, the Government of Pakistan launched "Operation Azm e Istehkam" with a commitment to completely eliminate terrorism from the country. Despite certain misconceptions and rumors circulating on social media about this operation, it is crucial to clarify its key objectives. "Operation Azm e Istehkam" will

be implemented nationwide, with no specific targeting of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa where local populations will not be affected. The intensification of this counter-terrorism effort will involve equipping law enforcement agencies with enhanced weaponry, modern equipment, and improved intelligence capabilities. Measures are already underway to address any deficiencies in the legal framework concerning the swift investigation and prosecution of terrorists, ensuring expedient justice.

Efforts will focus on combating the systematic propagation of hatred among students in certain Madrassas under the guise of Islam. Internationally, Pakistan will engage with countries like Qatar, UAE, and others with influence in Afghanistan to encourage the Afghan government to cease support for groups like the TTP. Advanced mobile tracking technology will be employed to apprehend terrorists, and law enforcement agencies will receive state-of-the-art forensic facilities to expedite investigations and ensure swift apprehensions. It has been decided that all aspects from vehicle registration plates to biometric data will be computerized, without exception for any Pakistani citizen or their property, and no leniency will be tolerated in this regard. During anti-terrorism operations, if there is a necessity to completely seal the Pak-Afghan border and crossings, it will be executed promptly and decisively.

All Chief Ministers of the provinces have unanimously acknowledged that this is a nationwide war, transcending politics, and is crucial for the future generations of Pakistan. Any politician engaging in negative politics against this initiative will be isolated and judged harshly by history.

It should be unequivocally stated that Azm-e-Istehkam aims to revitalize and reinforce the ongoing implementation of the Revised National Action Plan, which was launched after achieving national consensus across the political spectrum, as per a recent statement from the Prime Minister's Office. The government has introduced a new vision for long-term stability through Azm-e-Istehkam. However, there is misunderstanding among some individuals who are comparing it to previous kinetic operations like Zarb-e-Azb and Rah-e-Najaa. Previous kinetic operations were aimed at physically displacing terrorists from their strongholds, which had become No-Go areas and undermined state authority. These operations necessitated large-scale displacement of local populations and systematic clearance of affected areas. The current strategy encompasses political, diplomatic, legal, and informational approaches, complementing ongoing operations by all Law Enforcement Agencies. Since earlier kinetic operations decisively degraded the ability of terrorist entities to carry out large-scale organized attacks within Pakistan, there are currently no such No-Go areas requiring massive military operations and population displacement.

Azm-e-Istehkam is a comprehensive national vision across multiple domains and agencies aimed at ensuring enduring stability in Pakistan," the statement emphasized. It is designed to reinvigorate existing intelligence-led kinetic operations, decisively rooting out the elusive remnants of terrorists and their networks facilitated by crime-terror nexuses, while also combating violent extremism. This initiative aims to create a secure environment conducive to the country's economic development and prosperity. This statement seeks to clarify misunderstandings and end unnecessary debates on the subject.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## July 5th 1977; A Black Day in the History of Pakistan

On July 5, 1977, General Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, then Chief of Army Staff in Pakistan, orchestrated a military coup against the elected government of Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto.

This event marked a significant turning point and black day in Pakistan's history.

General Zia-ul-Haq justified the coup by accusing Bhutto's government of corruption, mismanagement, and rigging in the 1977 elections. The military takeover led to the imposition of martial law, the suspension of the Constitution, and the dissolution of the National Assembly. Ziaul-Haq assumed control of the country and established military rule which led Pakistan to stone age.

The coup and subsequent martial law had profound implications for Pakistan's political and social fabric. It marked the beginning of a nearly 11-year period of military rule under Zia-ul-Haq, during which Pakistan underwent significant changes, including the Islamization of laws and institutions that Pakistan is facing the grave implications even today. Zia-ul-Haq's regime also aligned Pakistan more closely with conservative Islamic values and played a key role in the Afghan-Soviet War, and all the terrorist and extremist minds are sabotaging Pakistan even today.

However, in the same breath the continuous struggle of Bhutto cannot be denied who reaffirmed that "the survival of this country [Pakistan] lies in democracy and democracy alone". Zulfikar Ali Bhutto played a significant role in resisting martial law imposed by General Zia-ul-Haq through legal challenges,

international diplomacy, political mobilization, and serving as a symbol of opposition to military dictatorship. His efforts, though ultimately unsuccessful in overturning martial law during his lifetime, had a lasting impact on Pakistan's political landscape and the struggle for democracy in the country. His leadership also extended to the international stage, where he sought to enhance Pakistan's standing while advocating for global peace and cooperation.

His policies aimed at maintaining Pakistan's sovereignty and fostering friendly relations with neighboring countries and the international community.

Bhutto's efforts and the PPP's advocacy left a lasting legacy of empowerment and political awareness among Pakistanis. The party continues to be a major political force advocating for democratic principles, social justice, and the rights of all citizens. The Jialas and the political workers of PPP faced immense hardships and atrocities under this time but never gave up. None of the parties in Pakistan can ever beat the contributions and political struggle for the welfare and betterment of the people of this country.

Despite his controversial end, Bhutto's contributions to Pakistan's political evolution are widely recognized, and the Pakistan People's Party remains a significant player in the country's democratic process, carrying forward Bhutto's vision of a progressive and democratic Pakistan while resisting such wicked ideas of Martial law that have deeply hurt this country.

Writer is Deputy Secretary General in PPP



Analysis

Saud Sadiq



# Xi urges China, Kyrgyzstan to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation

Xinhua

ASTANA: China and Kyrgyzstan should explore new ways of thinking to promote high-quality Belt and Road cooperation to make it continue to deepen and more effective, said Chinese President Xi Jinping here on Wednesday.

Xi said the two sides should expand economic, trade and investment cooperation, enhance connectivity and expand cooperation on new quality productive forces.

Xi made the remarks in his talks with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov ahead of the 24th Meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Astana.

Xi said that the two leaders held fruitful talks in Xi'an last May and reached many consensus on China-Kyrgyzstan relations and bilateral cooperation in various fields. Over the past year or so, these consensus have

been effectively implemented, and good news on China-Kyrgyzstan cooperation has been reported frequently.

Good neighbors wish each other well, Xi said, adding that China is happy to see a stable and developing Kyrgyzstan and will, as always, firmly support Kyrgyzstan in safeguarding national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity and in finding a development path suited to its national conditions.

