



Bilawal rues PML-N gov't 'weak strategy' on Budget 2024-25

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has once again criticised its key ally in the Centre, the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), for what he said not taking his party's input in the preparation of the Budget 2024-25.



CM Maryam Nawaz to establish Punjab Development Authority

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif became the first female Chief Minister to visit LDA Headquarters. She approved in principle to establish Punjab Development Authority, and sought a list of all illegal housing schemes in Lahore. She said, "Every housing scheme will be reviewed and decided upon whether to regularise it or not." (Details on Page 8)

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265th Corps Commanders' Conference

Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir presides over the 265th Corps Commanders' Conference held at the GHQ on Friday.



Photo: ISPR

Armed forces, nation aware of digital terrorism by enemies, united in defeating notorious designs

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The 265th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) on Friday underscored that the onslaught of politically motivated digital terrorism, unleashed by conspirators, duly abetted by their foreign cohorts against state institutions was meant to induce despondency in the nation and sow discord through peddling of blatant lies, fake news and propaganda. The armed forces along with the nation were, however, fully aware of all such machinations and stood united and committed in defeating the notorious

designs of the enemies of Pakistan, it said. Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir presided over the CCC here at the General Headquarters, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said. The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs) of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and the citizens who had laid their lives for peace and stability in the country. The conference undertook a comprehensive review of internal and external security situation of the country and had a detailed

discussion on various aspects of the operation "Azm-e-Istehkam", which was aimed at harnessing the national counter-terrorism efforts in a synchronised manner to dismantle the nexus of terrorism and illegal spectrum for enduring stability and economic prosperity. The forum noted with concern the unwarranted criticism by some quarters and deliberate misrepresentation of the vision, only for furthering their vested interests. It also deliberated upon regional security situation, especially Afghanistan and reaffirmed its commitment to

regional peace and security. The forum expressed solidarity with the people of Kashmir and Palestine, and condemned serious human rights violations, war crimes and genocide being perpetrated in Kashmir and Gaza. It affirmed that the military leadership was cognizant of the full spectrum of the challenges and resolved to shoulder its constitutionally mandated responsibilities with support of the resilient people of Pakistan. The forum reiterated to continue full support of ongoing efforts in uplifting the socioeconomic growth and wholeheart-

edly assisting the government in curbing all illegal activities which hamper investors' confidence, economic stability and growth. Expressing full satisfaction on the Pakistan Army's commitment to national security, the COAS stressed upon maintaining high standards of professionalism and operational preparedness. The Pakistan Army had always been fully prepared to thwart all internal and external challenges and play its due role in the stability and prosperity of Pakistan, regardless of the challenges posed, he added.

PTI members to attend APC, says Imran Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PTI members would attend the all-parties conference (APC) on the counter-terrorism operation Azm-i-Istehkam, party founder Imran Khan said on Friday. "PTI members will attend the APC only to listen to the government's stance, as this is a national issue," he said in an informal interaction with journalists at the Adiala Jail. "They will participate for the sake of the country." On Thursday, Aaj News while citing sources reported that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has been considering convening the APC to take the political leadership into confidence over the counter-terrorism campaign 'Operation Azm-i-Istehkam' after returning to Pakistan from the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. It is expected

the premier might summon the APC next week. Last month, PM Shehbaz approved a reinvigorated national counter-terrorism campaign by launching the operation 'Azm-i-Istehkam'. It was approved with the consensus of all stakeholders including provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. "Azm-i-Istehkam will integrate and synergise multiple lines of effort to combat the menaces of extremism and terrorism in a comprehensive and decisive manner," according to a statement issued after the Central Apex Committee on National Action Plan in Islamabad. But opposition parties expressed concerns over the operation and called for taking Parliament into confidence before taking any such decision.

PM's visit to Central Asian states achieves a major milestone: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar Friday said that the government had achieved a milestone with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's recent official visit to Tajikistan and Kazakhstan, especially on diplomatic and economic fronts. "Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his delegation received a splendid reception during his visits to the Central Asian states," the minister said while addressing a news conference. The Pakistani ports were the mainstay of the discussions of the prime minister with the top officials of the Central Asian states that were landlocked countries and had a keen



interest in increasing partnership with Pakistan, he said. The land and railway routes also came under discussion to promote bilateral trade between them, he added. For giving a boost to Pakistan's bilateral trade with the two Central Asian states, the provision of faci-

ties to the business community was also discussed during the meetings, he noted. Tarar said PM Shehbaz Sharif's meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Kazakhstan was held in a welcoming and friendly environment. With President Putin, he said, the discussion encompassed promoting cooperation and partnership between the two countries' diverse economic sectors including agriculture, mining, petrochemicals and others. The delegations exchange was expected between the two countries which would eventually increase the bilateral trade, he added. *Continued on Page 3*

President Zardari congratulates Keir Starmer on victory in UK election

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday congratulated the Labour Party leader Keir Starmer on his victory in the parliamentary election in the United Kingdom. The president wrote on his X timeline that Pakistan looked forward to working with the new UK government to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest. President Zardari expressed the hope that Keir



Starmer would play his role in addressing the shared challenges faced by the world.

PM felicitates Keir Starmer on victory in UK general elections



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday felicitated

Sir Keir Starmer on the landslide victory of the Labour Party in the UK's general elections. In his social media post on X, the prime minister said he looked forward to working closely with the new UK government. "Looking forward to working closely with the new UK government, under Sir Starmer's wise and able leadership, to further strengthen and broaden the Pakistan-UK partnership."

Advance tax not applicable on petrol pumps, says FBR after govt, dealers talks succeed

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: There would be no additional tax on petrol pumps, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) said on Friday night after successful negotiations between the government and the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association. "It is clarified that the provisions of tax collection under Section 236H are not applicable on dealers/retail outlets of oil marketing companies as the income of such person fall under the purview of Final Tax Regime in terms of section 169 of the Ordinance and it is full and final discharge of tax liability by the dealers/retail outlets of OMCs," the FBR said in a memorandum. The Petroleum Division had sought clarification

from the FBR over excluding OMCs from the applicability of Section 236H. The FBR said that the petroleum dealers operate in the regulated sector under a fixed margin and the authority collected income tax from them under Section 156 of the Income Tax Ordinance. The Directorate General Oil sought clarification after petroleum dealers/retail outlets complained that they were facing hardships after the scope of Section 136H was extended to all sectors of the economy through the Finance Act. While reacting to the development, the association thanked the authority, the Petroleum Division Secretary, and the Oil and Gas Regulatory Association chairman for their cooperation.

Islamabad administration cancels NOC for PTI's July 6 rally

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf supporters hold portraits of former prime minister Imran Khan, as they protest against the alleged skewing in national election in Peshawar on March 10, 2024. In a move to "ensure public safety," the Islamabad administration has cancelled the no-objection certificate (NOC) for the PTI rally scheduled to be held in the federal capital on Saturday (today). The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by the chief commissioner who

discussed concerns over public security and the observance of Muharram. In a statement, the Islamabad administration said the safety and security of the public was "their top priority." On Thursday, the district administration granted permission to PTI to hold a rally on July 6 in Turnol, Islamabad. According to the party's social media platforms, the PTI leadership was preparing for the rally and calling upon its supporters to turn up in big numbers for the public gathering.

Power consumers brace for another electric shock

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a move that would further burden the financially strained citizens, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) notified on Friday the Rs3.33 per unit hike in the fuel cost adjustment

charges for May. "The above adjustment of Rs.3.3287/kWh shall be applicable to all the consumer categories except Electric Vehicle Charging Stations (EVCS) and lifeline consumers," Nepra said in a notification. The electric shock comes a day

after the government approved up to 51% or Rs7.12 increase in the per-unit price of electricity from July. As many as 32.5 million consumers would pay an additional amount of at least Rs580 billion in this fiscal year which is over and above the existing cost

of electricity. Many believe such an increase in tariff was due to the mismanagement and wrong energy policies of past three decades. According to the notification, the additional charges would be included in the July electricity bills for consumers. "The said

adjustment shall be shown separately in the consumers' bills on the basis of units billed to the consumers in the month of May 2024. XWDISCOs shall reflect the fuel charges adjustment in respect of May 2024 in the billing month of July 2024," it said.

Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami says PM has no credibility to take economic decisions

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman has said that the government has no public support and no credibility to take economic and important decisions for Public. The Prime Minister proudly announced that the budget was prepared in consultation with the IMF. People cannot be left at the mercy of the situation, if the lava explodes, anarchy will follow, as usual, undemocratic forces can take advantage, they want to start an organized movement, give relief to the people. The agenda of the July 12 sit-in is the increase in expensive electricity, gas, petroleum levy and heavy taxes on the salaried class. Full support of traders is required for the protest movement, before or after the dharna they will call

for shutdown in consultation with the traders, there is no other option but peaceful democratic resistance, democratic freedom in the country, proportional representation and zakat and usher instead of usury. Want a system. He expressed these views while consulting the leaders of business organizations of Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad on the protest movement in Mansoor and later talking to the media. Secretary General Amirul Azim, Secretary Information Qaiser Sharif, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Lahore Ziauddin Ansari Advocate, General Secretary Pakistan Business Forum Khalid Usman and business leader Ejaz Tanveer were also present on the occasion. The business leaders assured Amir Jamaat of full support for the sit-in and shutdown and said

that they appreciate the decision of the Jamaat-e-Islami leadership to fight for people's rights, and the consultation will continue in the future. Hafiz Naemur Rahman said that the budget comes every fortnight in the country, the rulers are not ready to reduce their privileges, taxes are not imposed on the landlords, the demand for electricity decreased when the people installed solar panels. The benefit is going to the IPPs instead of the public and the industry, private companies are getting billions of rupees in capacity charges even without generating electricity. Military civil bureaucracy, politicians, family parties are lavishing on state resources, the country has been destroyed in 77 years, those who are in power are responsible, now we have to struggle,



there is no other option, reduce electricity prices. There should be, taxes on salaried employees should be reduced, taxes on exports should be abolished. He said that at this time the stage of saving the country is facing, we

are not doing politics for personal reasons, our politics is worship, we have to get people out of despair, businessmen should help us, our platform is here for them, start membership drive. Jamaat-e-Islami will emerge as a major

power in the coming days. Amir Jamaat said that at this time no one is talking about the people except Jamaat-e-Islami. Why didn't we get the share? Jamaat-e-Islami is an organized movement, our unity is

with people, traders, workers, farmers and youth, raising voice for women's rights. He appealed to the businessmen to unite and start the struggle for rights, the country cannot be left at the mercy of the imposed ruling elite.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Pacaci and others cutting the ribbon during launching ceremony of 1st ever environment friendly E-Buses in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

TMA, village and neighborhood council protest against non-receipt of funds in Abbottabad

Sohail Abbasi

ABBOTTABAD: Abbottabad village and neighborhood council chairmen staged a protest against non-receipt of funds to local body members, threatened to lock the offices of VCs, Tehsil and Assistant Director if their demands were not accepted. The members of Circle Tanaloo Tehsil Council have also decided to respond to the call of the Provincial Action Committee. They demanded from the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to restore the powers of the local body and release funds. Tehsil Councilor Sardar Saeed,



Zahid Khan, Salim Khan, Aftab Ahmed, Waqar Gul, Muhammad Iqbal, Waseem Khan, Dildar Awan, Aamir Fazal, Nazir

Mughal, Sher Khan, Naseer Khan, Raja Naseer, Wali Rahman, Raja Zeeshan, Sikandar Ayaz, Sardar Shabbir and others announced a joint struggle without party affiliation and gave a deadline to the provincial government. Village and neighborhood chairmen further said that two years of the local council have been wasted. Funds should be given. The protestors said that on one hand the government is lamenting the lack of funds while on the other hand it has increased its benefits and salaries. The TMA has been demanded to be held accountable. Earlier, the members of Tehsil Council took out a rally and raised slogans against the government for not getting funds. Various demands were listed including restoring 2019.

Shah pays eulogizing tributes to Shaheed Burhan Wani and his colleagues on their martyrdom anniversary

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior Hurriyat leader and chairman Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party Shabir Ahmed Shah has paid eulogizing tributes to Shaheed Burhan Muzaffar Wani and his associates on their martyrdom anniversary being held on 08 July.

In his message from Tihar jail, the incarcerated leader, while Lauding the supreme sacrifices of the martyred commander and his other associates who embarrassed martyrdom while fighting the occupation forces on the day, said, "Their unparalleled sacrifices for the freedom movement will serve as a beacon to illuminate our pathway to freedom".

Reiterating Kashmiris' pledge to uphold the martyrs' mission, the jailed leader appealed the Kashmiri masses to observe the martyred commander's

anniversary with a renewed commitment to continue ongoing freedom struggle till they achieve their cherished goal of freedom from India's occupation.

Terming Shaheed Burhan Wani as the icon of resistance, Shah said, "Shaheed Burhan Wani left behind a proud legacy that will continue to inspire the Kashmir's incoming generations".

"The way he rejuvenated the freedom movement in his short life will serve as an inspiration for the coming generations", he maintained.

He said that Wani family has set a great example of courage and commitment towards the national cause.