China is willing to deepen the synergy of development strategies with Kyrgyzstan, expand the sharing of experience in governance, promote all-round mutually beneficial cooperation and advance the building of a China-Kyrgyzstan community with a shared future, Xi noted.

The Chinese president said that China is willing to import more high-quality green agricultural products from Kyrgyzstan, support Chinese enterprises in investing and doing business

in the Central Asian country, strengthen cooperation in areas such as new energy vehicles and cross-border e-commerce, and accelerate the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project.

Xi said that the two sides should give full play to the platforms such as the Chinese traditional medicine center in Kyrgyzstan, the Chinese Cultural Center and the Luban Workshop to nurture more successors of China-Kyrgyzstan friendly cooperation.

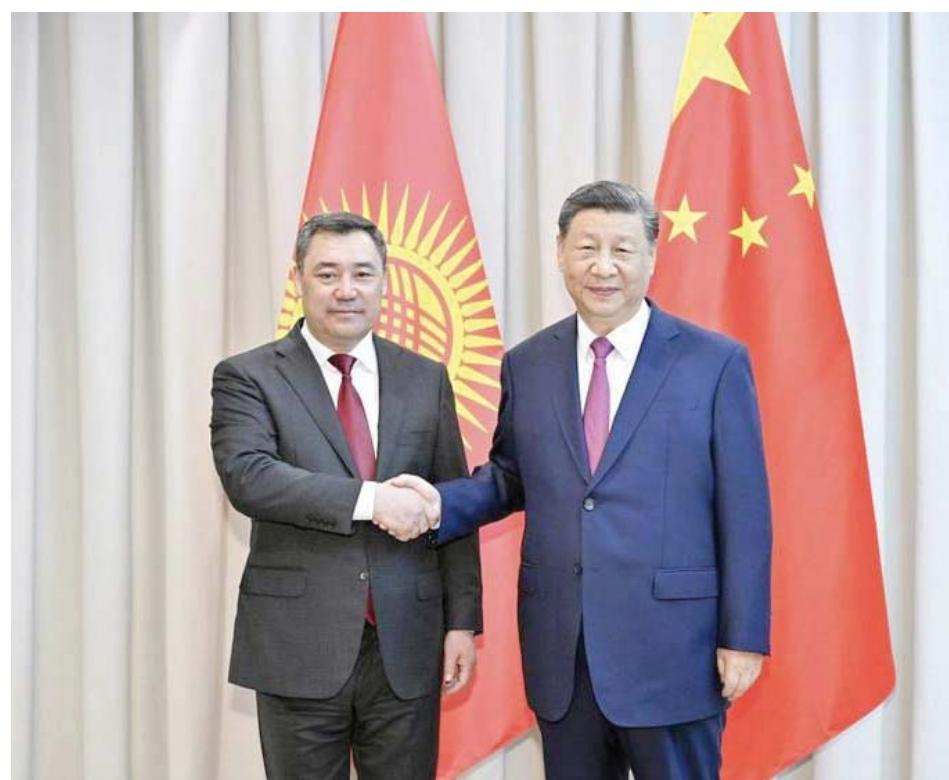
China is willing to strengthen coordination and cooperation with Kyrgyzstan, continue to strengthen the China-Central Asia mechanism, and ensure that the SCO develops in the right direction that serves the common interests of all parties, he added.

For his part, Japarov said he still vividly remembers his visit to China in May last year, which opened up a new era in bilateral relations. At present, the political relations between Kyrgyzstan

and China are developing at a high level, various departments of the two countries maintain close communication, sub-national exchanges and cooperation are booming, and bilateral trade and investment are growing steadily.

He said that in the face of global changes unseen in a century, Kyrgyzstan-China relations have always been rock-solid, and there are no political differences or cooperation obstacles between the two countries.

Japarov said Kyrgyzstan firmly adheres to the one-China principle, adding that Kyrgyzstan welcomes more Chinese enterprises to invest in the country, and will provide good business environment for Chinese enterprises. It is hoped that the two sides will work together to promote the construction of the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan railway project and close multilateral communication and collaboration in the SCO and other platforms.



# Uzbekistan – SCO: cooperation for peace and prosperity of countries and peoples

News Desk

ASTANA: On July 3-4, the President of Uzbekistan paid a working visit to the capital of Kazakhstan and participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

On July 3-4, the President of Uzbekistan paid a working visit to the capital of Kazakhstan and participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit.

SCO — is a regional international association established in 2001, with Uzbekistan among its founding members alongside Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Tajikistan. Presently, the SCO comprises nine member countries, with three countries serving as observers and 14 states engaging as dialogue partners. This underscores the SCO's growing influence in international politics amid challenging geopolitical conditions over the years of its existence.

Currently, the combined territory of SCO countries exceeds 34 million square kilometers, representing over 60% of Eurasia's landmass. With a total population surpassing 3 billion people, approximately 42% of the global population resides within SCO



member states. Moreover, the collective economy of SCO countries constitutes more than 24% of the world economy.

The SCO aims to strengthen mutual trust, friendship, and good neighborliness among member states, fostering multidisciplinary cooperation to ensure peace, security, and

stability in the region. It strives to promote a new democratic, fair, and rational political and economic international order, and collaborates to combat terrorism, separatism, extremism, drug and weapons trafficking, and other transnational crimes. Member countries endorse effective regional cooperation based

on international law principles.

The central governing body of the SCO is the Council of Heads of State, responsible for setting the strategy, priorities, and development prospects of the organization's multifaceted cooperation and activities. This council makes critical decisions aimed at achieving the SCO's goals and objectives, addresses urgent international issues and interactions with other international organizations and states, decides on membership expansion, and oversees internal structural and operational matters of the SCO and its permanent bodies.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) comprises several key bodies: the Council of Heads of Government (Prime Ministers), the Council of Foreign Ministers, the Meeting of Heads of Ministries and Departments, the Council of National Coordinators (CNC), the Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS), the Secretariat, the Business Council, and the Interbank Association.

The Secretariat, led by the Secretary-General, serves as the SCO's executive body, appointed on a rotational basis by the Council of Heads of State (CHS) from among citizens of

member states for a three-year term. Since January 1, 2022, Zhang Ming of the People's Republic of China has held this position, succeeding the previous representative from Uzbekistan.