"The martyrs of Kashmir and their supreme sacrifices can never be forgotten", Shah said, adding that the memories of those children, young and elders were still fresh in our hearts who



faced the deadly bullets and pellets during the mass uprising triggered after the martyrdom Burhan and his colleagues.

"Thousands of martyrs, who laid down their precious lives during the ongoing liberation struggle, will continue to live in our hearts and minds", he said, adding their memories won't fade away from our minds.

Shah regrettably noted that during the 2016 uprising hundreds of polit-

ical activists especially the young boys who were arrested and booked under draconian laws continue to languish in different jails in and outside Kashmir.

Urging the international community to take effective notice of the matter, Shah said that the world bodies must take up the issue with government of India to help secure early release of all Kashmiri prisoners who have been detained before and after 5th August 2019.

Reiterating his party's call for resuming talks to find out an amicable solution to the Kashmir conflict, Shah said that it was high time that the Indian government should revisit its policy and create a conducive environment wherein all the stakeholders could sit together to bring about a solution to the lingering dispute that has been the main cause and consequence of bloodshed and unrest in the region.

RPO Sahiwal Visited At Offices and Chinese Engineers Residents

Javed Shoukat Waince

SAHIWAL: Sahiwal Regional Police Officer Mehboob Rasheed visited the offices and residences of Chinese residents in Sahiwal and instructed to improve the security. Regional Police Officer Mehmoood Rasheed and District Police Officer Faisal Shehzad made a detailed visit to check the security of the Chinese working on various projects in Sahiwal. The police officers said that in the context of ongoing development projects in Sahiwal region, the security of Chinese residents and citizens is the first priority. The head is performing.



The District Police and Special Protection Unit (SPU) are carrying out the security of residences, offices, working sites of Chinese citizens with utmost zeal. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a great example of Pakistan-China friendship. He said that strict implementation of the SOPs issued by the Home Department is being ensured for the security of foreign nationals. He further said that a safe environment is being provided to all foreign nationals. And foolproof security is being provided to offices, working sites and residences. Movement of foreigners is being made foolproof by route clearance and security.

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Nishtar University workshop on endoscopy, colonoscopy and endoscopic ultrasound

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A Two-day Endoscopy, colonoscopy and endoscopic ultrasound workshop was organized under the auspices of Nishtar Hospital Multan Department of Stomach and Liver, in which more than 8 doctors were trained in endoscopy and colonoscopy. This workshop will be held under the leadership of Associate Professor Dr. Yasir Abbas Zaidi, Head of Gastroenterology Department, Nishtar Hospital, Multan. Assistant professors Dr. Shehryar Kanjo and Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Sanwan of the Department of Stomach and Liver Nishtar Hospital performed the duties of the course director. In this workshop, the local and foreign gastroenterologists of the Department of Stomach and Liver, Prof. Dr. Ghayas-ul-Nabi Tayyab, Dr. Ghulam Mujtaba and Dr. Muslim Ateeq gave special lectures. Participated and conducted various advanced courses. On this occasion, the first endoscopic ultrasound machine of South Punjab was inaugurated by Acting Vice-Chancellor Nishtar University Professor Dr. Khalid Hussain Qureshi and Principal Nishtar Medical College Dr. Rashid Qamar Rao. Poor patients will benefit and more help in diagnosis and treatment of difficult gastrointestinal diseases.



At the end of the workshop certificates were distributed to the guests and participants of the workshop.

Three killed, seven injured in remote control explosion near Takht Bhai bridge

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

MARDAN, TAKHTBHAI: A remote control explosion occurred near the Takht Bhai Jalala bridge on a mobile vehicle of an ASP under training as a result of which three people were killed and seven people including two police personnel were seriously injured. DPO Mardan arrived at the hospital along with a heavy police force and started a search operation and investigation. As soon as a large number of people reached the scene and the hospital, according to the incident, on Friday near Jalala bridge in Takhtbhai area, under training ASP Hamid Ehsan Shergarh was coming to Mardan from Jalala bridge. Two security guards constables Bilal Khan and Gulab Syed on duty along with ASP were injured in the blast, while Sher Aslam Khan son of Ghatand Suknawadi, Samiur Rehman son of Khaista Rehman Sukna Shringal who was riding in a high-speed Ching Chi were injured. Kale Takhtbhai Orusim Khan son of Muhammad Yasan Gujargarai died. A nine-year-old girl named Lababa, daughter of Bilal Ahmed, Sakna Gadar, child of Khashar, son of Sardar Khan, aged eight years old, resident of Hathian, Masma Noor Jahan, wife of Ayub Khan, resident of Gadar Gul, Jana, resident of Gadar Sawaladhir and Yusuf Khan Jalala, are among the victims of the explosion. But there is also a police post. As soon as the explosion was reported, DPO Mardan Zahoore Bafrafridi reached the spot along with heavy bomb disposal squad and jammers and started a search operation and started further investigation. All police officers, including the PO, refrained from giving details.

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PTI: From Hardships to Hope

Faisal Vadha had warned six months prior that PTI's iconic election symbol would be taken away. However, PTI, preoccupied with the aftermath of the May 9th incidents and the subsequent arrests of their leaders and workers, did not heed this warning or take preventive measures. Consequently, they lost their election symbol.

In another interview, after a dramatic gesture of prostrating on the footpath near the Supreme Court, Vadha warned PTI of even harder times ahead. But when confronted a PTI leader about Vadha's another horrific prediction, he replied that they are already in deep trouble their mandate was stolen, they deprived of governance in Federation and provinces, their leader is incarcerated, their party is in shatters, what else could be additional hardships which could befallen on PTI? Same was the question in others' minds. But the answer came in the shape of the Punjab Government's decision to file a case of high treason against the PTI leadership.

In an article titled "What was Wrong with Imran's Video on X," I pointed out that the video could not have solicited the angry reaction from the Pakistan Army, if it had merely attributed the reasons for the surrender of the Pakistan Army to the Indian Army to poor leadership, cowardice, lack of sound planning, logistic failures, and compromising the supply chain, without accusing the army of committing high treason as alleged in the video. This lack of diligence on PTI's part may cost them heavily. The Punjab Government has used this video and the incidents of May 9 as a basis to lodge a case of high treason against the PTI leadership and pursue it relentlessly, creating another reason to keep Imran Khan in jail,

if he somehow succeeds in securing his release in over 200 other cases.

The second indication of PTI's increasing troubles came on July 4th, when the scheduled meetings between the PTI leadership and Imran Khan were canceled without any explanation. Additionally, Imran Khan's freedom to communicate with his party leaders was restricted. When the jail administration was asked about the reason for these actions, they cited orders from the "high command." When pressed further on who constituted the "high command," they ambiguously replied that PTI knew them very well.

The fourth issue PTI is facing is the delay in the constitution of the Election Tribunals, even after five months have passed since the elections. This delay, successfully employed by the government, highlights PTI leadership's failure to use their legal expertise to ensure the timely notification of these tribunals. Instead, the ordinance regarding the tribunal's composition was challenged in the Lahore High Court and subsequently in the Supreme Court. In compliance with Supreme Court orders, further proceedings have been postponed until August 2024. This delay aligns with the government's objectives to buy time and allow the opposition to settle with the current election outcomes, rather than pressing for redressal of their election grievances.

To add insult to injury, the party is facing steep criticism from former PTI stalwarts like Ch. Fawad Hussain, Mr. Zaidi, and other leaders for lacking a concrete and coherent political strategy

to secure the release of the party founder. According to these critics, in the absence of a political strategy, which is the current situation, there is no chance of Mr. Imran Khan's release in the near or distant future.

Interestingly, PTI's leadership failures at home were compensated by its gains abroad.

The overseas party supporters demonstrated exactly what is lacking in PTI's current leadership in Pakistan. They set an initially elusive target, built strong teams across the United States and successfully convinced Congressman Rieh McCormick of Georgia and Congressman Dan Kildee of Michigan, along with over 100 co-sponsors from both parties, to introduce a resolution demanding an independent investigation into allegations of election irregularities and the release of Imran Khan. The resolution passed with unprecedented success, receiving 368 votes in favor and only 7 against.

This remarkable achievement was widely acknowledged by the media, analysts, and commentators worldwide. Even PML(N) veteran leader Mr. Irfan Siddique termed it a significant accomplishment for PTI, unparalleled in Pakistan's history.

The U. S. chapter of PTI did not stop there, but inundated the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention with complaints, dossiers, and evidence. Their relentless efforts culminated in a significant achievement: convincing the UN Working Group to declare that the detention of former Prime Minister Imran Khan was "arbitrary" and violated

several international laws and norms. The working group concluded that Khan's prosecution lacked legal basis and appeared politically motivated to disqualify him from running for office besides expressing the concerns about the broader campaign of political repression against Khan and his party.

Another pivotal element in the puzzle surrounding PTI's challenges and potential emancipation is the ongoing case sub-judice before the Supreme Court of Pakistan, SIC versus Election Commission. From observing the proceedings, it is abundantly clear that neither the Chief Justice nor the brute power of the state will influence or scuttle the judgment of any member of the larger bench. We can expect a decision that may surprise both the executive and the government alike. This decision is likely to have a significant impact on the composition of the National and Provincial Assemblies, and consequently, on the composition of the government in the Federation and the province of Punjab.

It goes without saying that both the government and the supra-executive are also monitoring the historic proceedings of the Supreme Court and have likely already begun developing contingency plans to salvage their majority in the National Assemblies and their governments.

It is up to PTI to set aside their internal petty and egoistic differences and develop their own contingency plans to reap the maximum benefits from the energy generated in their favor by the U. S. Congress, the United Nations Working Group, and the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

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

A digital corridor helping Pakistani young entrepreneurs

Chinese e-commerce companies are helping Pakistani young entrepreneurs to expand their businesses across the country.

"Our platform could be said to be the Pakistani version of Pinduoduo. As an e-commerce platform targeting price-sensitive users, groceries and daily necessities are within our scope," Fahad Raja, co-founder of Pakistani e-commerce platform Deal Kart, introduced himself at the EuroAsia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum held in Beijing.

"As a global giant, Pinduoduo has not yet started operations in Pakistan. But that's not a problem, we are building a Pinduoduo for ourselves." Raja said that Chinese companies, especially e-commerce companies, are closely related to his career, CEN reported.

"In terms of payment, logistics, technology and the like, Chinese companies have attracted global attention, making great achievements. For us from emerging markets, there are too many experiences and even too little time to learn, thus more connections are in urgent need." □

Another young entrepreneur, Shahada Salam, mentioned that CPEC ensures the transportation efficiency of Pakistan's supply chain.

"In my country, most of the hardware comes from China, such as biometric equipment needed to solve security issues, thus this corridor is very helpful for the timely supply of hardware and technology products."

Nowadays, more and more Chinese companies have set up offices in the special economic zone located in my hometown, Islamabad, including manufacturing and supply chain departments. We are also inviting a large number of Chinese technology companies to set up offices there, so that we could better assist them expand their business throughout the country, and then from Pakistan to the Middle East, Europe, Africa... In the future, this will become an amazing 'digital corridor'.

A total of more than 200 representatives from all walks of life in China and Pakistan attended the forum, all of whom looking forward to a more shining digital future that both two countries can benefit from.

Addressing on the Global Digital Economy Conference 2024, Shaza Fatima Khwaja, Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication of Pakistan, said that the global landscape has witnessed a digital revolution in recent years, positioning the IT sector as a cornerstone of economic development, innovation, and social transformation.

Recognizing the immense potential of this sector, "both Pakistan and China have made substantial strides in harnessing its capabilities", she added.



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

Motives behind Initiating Operation Azm-e-Istehkam - III

Terrorism has profoundly impacted Pakistan for decades, exacting a heavy toll on its people, economy, and social fabric. Its eradication is not merely a priority but a necessity for Pakistan's stability, development, and international reputation. Terrorism directly threatens national security by destabilizing regions, undermining governance, and instilling fear among citizens. Militant groups, often operating from remote and cross-border safe havens, challenge state authority through targeted violence and bombings. The economic repercussions are severe, deterring foreign investment, disrupting business activities, and diverting resources from essential sectors like infrastructure, healthcare, and education to security and rehabilitation efforts.

wide have undertaken significant operations to address terrorism within their borders. These efforts vary widely in their scope, strategies, and outcomes, reflecting diverse geopolitical circumstances and security challenges.

Following the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States initiated the global "War on Terror." This extensive campaign included military actions in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime, which harbored Al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the attacks. The objective was to dismantle terrorist networks, promote democratic governance, and stabilize the region. However, the prolonged engagement underscored the complexities of nation-building and the difficulties of countering insurgencies in a volatile environment. In response to escalating terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa, particularly Mali, France initiated Operation Barkhane in 2014. The operation aimed to combat jihadist groups affiliated with Al-Qaeda and ISIS, providing logistical support, intelligence sharing, and military assistance to regional partners. Despite successes in disrupting terrorist networks, Operation Barkhane underscores the importance of regional cooperation and addressing underlying socio-economic grievances to achieve lasting stability. In response to the Boko Haram insurgency, Nigeria launched Operation Lafiya Dole in

2015. The operation, supported by regional partners and international assistance, aimed to reclaim territory held by Boko Haram, rescue abducted civilians, and promote stability in the northeastern region. While progress has been made in weakening Boko Haram's operational capacity, challenges persist in addressing humanitarian crises and promoting reconciliation among affected communities. Russia has also conducted extensive counter-terrorism operations in the North Caucasus region, particularly in Chechnya and Dagestan, to suppress separatist movements. These examples show that no country allows terrorists to destroy its peace and attack the innocent people.