Additionally, the SCO Forum acts as an unofficial dialogue mechanism, including one scientific institution from each member state designated as a national research center. Recently, Uzbekistan hosted the 19th meeting of the SCO Forum in Tashkent, chaired by Uzbekistan's Institute of Strategic and Interregional Studies.

Uzbekistan has actively engaged in the SCO, chairing the organization four times: in 2003-2004, 2009-2010, 2015-2016, and most recently in 2021-2022. It has spearheaded initiatives such as establishing the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure in Tashkent in 2004, introducing the Meetings of Security Council Secretaries, and launching a mechanism for granting observer status. The SCO Center for Public Diplomacy in Tashkent enhances intercultural and humanitarian dialogue within the SCO framework.

Since 2017, Uzbekistan has imple-

mented 75 out of 91 initiatives aimed at enhancing political, economic, and innovative cooperation within the SCO. At the Samarkand summit on September 15-16, 2022, attended by leaders of 14 participating countries, observers, and international organization heads, significant decisions were made. These included signing a Memorandum of Commitments with Iran for its path to full SCO membership, finalizing the status of Egypt, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia as dialogue partners, and initiating Belarus's full membership process. Moreover, SCO's cooperation expanded with Bahrain, the Maldives, the UAE, Kuwait, and Myanmar seeking dialogue partner status.

Memorandums of understanding were signed with the League of Arab States, UNESCO, and UNESCAP during the summit. The president of Uzbekistan put forward 16 new initiatives aimed at bolstering cooperation across various sectors during this summit.

The SCO summit in Astana introduced new initiatives that will further enrich cooperation and advance peace and prosperity among SCO member nations. Dunyo IA

# Meeting on National Productivity Master Plan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An important meeting regarding the National Productivity Master Plan was chaired by the Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Mr. Ahsan Iqbal. The meeting focused on various aspects aimed at improving the country's economy.

Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of modern skills in the industrial sector, highlighting that the industry is not focusing on equipping its workforce with modern skills, which is a major concern. He stressed that under the "Five Es" National Economic Transformation plan, Pakistan's economy needs rapid growth. Currently, the country is facing economic deficit, and the root cause of every deficit is linked with economic woes.



Mr. Ahsan Iqbal stated that the goal is to achieve a surplus economy. To implement the IMF plan, a cut of 250 billion rupees had to be made in the

PSDP (Public Sector Development Program). The public is bearing an extraordinary tax burden due to the IMF, which necessitated the cut in the

PSDP by 250 billion rupees.

He mentioned that the purpose of the development budget is to enhance growth, and investment is essential for growth, which is possible through development projects. The only way to increase and sustain growth in Pakistan is to boost productivity. The success of any country's economy depends on its productive capacity.

Ahsan Iqbal prioritized increasing exports under the "Five Es". He stated that positive results have been seen in some sectors where productivity has increased. Despite the challenges of expensive electricity and issues in the microeconomic framework, those sectors are enhancing their productivity and making progress. For the economic recovery of the country, productivity and growth are the fundamental pillar.

He added that Pakistan needs

to increase not only its industrial productive capacity but also its agricultural productivity. Although Pakistan is the third-largest producer of milk globally, the per-animal milk yield is only 1,500 to 1,800 liters, while other countries have reached 8,000 to 9,000 liters per animal. We need to advance the dairy value chain as well.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal further emphasized that modernizing Pakistan's economy is the key to success. We possess the knowledge and capability, but political instability has prevented us from maintaining policy continuity. The secret to the development of other countries mainly lies in the continuity of their policies for at least ten years.

He asserted that the only way forward is to transform our economy of deficit into a surplus economy through our efforts. In recent years,

social media has promoted chaos and divided politics. As a nation, we need to have confidence that we are capable and intelligent enough to overcome any challenge.

Ahsan Iqbal remarked that globally, we are recognized as a hardworking and intelligent nation. Enhancing productivity requires a positive mindset. We do not want the National Productivity Master Plan to meet the same fate as other master plans. We need to focus on quality and innovation alongside productivity. A national summit is necessary to launch a movement at the national level to increase productivity, where everyone strives to increase output even with limited resources.

He concluded by stating that provincial governments and the private sector must work together to promote productivity.

# Indonesia as OIC Center of Excellence on Vaccines and Biotechnology Products Holds Training for OIC Researchers

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Within July 2024, the Government of the Republic of Indonesia in collaboration with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) based in Islamabad will hold the 3rd Batch of Indonesia-COMSTECH Fellowship Program for Research and Advanced Training in Virology and Vaccine Technologies, in three Indonesian cities of Jakarta, Bogor, and Bandung. The participating researchers are from Cameroon, Egypt, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Somalia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

The Indonesia-COMSTECH Fellowship Program was initi-

ated by the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad during the COVID-19 Pandemic, to seek mutual solution for Islamic Countries amid lack of global vaccines supply.

Prior to the Training, the Workshop was also held in hybrid, attended by more than 400 participants including 12 researchers of the Training, Ambassadors, Indonesian high rank officials, and the relevant stakeholders. The Workshop focused on discussion about the future of vaccine cooperation among countries and its potentials to provide equal access and more protection to the global community.

In his opening remarks, the Indonesian Minister of Health, H. E. Mr. Budi G. Sadikin, high-

lighted how Indonesia seriously learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic that adversely affected Indonesia due to inaccessible vaccines despite having enough financial resources. Referring Indonesia's experience in overcoming the Pandemic, he invited all of the OIC Member States to support the vaccine manufacture cooperation initiative, while in parallel bolstering their capabilities of research and development for vaccines production.

"It is not (only) scientifically wrong, you presume that you can fix the global pandemic by only fixing your own country, but it is also ethically wrong. So, I strongly support the initiatives to have this vaccines cooperation among Islamic countries," he said in the opening ceremony of the

Training (1/7). He further underlined that vaccines, diagnostic tools, and medicines should be readily available and accessible to all countries at a reasonable price.

The Indonesia-COMSTECH Fellowship Program is expected to benefit the healthcare personnel and early-stage researchers, as well as to provide the most feasible ways in reducing healthcare costs and the pharmacoeconomic burden among OIC States. The participants of the Training are also expected to proactively contribute to their respective countries in manufacturing and producing safe, effective, accessible, as well as affordable vaccines and biotechnology products to tackle any possible pandemic in the future.



To advance cooperation in the fields of science and technology, the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad has collaborative events and programs with the COMSTECH. Previously in June 2024, both

sides jointly hosted the international seminar on "Sustainability of Palm Oil Industry and its Derivative Products", to raise more awareness of the Pakistani public, business communities, and relevant authorities on the

scientific benefits of palm oil. Currently, the Indonesian Embassy and COMSTECH are working to co-organize an exhibition on nutraceuticals and cosmetics made with natural and halal ingredients later this year.



**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
80,282.80	80,233.67
Day's High	Day's Low
80,888.86	80,134.89
Index Value	Change
13,270,036,094	+49.13
Percentage	Time
+0.06%	4 Jul, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,241.26	+70.14
Percentage	Time
+0.86%	4 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,308.00	-23.85
Percentage	Time
-0.061%	3 Jul, 1:11 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
40,913.65	+332.89
Percentage	Time
+0.82%	4 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	182.1	183.9
Bahrain Dinar	740.12	748.12
Canadian Dollar	202.9	204.9
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	294.25	297.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35.60	35.95
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.43
Japanese Yen	1.9	1.98
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.61	916.61
Malaysian Ringgit	58.89	59.69
New Zealand \$	169.24	171.24
Norwegians Krone	26.04	26.34
Omani Riyal	722.87	730.89
Qatari Riyal	76.34	77.04
Saudi Riyal	73.1	73.9
Singapore Dollar	202.15	204.15
Swedish Korona	26.4	26.7
Swiss Franc	309.11	311.61
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.2	76
UK Pound Sterling	350.75	353.65
US Dollar	277.75	280.55

**TECNO and Careem Announce Partnership for Exciting WIN TECNO Campaign**

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: TECNO Pakistan, a leading smartphone brand, and Careem, the pioneer of ride hailing in Pakistan, are joining forces for an exciting Raffles Campaign, offering users the chance to win a CAMON 30 smartphone by TECNO. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony recently took place in Karachi.

TECNO Pakistan was represented by Shiekh Mahad Arif, PR Manager TECNO Pakistan, and Pernia Rathore, Marketing Supervisor TECNO Pakistan. Representing Careem Pakistan was Saad Qadeer, Head of Commercial and Special Projects, and Talha Noman, Sr. Commercial Manager.

Imran Saleem, General Manager Ride Hailing at Careem Pakistan stated: "We are super thrilled to partner with TECNO Pakistan to bring this raffle to our mutual customer base. At Careem, we are adamant on providing exceptional service as well as value to all our customers and Captains. We are always looking for such partnerships that enhance the overall experience of taking a ride with Careem. Similarly, it will also give our Captains a chance to win exciting prizes that will enhance their everyday journey with Careem."

"Having Careem as our partner in this exciting campaign is definitely going to be an amazing experience!

**Fuel dealers dismiss proposal for a strike on July 5**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Most Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) leaders have announced they will not join the July 5 strike.

Petroleum retailers have said that they will take the path of detailed negotiations with the authorities before opting for extreme options like an indefinite strike.

After giving the strike call, negotiations are useless, so petrol pumps will be kept open all over the country on July 5, as the country's economy cannot be jammed at this critical juncture.

PPDA Spokesperson Hasan Shah, while talking to petroleum dealers, said that we have protested in the past as well. We have also closed D-Chowk and blocked Faizabad Interchange. We have also protested outside



the National Assembly and Senate. However, he underlined that negotiations

are still the best option while strikes should be the last option.

He said that a delegation led by PPDA Rawalpindi leader Numan Ali Butt met Minister of State for Finance Ali Pervez Malik and informed him that petroleum Dealers may be charged either fixed tax or regular tax. A business cannot be taxed both ways, and if it were to do so, it would be illegal, and the petrol pumps would be shut down.

The minister has asked Chairman FBR to resolve the issue and the Chairman FBR has assured all out cooperation.

Hassan Shah said that our detailed discussions are ongoing. If there is no success, then any decision will be taken after consultation with the organization of each district of the country.

"We reject the strike call by some dealers in Karachi because they are working for the interests of oil marketing companies and not concerned about their own community," Shah said.

He said that individuals cannot be allowed to impose their decisions on the whole community.

He added that petroleum dealers cannot be sacrificed for the interests of any individual or some oil marketing companies.

PPDA leaders including Khawaja Atif Ahmad from Lahore, Humayun Khan from Khanewal, Zaheer Ahmed Paracha from Leh, Waseem from Karachi, Butt and Haji Abdul Karim, Haji Sawab Gul from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Amjad Shinwari, and Nadeem Aziz Khan from Gujranwala said that an indefinite strike would be the last option.

**Media Talk**

ISLAMABAD: President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh along with business community talking to media on electricity bills issues.



Photo: by Ramzan Mughal

**Exorbitant electricity prices have led to mass industrial shutdowns and job losses**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Atif Ikram Sheikh has said that the federal government should cancel all contracts with IPPs and procure electricity from cheaper sources without capacity charges. The recent increase in electricity rates may lead to civil unrest and discontent with the business community. The federal government should formulate a strategy to deal with IPPs and ensure affordable electricity prices for industries in the national interest, he expressed these

views while talking to Chairman Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik, Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Vice President Qurat ul Ain, Mian Akram Farid, Coordinator Diplomatic Committee Muhammad Ahmed, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain and others.

Federation President Atif Ikram said that Pakistan's energy sector has been trapped in contract issues with IPPs since 1994. Exorbitant electricity prices have led to large-scale industrial shutdowns and job losses. The payment of two trillion to fourty companies is economically crippling. IPPs receive payments even

when power is not generated or supplied.

Atif Ikram Shaikh said that these agreements led to an increase in revolving credit, which reached Rs 2.64 trillion as of February this year.

The initial return on equity for IPPs was set at 18% and was later reduced to 12% but is still high compared to global standards. Research shows that IPPs are enjoying more than 73% returns in dollar terms which is unusually high compared to international standards. Re-evaluation of IPPs contracts and pricing, better monitoring to prevent over-invoicing is required.

**Government must take prompt action to address business community's problems: ICCI President**

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has impressed the government to address business community's concerns on priority basis to avoid further economic problems, adding that the increased fines and duties in the new Finance Act have instituted challenges for the business sector.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, he stated that the business community is not afraid of paying taxes and duties, but these should be assessed on ground realities and the ease of the business community. He said that instead of imposing additional taxes on those who are already paying taxes, the tax net has to be widened, adding that policy inconsistencies are



creating multiple problems and that the

new two-tier appeal system may also erode taxpayers' confidence.