Peace and stability is very important for development and prosperity of the countries. Peace is not merely the absence of conflict but a fundamental prerequisite for sustainable development and prosperity within any nation. Across the globe, countries that have achieved significant economic growth and social progress have often done so in environments characterized by political stability, social cohesion, and robust institutions. Peace lays the foundation for economic growth by creating a conducive environment for investment, entrepreneurship, and trade. In peaceful societies, businesses thrive, job opportunities increase, and infrastructure development flourishes. Investors are more willing to commit resources to long-term projects, knowing that their investments are protected from the risks posed by conflict and instability.

To be continued

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

Guardians of Peace: Pakistan's Azm-e-Istehkam Operation Ensures Stability

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

In a world where peace is paramount, Pakistan's Azm-e-Istehkam operation stands out as a beacon of hope. This operation, known as the Guardians of Peace, plays a vital role in ensuring stability and security within the nation. The Azm-e-Istehkam operation, launched by Pakistan's armed forces, aims to combat terrorism and ensure the safety of its citizens. Through strategic military actions and intelligence operations, this initiative has successfully targeted extremist groups, dismantling their networks and preventing potential threats. By maintaining a strong presence in volatile regions, the Guardians of Peace have been able to restore a sense of security and stability in areas that were once plagued by violence and unrest. The dedication and bravery of the personnel involved in this operation have been instrumental in safeguarding the nation and fostering a climate of peace.



Pakistan, a country facing numerous security challenges, has been striving to ensure stability and peace within its borders. In this pursuit, the Pakistani military has been playing a crucial role in safeguarding the sovereignty of the nation. One such operation that has been instrumental in maintaining peace and security in the country is the Azm-e-Istehkam operation. Azm-e-Istehkam, which translates to "resolve of steadfastness," is an ongoing military operation launched by the Pakistani armed forces in the tribal areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. The operation initiated in response to the increasing threats posed by terrorist organizations operating in the region. These groups, including the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Al-Qaeda have been responsible for numerous attacks on civilians, security forces, and government installations.

The main objective of the Azm-e-Istehkam operation is to eliminate these militant groups and restore peace and stability in the region. The operation has been successful in targeting and dismantling the infrastructure and networks of these terrorist organizations. Through targeted military strikes, intelligence-based operations, and coordinated ground offensives, the Pakistani military has significantly weakened the capabilities of these groups. Moreover, the operation has also focused on winning

the hearts and minds of the local population by providing humanitarian assistance, building infrastructure, and promoting socio-economic development in the region. Pakistan military has shown firm determination and commitment in the face of numerous challenges, demonstrating their dedication to protecting the nation from internal and external threats. The threat of terrorism remains a significant challenge for Pakistan. The country continues to face security threats from various terrorist groups, both local and foreign. Therefore, it is essential for the Pakistani government and military to remain vigilant and continue their efforts to counter the menace of terrorism.

Pakistan's Azm-e-Istehkam operation exemplifies the solid commitment to safeguarding the nation and its people. Through their relentless efforts in combating terrorism and maintaining stability, these guardians have proven to be instrumental in upholding peace within the region. As they continue to stand as protectors against threats, their dedication serves as a beacon of hope. Azm-e-Istehkam operation is a testament to the resilience and resolve of the Pakistani armed forces in safeguarding the country's security and sovereignty. The guardians of peace in Pakistan have been able to ensure stability in the region and protect the nation from external threats. It is imperative for all stakeholders to continue working together to build a peaceful and prosperous future for Pakistan.

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Xi kicks off state visit to Tajikistan, eyeing new heights in bilateral cooperation

Xinhua

DUSHANBE: Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived here on Thursday night, commencing his state visit to Tajikistan following a busy schedule at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Tajik President Emomali Rahmon welcomed Xi at the Dushanbe International Airport with a grand ceremony, where around 1,500 Tajik youths in traditional attire dancing and waving the national flags of China and Tajikistan.

Upon arrival, Xi expressed his anticipation for discussions with Rahmon to formulate new plans and arrangements for the development of China-Tajikistan relations in light of the new circumstances.

Xi said with concerted efforts from both countries, this visit is expected to be a complete success, elevating all-round cooperation between China and Tajikistan to new heights.

President Xi's state visit to Tajikistan will inject new and strong momentum into developing and strengthening the



comprehensive strategic partnership between the two countries, Rahmon told Xinhua in a recent interview.

Rahmon also said the China-Tajikistan relations have entered a new historical stage, opening up new prospects for extensive cooperation.

Recent years have seen close interactions between the two heads of state. During Xi's visit to Tajikistan in 2019, he was awarded the Order of the Crown

from Rahmon in Dushanbe. Both countries pledged to build a China-Tajikistan development community and security community.

In May 2023, during the China-Central Asia Summit, the two leaders jointly announced the building of a China-Tajikistan community with a shared future featuring everlasting friendship, solidarity and mutual benefit.

"These initiatives and joint decisions to create a community have

already yielded tangible results," said Abdugaffor Abdujabbor, former head of the International Relations Department of Tajikistan's Culture Ministry.

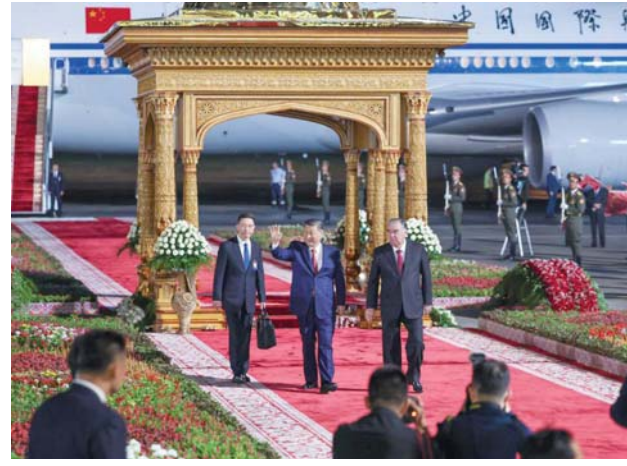
Abdujabbor highlighted two China-assisted edifices on Rudaki Avenue, the main thoroughfare of Dushanbe: the government building and the Parliament building, referring to them as new landmarks of the capital.

"This is the fruit of the friendship between our two leaders," he told Xinhua. "They share a great sympathy, pure friendship, and mutual understanding."