He underlined the need for reviewing certain decisions of the Finance Act 2024, otherwise the business sector would badly be discouraged, leading to a decline in exports and remittances, adding that it is not possible for retailers to adopt the Point of Sales (POS) system, pleading the government to reconsider its policies to prevent the closure and relocation of industries.

The President ICCI further said that exports have been brought under the normal tax regime leading to harassment problems, while a 1% turnover tax on exports will still apply as a minimum tax and at the end of the year, additional taxes will be collected under the normal tax regime.

**FFC Partners with Agrilift to Scale Agtech in Pakistan**



**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Fauji Fertilizer Company (FFC) "Partner in Prosperity" has entered into a strategic partnership with Agrilift to scale their agricultural practices in Pakistan through the introduction of latest Agtech. This collaboration aims to modernize farming practices, thus enhancing national food security and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

Through this alliance, FFC and Agrilift will introduce an innovative "Agtech" based Agri Services model, starting with 18,000 acres across Pakistan. Key components of this initiative include deployment of modern technology, comprehensive advisory services from soil assessment to fertilization, and farmer capacity building through various training programs.

Mr. Jahangir Piracha, MD

& CEO of FFC, emphasized the significance of this partnership, highlighting FFC's dedication to supporting farmers and enhancing crop yields amid economic challenges. He stated, "By leveraging Agrilift's innovative solutions and sustainable practices, FFC aims to empower farmers, ensuring food security and stability for future generations."

Speaking at the occasion, Mr. Jawwad Hasan, CEO and Co-Founder of Agrilift, emphasized that the implementation of advanced technologies will contribute to increased farmer incomes, and the promotion of sustainable growth nationwide. He said, "Our top priority is to uplift farmers by enhancing crop yields, a crucial step in mitigating the food insecurity crisis that has impacted 14% of the population in Pakistan, up from 2% in 2019."

**Alibaba.com launches inaugural KEL Award to recognize leading B2B E-commerce Talent**

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, today announced the inaugural Key E-commerce Leader Award (KEL Award), designed to honor distinguished e-commerce suppliers within the South and Southeast Asia regions.

Launching this week and continuing through November 2024, the KEL Award will see eligible Alibaba.com suppliers from seven countries - India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam - compete in a national round in their respective markets from August to October. The 10 best performers from the national round will take the stage in the finale to be held in Vietnam in November, where the three most outstanding contestants among them will be crowned the winners of the KEL Award.

Contestants are expected to showcase their use of Alibaba.com in developing

and expanding their export ventures, along with the strategies they employ to stand out in the global market. Evaluations of the KEL Award will be based on the substance and creativity of their presentations, effectiveness in communication and personal brand portrayal, in-depth understanding of the Alibaba.com platform, and adeptness in fielding questions and articulating plans to impact and inspire others within the e-commerce community.

The competition is open to owners, key personnel and managers of companies selling on Alibaba.com with a minimum rating of two stars and an active presence on the platform for at least six months.

Alibaba.com's KEL Award aims to bring together top-notch suppliers across the region and foster mutual learning and engagement. It also offers a stage for participants to expand their influence within Alibaba.com's community of global buyers and suppliers, enhancing their visibility and opening doors to collaborative opportunities.

**Govnt should solve the problems of exporters immediately to save exports, Karim Aziz Malik**

**Spokesman Report**

KARACHI: Chairman FPCCI Capital Office Karim Aziz Malik and Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain urged the government to resolve the problems of exporters immediately, FPCCI led by President Atif

Ikram Shaikh. I have given effective suggestions to the government to solve the problems of the export sector and other problems related to the budget and the Anomalies Committee has also pointed out to the Finance Minister and the ball is in the court of the government to redress the

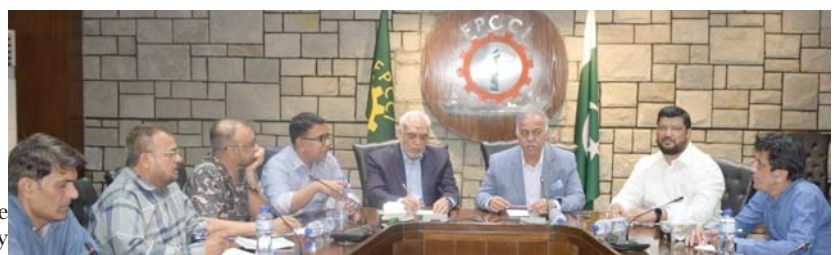
grievances of all the export associations of Pakistan. criticized the federal government for its taxation plans. Karim Aziz Malik, speaking to a delegation of the Council of Economic and Energy Journalists (CEEJ), said that exporters have rejected the end of the "final tax regime", and exporters

are wary of taxing plans as an incentive to slow manufacturing growth, fearing the measures could open the door to corruption. Karim Aziz Malik said that the government should register those who do not pay taxes, the government will get revenue only by increasing the tax net, the pres-

sure on those who already pay taxes can cause the destruction of the industry. Malik Sohail Hussain said that the government should introduce industrial development policies to help increase exports and if practical and help-

ful measures are taken, there will be a strong increase in exports. He called on the government to withdraw its proposed move to remove exports from the final tax regime in the Finance Bill to

help prevent further trade deficits. He strongly condemned the implementation of new electricity tariff by Nepra from July 1 and said that this move will further increase the electricity bills.





# Pakistan, Kazakhstan discuss bilateral cooperation in sports, tourism

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs, Rana Sanaullah, met with Kazakhstan Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin to discuss bilateral cooperation in sports, tourism and cultural exchange.

The meeting was also attended by Federal Secretary for Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC), Nadeem Irshad Kiani, said a statement issued here Thursday.

Both expressed interest in strength-



ening bilateral relations and explored opportunities for cooperation in sports, tourism and cultural exchange.

Rana Sanaullah, who hold the portfolio of IPC Ministry, appreciated Kazakhstan's efforts to strengthen bilateral ties and expressed hope that cooperation in sports and tourism would further enhance relations between the two countries.

Experts from both countries would soon hold an online meeting to discuss possible memorandums of understanding in the sports sector.