"Xi's words are matched by his actions; what he said is always felt in practice," he added.

Tajikistan is a neighbor of China. Trade between China and Tajikistan doubled from 2013 to 2023. China has become the largest source of investment in Tajikistan and its second-largest trading partner.

Tajikistan was among the first countries to support the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) proposed by Xi in 2013 and sign related cooperation agreements with China. Under the BRI framework, a



series of China-Tajikistan cooperation and aid projects have been implemented in key areas such as infrastructure, metallurgy, energy, cement, and the cotton textile industry.

"The space for practical cooperation between China and Tajikistan is broad, and the prospects are promising," Chinese Ambassador to Tajikistan Ji Shumin told Xinhua.

The two countries firmly support each other on issues concerning their core interests, Ji

in China, in the study of the Chinese experience of modernization, Chinese culture and language," said Abdurakhim Juraev, professor at the Tajik State University of Law, Business and Politics in Khujand.

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of Tajik students attending Confucius Institutes in their country or studying in China. Take the Confucius Institute at the Tajik National University as an example. Since its establishment in August 2008, the institute has trained nearly 39,000 Chinese language learners.

The Luban Workshop in Tajikistan, co-founded by China's Tianjin Urban Construction Management and Vocation Technology College and Tajik Technical University, has been training skilled professionals, contributing to Tajikistan's vocational education, industrialization, and modernization efforts.

The visit of President Xi, said Juraev, will give new impetus to cooperation between the two countries and will contribute to the overall prosperity of Central Asia.

Meeting

Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme, and Major General (R) Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chairman PTA, during a meeting at PTA Headquarters Islamabad to discuss measures for safeguarding BISP beneficiaries on Friday.



Photo: Online

Kazakhstan Highlights Afforestation Efforts at Global Conference

News Desk

ASTANA: Advisor to President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Special Representative on International Environmental Cooperation Zulfiya Suleimenova emphasized Kazakhstan's commitment to biodiversity and ecosystem preservation, essential for sustainable development, at the first International Conference on Afforestation and Reforestation (CIAR-1).

Held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, the conference highlighted Kazakhstan's achievements, including increasing forest cover from 3% to 5% and expanding protected natural areas to nearly 11% of the country's territory.

Kazakhstan plans to plant two billion trees by 2027, with 843 million planted between 2021 and 2023. Efforts to restore degraded lands include establishing saxaul plantations on 1.1 million hectares of the Aral Sea's dried bed and planting 15 million trees in urban areas.

According to a statement from the Embassy of Kazakhstan to Ethiopia, Suleimenova stressed that all afforestation

activities in Kazakhstan adhere to scientific recommendations and environmental requirements.

"A national headquarters has been created to analyze and control these works. Public monitoring of tree planting is carried out using an interactive map," she said.

On the sidelines of the conference, Suleimenova held bilateral meetings with President of Congo Denis Sassou-Nguesso, Congo's Minister of Forestry Rosalie Matondo, and Minister of Environment, Sustainable Development, and the Congo Basin Arlette Soudan-Nonault. These discussions focused on bilateral cooperation and international collaboration on issues of mutual interest.

Experts at the conference warned about the catastrophic consequences of uncontrolled deforestation on the climate, the planet, and human health, highlighting the urgency of achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Conference chairman Sassou-Nguesso called on the international community to unite in addressing afforestation,

reforestation, and sustainable economic development, emphasizing the importance of preserving forests and biodiversity to combat climate change.

The conference concluded with a Declaration urging the UN General Assembly to include this issue in its upcoming session in New York. Adopting the Global Strategy on Afforestation and Reforestation underscored the vital role of forests in climate change mitigation and sustainable management, aiming to mobilize financial resources and improve access to science, technology, and innovation to support global afforestation and reforestation efforts.

The conference, organized by the Congolese government, the African Union Commission, the UN Forum on Forests, and the African Forest Forum, brought together over 2,000 delegates, including heads of state and government, representatives from regional and subregional political and economic organizations, the global scientific community, international forest, climate and biodiversity organizations, NGOs, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

President of Uzbekistan familiarizes himself with development work in Shusha

News Desk

TASHKENT: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev arrived in the city of Shusha to participate in the informal summit of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS).

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev welcomed the head of Uzbekistan.

Together with other heads of delegations from OTS member countries, under the guidance of the Azerbaijani president, they reviewed the reconstruction work being carried out in Shusha.

Shusha is considered the

main jewel of Karabakh, the center of Caucasian art, and the cradle of Azerbaijani music. This city is the birthplace of many prominent figures in science, culture, and art. Since 2021, Shusha has held the status of the cultural capital of Azerbaijan, and in 2023 it was declared the cultural capital of the Turkic world.

This year, the cities of Khiva and Shusha became sister cities.

The guests visited a residential complex that was built in Shusha for the first time in the last thirty-two years. The area of this complex, consisting of 23 buildings, is about 8



hectares.

The leaders then familiarized

themselves with the project and the construction progress of a

new mosque, whose foundation was laid in 2021.

The President of Azerbaijan briefed the guests on the work carried out and the future plans for the development of the city's infrastructure.

The presidents also visited the Govhar Agha Mosque, the first mosque built in Shusha in the 19th century. The guests highly appreciated the results of the restoration of this historic site.

The working visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Azerbaijan continues, and the main events of the OTS summit will take place tomorrow, on 6 July.

Pakistani envoy delivers masterclass on science diplomacy

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS:

Ambassador of Pakistan to the European Union, Belgium and Luxembourg Amna Baloch on Friday delivered a masterclass on science diplomacy at the Barcelona Science and Technology Diplomacy Summer School.

In her lecture at Barcelona Science and Technology Diplomacy Hub, the ambassador elaborated on the challenges and opportunities besides showcasing Pakistan's landscape and avenues of engagement.

The Barcelona Science and Technology Diplomacy Hub is a pioneering nonprofit public-private partnership that positions Barcelona as a global lab in science diplomacy for cities around the world with a mandate to elevate the role of science, technology and cities in foreign policy.



Digital ads trucks flash messages around Washington demanding end to India's occupation of Kashmir

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: Digital advertising trucks Thursday displayed around this capital city pointed messages like "Kashmiris Reject Indian Occupation: UN Resolutions Only Solution" on July 04, the American Independence Day.

The Trucks were rented by the World Kashmir Awareness Forum, a Washington-based advocacy body, and put on road as most Americans were out of their homes, flocking to parks, parades, fireworks shows and barbecues for a brief respite from the daily drumbeat of unsettling news at home and abroad.

The holiday, which marks the July 4 signing of the Declaration of Independence from Britain in 1776, is a day when Americans traditionally celebrate with displays of old-fashioned patri-

otism.