The Kazakh Ambassador thanked Rana Sanaullah for his hospitality. The two countries' sports federations are already cooperating which is a step towards strengthening bilateral ties, he said and added that all major Pakistani logistics companies were planning to set up offices in Kazakhstan and representatives of Pakistani logistics companies had also visited Kazakhstan to explore opportunities.

The Ambassador believed that bilateral tourism would open up new avenues for cooperation between both countries.

# ICC unveils nominees for Player of the Month awards for June

## A Sports

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Thursday, unveiled the nominees for the Men's Player of the Month Award for June 2024, including India's T20 World Cup-winning captain Rohit Sharma.

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

Along with Sharma, the nominees for the Men's Player of the Month also include his team-mate Jasprit Bumrah and Afghanistan's wicketkeeper batter Rahmanullah Gurbaz.

Rohit Sharma enjoyed a brilliant run in June, which culminated with the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024 trophy, ending India's 13-year-long trophy drought.

The top-order batter led his team from the front, ending as the second-highest run-scorer in the tournament with 257 runs in eight



innings at a magnificent strike-rate of 156.70.

He also became the first-ever captain to guide his team to the T20 World Cup glory without losing a single game.

Sharma's tally of 257 runs in the tournament is only bettered by Afghanistan's batting mainstay Rahman-

ullah Gurbaz, who scored 281 runs in eight innings at a strike-rate of 124.33.

He was instrumental in Afghanistan's qualification to their first-ever semi-final in an ICC event as he scored three half-centuries during the tournament.

Meanwhile, the third nominee for the coveted ICC

Player of the Month award, Jasprit Bumrah earned his nomination on the back of his 15 wickets at an average of 8.26, which led India to their second T20 World Cup title.

Bumrah was also named the Player of the Tournament for his brilliance throughout the tournament.

# Babar Azam consults with Australian power-hitting coach Shannon Young

## A Sports

LAHORE: Pakistan's white-ball captain Babar Azam recently met Australia's leading power-hitting coach Shannon Young on Thursday in Lahore.

The meeting took place at a local cricket club in Lahore during Young's private visit to Pakistan. Babar Azam consulted Young about how to enhance power-hitting abilities to cater to the demands of modern-day cricket.

For the unversed, Australia's young aggressive opening batter Jake Fraser-McGurk has credited Shannon Young for his power-hitting prowess. Meanwhile, Young has also worked with established Australian players like Glenn Maxwell and Marnus



Labuschagne.

Babar Azam started physical training at the National Cricket Academy (NCA) last week after returning from the United States of America (USA). The right-handed batter trained for two hours in the scorching heat in a bid to focus on his fitness.

The white-ball captain recently declared his avail-

ability for the upcoming home Test series against Bangladesh.

The star batter, however, will partake in Global T20 Canada 2024 where he will represent Vancouver Knights, prior to the Bangladesh Tests.

The fourth season of the GT20 will run from July 25 until August 11. The

six-team tournament will be played at TD Cricket Arena in Brampton.

For the unversed, Azam has been under fire lately for his batting and captaincy after Pakistan's early exit from the recently concluded T20 World Cup 2024.

The 2009 champions, in a first, were knocked out from the group stage of the tournament, majorly because of their upset defeat against the USA, followed by a gut-wrenching defeat against arch-rivals India.

The back-to-back defeats had put Pakistan on the verge of an early exit from the tournament while the abandonment of the crucial group-stage fixture between the USA and Ireland officially marked the end of their campaign in T20 World Cup 2024.

# Arshad Nadeem departs for Paris to partake in Diamond League

## A Sports

LAHORE: Pakistan's star javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem has departed for Paris from here in the wee hours of Thursday to participate in the Diamond League before the Paris Olympics 2024.

Diamond League will be played in the capital city of France on July 7.

The star athlete shared that he was eager to end Pakistan's medal drought at the Olympics.

"It has been too long that Pakistan has not won any medal at the Olympics, what was it, 1992 that we won it last in hockey? I am aiming to win that medal really, and I will do all that I can in my power to

achieve that," stated Nadeem.

The star athlete resumed his training for the upcoming events last week under his trainer after recovering from a leg injury a few weeks ago.

The leg injury forced Nadeem to withdraw from a couple of events in Finland but the star athlete shared that he is undergoing rehab and is "feeling better".

"I have to go to Paris to play Diamond League, pray that I stay fit," said Nadeem.

"I have been suffering from injuries for a long time, but that is part of the game.

"I played an event a year after the Tokyo Olympics. If I am fit, I will try to do my best throw in the Olympics."



For the unversed, besides clinching the gold medal at the CWG in 2022, Arshad Nadeem also secured the silver medal in

the World Athletics Championship 2023 in Budapest.

He created history by becoming the first Pakistani to earn a medal at the World Athletics Championship.

He also earned his qualification for the Paris Olympics during the World Athletics Championship. The automatic qualifying benchmark for the Paris Olympics was 85.50 meters, which Nadeem breached with an amazing 86.79-meter throw.

The star player also got his hands on the gold medal in the ongoing 34th National Games last year. He proved his mettle once again as he recorded the longest throw of 78.02m in his third attempt.

# CM's Advisor visits Buner, inspects sports facilities, youth center site

## Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: The Advisor to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Sports and Youth Affairs, Syed Fakhir Jahan, made a surprise visit to the District of Buner on July 4, 2024.

During his visit, he inspected the under-construction hockey ground and gymnasium in Swari and directed the officials to speed up the construction work. He also visited the proposed site for the establishment of a district-level youth center in Buner and reviewed the progress of the project.

The Advisor emphasized the importance of completing the sports gymnasium and youth center projects according to the required standards and directed the officials to expedite the process. He also stressed the need for providing modern facilities to the youth of the province, including infrastructure, educational opportunities, incubation centers, IT labs, startup spaces, youth assemblies, and recreational facilities.

The establishment of the youth center in Buner is part of the provincial government's efforts to provide opportunities for the youth to develop their skills and talents. The center will be established on a piece of land owned by the Sports Department and will provide a range of facilities to the youth of the district.

Overall, the visit of the Advisor to Buner reflects the provincial government's commitment to promoting sports and youth development in the province.



# Punjab teams to be selected thru open trials for National Games

## Sports Desk

LAHORE: The open trials will be conducted in all divisions of the province to select Punjab teams for participation in 35th National Games scheduled to be staged at Karachi. DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said this while presiding over an important meeting at National Hockey Stadium on Thursday.

The key meeting was convened to review the preparations of 35th National Games. Besides this, several important decisions were also taken in the meeting.

Director Admin M Kaleem, Director Sports Yasmeeen Akhter, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed, Deputy Director Atar Rehman, Chief Sports Consultant Hafeez Bhatti and other officials attended the important meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Pervez Iqbal said that the Punjab teams in different games will be selected purely on merit and in this regard no negligence will be tolerated. "Different selection committees will also be constituted for holding transparent trials in all divisions of the province," he added.

He informed that the players, who will be selected for National Games, will be given scholarships from Sports Endowment Fund. "Sports Board Punjab will also organize camps for the top level training of Punjab athletes under the supervision of qualified coaches and trainers," he elaborated.

# Zone-VI Score 4th Consecutive Victory in PCB Regional Inter Dist U-19 (Karachi Region) Cricket

## Sports Desk

KARACHI: Zone-VI Consecutive 4th victory to beat Zone-I By 244 runs in the PCB Regional Inter District Under-19 (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament at KCCA Stadium.

The highlights of the days play Brilliant Century by Abdul Rehman Niazi scored 100 and deadly bowling by Abdullah Hanan 5/21, Saifullah Khan 5/22, Arram Ahmed Khan 4/20.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-VI beat Zone-I by 244 runs at KCCA Stadium. Zone-VI 282/4 in allotted 50 overs. Abdul Rehman Niazi 100 10x4, Huzaifa Ahsan 56 5x4 1x6, Abdullah Alam 49, Haroon Arshad 42.

Zone-I 38 all out in 16 3 overs. Farad Akbar 13. Abdullah Hanan (rov) 5/21. Abdul Moiz(rlb) 3/6, Owais Rahim Shah 2/11.

In the 2nd Match at UBL Sports Complex Zone-VII beat Zone-IV by 8 wickets. Zone-IV 79 all out in 26.3overs. Alan Khan 48. Arram Ahmed Khan (rmf) 4/28, Muhammad Usman 2/17, Rohail Nisar 2/29.

Zone-VII 80/2 in 5.5 overs. Ismail 47 4x4 3x6 not out.

In the 3rd Match Zone-II beat Zone-V by 7 runs at Nya Nazimabad. Zone-II 114 all out in 29.4 overs. Umar Farooq 25, Abdullah Waheed 18, M. Ibad Mirza 17, Saifullah Khan (rls) 5/22, Rizwanullah (mf) 4/29.

Zone-V 107 all out in 29.1 overs. M. Hasan Iqbal 40, Susan Usmani 14. M. Ibad Mirza (rls) 4/28, Abdullah Waheed 2/4, Muhammad Ahmed 2/20.

# Schedule of Pakistan-Bangladesh Test series unveiled: sources

## Sports Desk

LAHORE: The schedule of the two-match Test series between Pakistan and Bangladesh has been unveiled on Thursday, according to sources.

The sources revealed that the Bangladesh cricket team will touch down in Pakistan on August 17, while the first Test match will commence on August 21.

The second match of the two-match series will be played from August 30 to September 03.

It is pertinent to mention here that the two-match series between Pakistan and Bangladesh is part of the ICC Test Championship 2023-2025.

Moreover, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Mohsin Naqvi, while speaking to the media in Lahore today, confirmed that the iconic Gaddafi Stadium will not be hosting any match in the upcoming series due to its upgradation.

Consequently, the series will be played in two of these three cities - Multan, Karachi and Rawalpindi.

Pakistan and Bangladesh have squared off in 13 matches since their first meeting in Test cricket during the Asian Test Championship in 2001.

The Green Shirts boast an undefeated record against Bangladesh, securing 12 victories out of 13 games, while one match ended in a draw.





## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Privatization Commission to keep stakeholders on board

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting of the Board of Privatization Commission was held in Islamabad under the Chairmanship of Federal Minister for Privatization, Investment Board and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan to finalize the privatization of various institutions and regarding important issues related to it. Federal Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan directed that all stakeholders should be kept on board for the privatization of national institutions and the Privatization Commission should ensure its full cooperation to the companies coming forward with serious offers. Abdul Aleem Khan said that the Prime Minister wants the privatization of PIA as soon as possible so there should be no further delay while completing the remaining process in this regard. Federal Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan said



that Privatization Commission should attain financial autonomy by reducing its dependence on the Federal Government and ensure increase in its own resources.

Moreover, Federal Minister Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Finance Muhammad Aurangzeb and Minister of Law Azam Nazir Tarrar held a meeting to review the progress on privatization of House Building Finance

Corporation. In this meeting it was agreed that the protection of the employees of the institution will be kept in view while its privatization. The technical and legal aspects of the privatization of the House Building Finance Corporation were also discussed in the meeting and a negotiation session was held with business group interested in the purchase of the House Building Finance Corporation along with the officers of

the Privatization Commission. Federal Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan directed that all proposals for privatization should be opened in front of cameras in the presence of the media so that there should be no question on its transparency. Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and Law Minister Azam Nazir Tarrar also emphasized on the privatization of the House

Building Finance Corporation as soon as possible and directed to keep in view all procedural and legal aspects in this regard.

Earlier, in the 220th meeting of the Privatization Commission Board under the Chairmanship of Federal Minister for Privatization, Investment Board and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan who is also Chairman of Privatization Commission Board approved the proceedings of meetings of 218 and 219th of PCB.

The meeting was told that PCB is in contact with the relevant departments including Finance, Law and Aviation. Moreover, for the appointment of Financial Advisor for Roosevelt Hotel and other projects of privatization advertisements have been given in the international media as well.

In the board meeting, more institutions were shortlisted for privatization while discussions were held to ensure prompt progress in this regard.

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

## Commerce Desk

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

The meeting was attended by Minister for Housing & Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Law & Justice Mr. Azam Nazeer Tarrar, Minister for Economic Affairs Mr. Ahad Khan

Cheema, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission, Chairman SECP, Federal Secretaries and other senior officers of the relevant ministries.

The Committee considered the summaries presented by different Ministries/Divisions for the categorization of their relevant State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) as strategic/essential or otherwise. The Cabinet Committee approved the summaries presented by Power Division, Ministry of Industries & Production, and the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis & Human Resource Development, while the agenda of Petroleum Division was deferred for further deliberations.