The electronic screens on the trucks carried messages such as: "Americans Celebrate Independence Day: Kashmiris Treat Indian Occupation with Dismay;" "No Election, No Selection: UN Resolution the Only Solution;" "Freedom of Kashmir only Solution: Enslavement Not an Option;" "Indian Forces on Killing Spree: Kashmir Need to Be Set Free;" "Kashmir Facing Existential Threat: United States Needs to Act;" "India Involved in Genocide: Kashmiris Demand Plebiscite;" and "Freedom For All: Freedom for Kashmir."

Digital advertising trucks are considered to be the most effective way to spread a message as the brightly lit words on the screens catch attention of the people walking on the streets and those coming in and out of buildings.

The route of digital trucks in Washington included: National Mall where tens of thousands of visitors were gathered to celebrate the Independence Day, the Capitol Hill; The Washington Monument; The White House; Museums; and various embassies.

In a statement, Dr. Ghulam N. Mir, WKAF President, said, "We Americans of Kashmiri ancestry are grateful to the United States for having rendered moral and diplomatic support at the international level in our struggle against Indian occupation since 1947."

"July 4th," he said, "is especially relevant to Kashmiri Americans as we continue to relish the fruits of complete freedom here in the US. Our people back in the colonized Kashmir keep encouraging us here in this country to cherish its independence while

they resist to exist under a dehumanizing regime."

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, WKAF's Secretary General, warned, "Today Kashmir is at the brink of genocide."

In this regard, Dr. Fai urged world leaders to use their moral authority to persuade the violators of the international laws to abide by these principles.

"Today, on its Independence Day, the United States should support the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people as it is in conformity with the statement made at the UN General Assembly by President John F. Kennedy on September 25, 1961 "That continuing tide of self-determination, which runs so strong, has our sympathy and our support...My Nation was once a colony, and we know what colonialism means; the exploitation and subjugation of the weak



by the powerful, of the many by the few, of the governed who have given no consent to be governed, whatever their continent, their class, or their colour."

Dr. Imtiaz Khan, a Kashmiri-American scholar, said that Americans of Kashmiri origin, though limited in numbers consider themselves extremely fortunate to be the citizens of this

country. "We feel highly indebted to this country for the magnanimity in providing fair opportunity to succeed and realize our dreams. But while we are enjoying the benefits of freedom of expression in USA, we are pained by the repression and gross injustice in Indian occupied Kashmir, that is the place of our origin."

Dr. Khan added that since year 2019, when Indian government by act of parliament abrogated article 370 and 35A, a sinister design to change the demographics of the region is being actively pursued. Hundreds of thousands of fundamentalist Hindus from India are being provided domicile certificates and settled in the region. The goal is to change the Muslim majority character of Kashmir that can lead to outcome in their favour down the road, in case plebiscite is held.

Sardar Zulfiqar Roshan Khan, a Kashmiri-American activist, Sardar Shoaib Irshad, Joint Secretary, Kashmir American Welfare Association (KAWA) and Sardar Zubair Khan also called for implementation of UN resolutions on Kashmir to usher in peace and stability in the region.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of Cabinet Committee on Energy on Friday.



Photo: PID

Cabinet body approves six months' extension in Refinery Policy 2023

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Energy, which met under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday, approved the extension of six months in the Refinery Policy 2023 regarding the upgradation of the existing refineries.

The committee directed the Ministry of Petroleum to take into confidence the oil refineries established in the country and prepare a comprehensive plan for their upgradation on

a priority basis.

The committee was also presented with a detailed report on the circular debt of the power sector from July 2023 to May 2024.

The report stated that the volume of the power sector's circular debt was Rs 2,655 billion till May 2024.

The committee also approved the Standardized Security Package Document under the Power Policy 2015 for small water projects of the private sector.

This initiative is aimed at

promoting private investment in the electricity sector and quickly resolving the tariff and other issues.

The prime minister decided to resolve complaints regarding the electricity supply of the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

He constituted a committee to prepare a plan of action to ensure the uninterrupted supply of electricity in Gilgit-Baltistan.

The committee also approved setting up a support unit with two-year tenure to increase the efficiency of elec-

tricity distribution companies, prevent electricity theft and timely collection of bills.

After the Federal Cabinet's approval, the first support unit would be established for the Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO).

The committee also approved an incentive package for recovery of unpaid and overdue electricity bills.

Under the package, rewards would be given to the personnel of law enforcement agencies and officials of DISCOs for the recovery of unpaid and overdue

electricity bills.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Dr Musadik Malik, Ahsan Iqbal and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of State Ali Pervaiz Malik, Coordinator to the PM Rana Ehsaan Afzal, NEPA Chairman Waseem Mukhtar, OGRA Chairman Masroor Khan, and other high officials.

Fazalur Rehman, Shahid Khaqan term budget 'IMF influenced'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and chief Awaam Pakistan—a newly formed political party—Shahid Khaqan Abbasi called on Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman.

The JUI-F spokesperson said that both the leaders Pakistan's political situation. "The leaders expressed concern over the increasing inflation and lawlessness," the spokesperson added.

The JUI-F spokesperson said that Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman also expressed reservations about the budget 2024-25.

He said that both the



leaders were of the view that budget for the fiscal year 2024-25 is not for the people, but is 'based on' Interna-

tional Monetary Fund (IMF) instructions.

The JUI-F spokesperson also reiterated that the party

would not accept 'fake' general elections 2024.

Earlier, Maulana Fazlur Rehman demanded new general elections in Pakistan, rejecting the February 8 polls as 'unacceptable'.

Addressing a press conference, Fazlur Rehman claimed that the government has 'no powers' to address their concerns and that the elections held on February 8 were not transparent.

He demanded that the right to vote be restored to the people and fresh elections be held under a transparent system.

Fazl also referred to the US Congress's recent resolution on Pakistan's elections, saying that it has raised questions about the legitimacy of the polls. He questioned the passage of such resolution, asking whether this was a diplomatic failure.

Ali Amin Gandapur warns against suppressing 'Haqeeqi Azadi'

Correspondent

MANSEHRA: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur on Friday warned his political opponents against suppressing 'Haqeeqi Azadi (True Freedom)', vowing that PTI would resist any move in this regard.

Addressing a public gathering in Mansehra, the PTI leader declared that anyone who tries to become Gen (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa will be labeled a traitor. The minister also warned that those who try to violate the Constitution will be hanged and made an example of.