## Overseas Pakistanis will benefit from online transfer facility for property: Chaudhry Salik

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis Chaudhry Salik Hussain stated that overseas Pakistanis are ambassadors of the country. Overseas Pakistanis will benefit from an online facility for property transfer. Initially, Pakistanis from the USA, UK, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Italy, and Spain will be able to access this facility. Property transfer complaints will be resolved within 20 days. 2000 IT-skilled people will be sent to Japan. Asylum seekers bring the country into disrepute. Efforts are being made to strengthen the country's institutions.

He expressed these views yesterday during a briefing session at the OPF headquarters. He further stated that Overseas Pakistanis will be able to transfer property from abroad. Most complaints from overseas Pakistanis are related to property transfer. They will now be able to benefit from the online transfer facility. The problems with



the power of attorney will also be resolved. He also stated that Pakistanis should not go abroad, illegally.

He also informed that the Mayor of New York has assured that more and more Pakistanis will be given priority in the paramedical field. Training will be provided to Pakistanis going abroad because they are our ambassadors. Every year, 700,000 to 800,000 Pakistanis go to foreign countries. There are about 20,000 Pakistanis in prisons abroad.

## New York State Assembly Delegation discusses trade enhancement with Jam Kamal

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-profile delegation led by New York State Assembly Deputy Speaker Phil Ramos met with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to explore avenues for enhancing mutual trade interests between the two regions.

The meeting emphasized several key areas for collaboration,



including the establishment of a Sister State relationship between New York and various Pakistani provinces,

which would bolster cooperation in trade, health, and education sectors.

Both parties discussed the

potential signing of agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to formalize and improve trade relations.

Minister Jam Kamal highlighted the importance of multi-level connectivity—people-to-people, business-to-business, and government-to-government—to enhance bilateral relations. He underscored that the

Prime Minister's diverse policy focuses on direct business connectivity and the government's role as a facilitator.

Dr. Ijaz Ahmed, Chairman of the American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC), stated that the Pakistani community is keen to invest in their homeland and called for government facilitation and cooperation to support this initiative.

## Pakistan to host SCO Heads of Governments summit in October: FO

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Heads of Governments meeting in October this year, Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch said on Thursday.

During her weekly press briefing, she stated that before the October summit, there would be a ministerial meeting and multiple rounds of senior officials meetings to concentrate on fostering cooperation in finance, economics, socio-cultural affairs and humanitarian efforts among SCO member countries.

She highlighted that 2024 marks a significant juncture in Pakistan's relationship with the SCO, with Pakistan assuming the rotational Chairmanship of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG), the organization's second most critical decision-making body.

She told the media that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and senior cabinet members recently visited



Kazakhstan for the SCO Council of Heads of State and SCO Plus Summits in Kazakhstan and also Tajikistan to a bilateral visit.

During the SCO Summit in Astana, the prime minister also participated in the inaugural Pakistan-Azerbaijan-Turkey Trilateral Summit.

In Dushanbe, the focus of his meetings was enhancing comprehensive cooperation between Pakistan and Tajikistan on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

During the visit, Pakistan and

Tajikistan signed the Strategic Partnership Agreement, which includes scheduled high-level dialogues involving leaders and Foreign Ministers.

She said the government has allowed medical students from Gaza to complete their medical education in Pakistan. The decision was made on the directions of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar by the Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PMDC) to enable Gaza students to continue their medical educa-

tion in Pakistan on humanitarian grounds.

She said the Palestinian students from Gaza in batches of 20-30 will soon join medical colleges in Pakistan. The decision will enable Gaza students to complete their medical education in Pakistan in the fields of cardiology, orthopaedics, oncology, paediatrics and surgery to address the critical needs in Gaza's health care system.

Commenting on recent International Religious Freedom report, she expressed that unilateral reports assessing other countries' human rights situations were not free from political bias and presented an incomplete and distorted picture. The methodology adopted in preparing these reports and the mandate and expertise of its authors are not transparent, she added.

"It is unfortunate that the report refers to certain incidents in Pakistan last year without highlighting the strong political will shown by the government to hold the perpetrators accountable as well as the remedial

efforts undertaken and the legal and administrative protections in place for religious minorities."

It cannot be viewed from the lens of any single country's social and legal perspective, she said.

She told the media that the Indian authorities' campaign to crush dissent in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) remained relentless. She told a prominent Kashmiri lawyer and former President of the High Court Bar Association, Mian Abdul Qayoom has recently been arrested on fabricated charges. He suffers from multiple chronic ailments and old age.

"His arrest is a clear act of political vendetta. We urge the Indian authorities to release Mian Abdul Qayoom and thousands of other Kashmiri political prisoners, dissenters and human rights defenders."

The spokesperson said Pakistan will continue to extend political, diplomatic and moral support to our Kashmiri people for the just and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir

dispute in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolutions.

Commenting on Pak-India relations, she said Pakistan and India exchanged lists of prisoners in each other's custody in pursuance of the Consular Access Agreement of 2008.

She said Pakistan handed over a list of 254 Indian or believed-to-be-Indian civilian prisoners and fishermen in Pakistani jails. India shared a list of 452 Pakistani or believed-to-be-Pakistani civilian prisoners and fishermen in Indian jails.

A list of 38 missing Pakistani defence personnel, believed to be in India's custody since the wars of 1965 and 1971, was also handed over by Pakistan.

She said Pakistan is committed to addressing these humanitarian matters as a matter of priority. Last year, Pakistan released 485 Indian nationals including 06 civilian prisoners and 479 fishermen.

"We will also continue endeavors to ensure the early return of all Pakistani prisoners in Indian jails. As part of these

efforts, the repatriation of 62 Pakistani prisoners in 2023, and 04 in 2024, have taken place," she said.

The spokesperson highlighted the participation of Pakistan's Special Representative on Afghanistan Ambassador Asif Ali Khan Durrani along with a delegation in the Doha-III meeting of Special Envoys on Afghanistan, held under the UN auspices in Doha from 30 June to 2 July 2024.

She said Ambassador Durrani presented Pakistan's perspective on the current situation in Afghanistan. He underscored Pakistan's support for Afghanistan to alleviate its economic situation and highlighted the threat posed by TTP-led terrorist activities originating from sanctuaries inside Afghanistan.

Vowing stable Afghanistan she said, a bilateral meeting between Pakistan and the Afghan Interim Government was held on 1 July 2024. The two sides exchanged views on key issues of mutual concern, including peace and security.