Ali Amin Gandapur concluded his speech by saying that he is waiting for just one call from PTI founder Imran Khan to take action and lead the charge. He also took a dig at Perviz Khattak, saying that if he testifies falsely, he will not be able to enter Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

CM Maryam Nawaz to establish Punjab Development Authority

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif became the first female Chief Minister to visit LDA Headquarters. She approved in principle to establish Punjab Development Authority, and sought a list of all illegal housing schemes in Lahore. She said, "Every housing scheme will be reviewed and decided upon whether to regularise it or not."

Madam Chief Minister approved remodeling and beautification of MM Alam Road, and directed the authorities concerned to operate a Tram in Liberty, Main Market, Mini Market and Hali Road area. She also directed to construct, renovate and rehabilitate Gulberg and its adjoining areas, and said, "Uniform roads and tuff tiles should be installed."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved Karim Block to Motorway Signal Free Corridor

Plan, under which 02 underpasses will be constructed on 6-ways road from Karim Block to Motorway. She also approved commercialization of various roads in Lahore, and directed for the early completion of Sports



Complexes at Minar-e-Pakistan and China Scheme.

Earlier, DG LDA Tahir Farooq gave a briefing about the working projects and performance of LDA. He briefed Madam Chief Minister, "LDA will collect many times more revenue this financial year as compared to last year." Madam Chief Minister set Rs 46 billion revenue generation target

for LDA.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif was apprised, "An online service is being launched for the citizens to get their residential maps approved." She was briefed, "Government plots worth billions of rupees have been recovered as a result of checking and sifting of records." Madam Chief Minister directed LDA authorities to complete the process of sifting and checking of records as soon as possible. She also reviewed a proposal to commercialize various important roads of the city.

Madam Chief Minister said, "Special attention should be given to the development of LDA City." She also visited the Global Village.

Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, SACM on Political Affairs Zeeshan Malik, Chief Secretary, Principal Secretary to CM and other relevant officers were also present.

Palestinian Medical Students to complete education in Pakistan: Ishaq Dar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Leader of the House in Senate and Foreign Minister, Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday informed the Upper House that Palestinian medical students will complete their medical education in Pakistan. He informed the House that some UK based groups had approached him as Foreign Minister that Pakistan should facilitate the Palestinian medical students of final year in completing their degrees because the infrastructure in Gaza has completely destroyed.

He said upon receiving requests, he wrote to Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) to find a way out that Pakistan can help those students. He said the PMDC in response to his request, had agreed to accommodate all those medical students from Palestine in the medical colleges under PMDC's

administrative control for completion of their education. "Palestinian students will come to Pakistan in 20 to 30 batches for completion of their medical education which is very humble contribution of Pakistan" said Ishaq Dar.

The foreign minister said the stance of Pakistan's government on Gaza is very clear and Pakistan approached all available forums to promote its stance on Gaza. He said first of all Pakistan raised the issue of Gaza in Organization of Islamic Country (OIC) meeting which took place in Gambia, later in the D-8 meeting which took place in Istanbul and demanded that every forum that Israel's atrocities in Gaza must be stopped.

He said that Pakistan also supported that the humanitarian aid should be given free flow in Gaza and Pakistan in this regard had sent nine consignments so far as an aid for the brothers and sisters in Gaza. Pakistan has also demanded that the proceedings against Israel's war crimes should be started in the International Court of Justice and the genocide of innocent Palestinians should be stopped. Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif in his recent visit to Astana categorically supported Gaza and condemned Israel's war crimes, he expressed.

Family of 2022 car accident victim end Islamabad sit-in after talks with police



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Family and relatives of a 2022 car accident case victim ended their sit-in outside the National Press Club in Islamabad on Friday after negotiations with the police.

"The DIG has assured us of resolving our reservations and arresting the murderer of my son within 10 days," Rafiqat Ali Tanoli, the father of Shakeel Tanoli who was killed in a traffic accident, told reporters.

He returned to the National Press Club after being released. He was arrested by the Islamabad police on Thursday after protesters marched towards D Chowk – the iconic square.

Rafiqat Ali's son Shakeel Tanoli and his colleague Hasnain Ali both were waiters at Savor Foods. They were going home on June 8, 2022 midnight when they were hit by a Sports Utility Vehicle (SUV) allegedly driven by a

woman.

The woman left the vehicle on the spot and fled from the scene. The police took the car into custody. But a Lahore High Court official returned the car back on superdari (interim disposal).

In 2023, Rafiqat informed the court that the suspect and the heirs of Hasnain settled the matter out of court. He claimed that the family members of the suspect also came to his house in Mansehra district and warned him of dire consequences if he pursued the case.

"If our demands are not met, we will return to D-Chowk," Rafiqat said and reiterated the sit-in was called off after assurances from the DIG.

While appearing on Aaj News show Rubaroo via video link from the protest site, he said: "We will protest until the murderer of my son is arrested."

RCCI warns of nationwide protest and shutter down strike for anti-business budget

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: An emergent consultative meeting was held at the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry on the impact of the recently passed fiscal Budget 2024. President RCCI Saqib Rafiq along with Group Leader Sohail Altaf, chaired the meeting. In the course of the meeting, representatives from the ICMA and tax bar associations provided a comprehensive overview of the measures outlined in the budget, including tax rates, FBR additional powers, penalties for filers, non-filers, and late filers, double taxation, and advance tax.

President Chamber Saqib Rafiq informed that a charter of demands will be presented to the government prior to any calls for organized nationwide protests and strikes. A decision was made to seek the support and collaboration of all small and large factions of trade organizations and chambers across the country in preparation for a potential nationwide strike. It was emphasized that the budget was formulated without considering the prevailing ground realities and without consulting relevant stakeholders.

Group leader Sohail Altaf expressed concerns regarding the impact of the budget on various stakeholders, including shopkeepers and indus-

tries. Mr. Altaf cautioned that instead of implementing reforms and providing a roadmap for industrialization and increasing exports, the government has disincentivized the industry and especially exports by bringing exporters into the Normal Tax Regime as opposed to the Final Tax Regime previously. Senior Vice President Muhammad Hamza Sarosh, Vice President Faisal Shahzad, former presidents, Executive Committee Members, Women Members and a large number of RCCI members were also present on the occasion.

Representatives from the Anjuman e Tajran, Sheikh Siddique, Shahid Ghafoor Piracha, Sheikh Hafeez, Arshad Awan, Raja Jawad from Gujjar Khan, Asif Idrees—Former President RCSTSI, leaders of different markets, representatives from the Tax Bar Associations and ICMA, including Tansoor Bukhari, Chairman of the RCCI Standing Committee on Tax Affairs, Faraz Fazal, President of RITBA, Shehzad Malik, President of ICMA, and Mian Ramzan, were present at the meeting. Key individuals from various sectors and industries, including poultry, pharmaceuticals, mobile, furniture, travel and tourism, stationery, marble, construction, property, gems, and jewelry, were also in attendance.