



"We have to work together to solve the menace of terrorism and other challenges"

Interior Minister
Mohsin Naqvi

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Price Rs 8 | Pages 4

PMA remains cradle of leadership, center of excellence for cadets joining Army's premier institution: COAS



RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza on Saturday said since its inception, Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) has remained the cradle of leadership and center of excellence for cadets joining the premier institution of Army.

He was addressing as chief guest at the passing out parade of cadets of 149th PMA Long Course, 14th Mujahid Course, 68th Integrated Course and 23rd Lady Cadet Course held at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul where 49 Cadets from friendly countries were also among the passed out cadets, an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

While Chief of the Turkish General Staff, General Metin Gurak was Guest of Honour on the occasion. On the occasion, General Sahir Shamsahad Mirza said, "Over the years, PMA has also trained scores of foreign cadets whose brilliant performance in their respective Armies stands testament to the professional ethos of PMA. Today's parade serves as an illustrious example of military discipline at its finest and reflects the sterling ethos of the Academy and Pakistan Army alike."

The JCSC reviewed the parade and along with the Turkish Chief of General Staff gave away awards to the distinguished cadets.

The coveted Sword of Honour was awarded to Academy Senior Under Officer Muhammad Nauman Abdullah and President's Gold medal to Company Senior Under Officer Muhammad Abdullah Javed of 149th PMA Long Course. The Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee Overseas Gold Medal was awarded to Friendly Country Senior Under Officer Fahad Bin Aqil Al Towarqi Al Fallaj from Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The COAS Cane was awarded to Course Under Officer Ilyas Khan of 14th Mujahid Course. The Commandant's Canes were awarded to Course Junior Under Officer Danish Sattar of 68th Integrated Course and Course Under Officer Sher Bano of 23rd Lady Cadet Course.

The Chairman JCSC felicitated the passing out cadets and their proud parents on the successful completion of their training at PMA. Earlier on arrival, JCSC was received by Commandant PMA. PR



Washington DC: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Chinese Finance Minister, Mr. Lan Fo'an.

Pak-China ties rapidly growing due to CPEC, Chinese language further fostering them: PM

PM strongly condemns attack on Customs officials in DIKhan

VOM Report

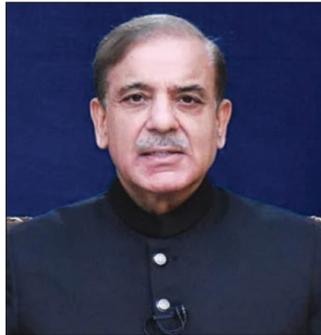
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday said that the economic and cultural relationships between Pakistan and China were being rapidly growing due to China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

In a message on global observance of Chinese language as one of the largest dialects for communication, he said that a sufficient number of Pakistanis were learning the Chinese language which was further cementing ties between the people of the two countries.

The United Nations (UN) observed the UN Chinese Language Day every year on April 20 to highlight the contribution of Chinese literature, poetry and language in world culture.

The prime minister observed that steps were being taken at the official and public sectors levels to promote the Chinese language and literature so that the people to people contacts between the two countries could be further strengthened, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Today was the observance of the Chinese



language as the global language, he said, adding that the dialect had been an exponent of centuries old Chinese culture. In the last few decades, China had been proving its mettle in economic prosperity besides, the Chinese language and culture had been becoming popular across the globe, he added.

Prime Minister Sharif said no doubt, today, the Chinese language had become the

largest tool of communication in the world and the UN had included it into the list of its official communication language.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday strongly condemned an attack on Customs officials in Daraban area of District Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The prime minister reiterated that such cowardly acts could not shake the resolve of the government and the fight against terrorism and smuggling would continue till their complete elimination.

The prime minister prayed for the departed souls of Shaheed officials and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He said that looking after the bereaved families of Shuhada was now a responsibility of the government and directed Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to prepare Shuhada package for the bereaved families.

Those Shuhada who had been sacrificing their lives for the motherland and laying down their lives in performance of duties, were alive before Allah Almighty, he added.

Iranian Ambassador discusses details of President's visit with Mohsin Naqvi



ISLAMABAD: Iranian Ambassador Dr Reza Amiri Moghaddam on Saturday met with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi in his office to discuss arrangements for the Iranian president's upcoming official visit to Pakistan. The meeting discussed the details of the visit of the President of Iran along with the details of proposed agreements which would be discussed during the visit.

The Iranian Ambassador congratulated Mohsin Naqvi on assuming the post of interior minister and appreciated his performance as caretaker chief minister of Punjab. "You completed public projects at an extraordinary speed during your tenure as Chief Minister," said the Iranian ambassador.

The minister termed the Iranian President's visit very important, in the context of the regional situation and said that the visit would be a milestone in the development of bilateral relations. "We have to work together to solve the menace of terrorism and other challenges" said Mohsin Naqvi adding that Pakistan-Iran relations span over decades and Pakistan values brotherly relations with Iran.

He said that there is a need to promote cooperation for lasting peace and stability in the region. APP

Federal Cabinet okays removal of age limit for high-paying appointments

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has approved amendments to the Special Professional Pay Scales Policy 2019, removing the age limit for important appointments and extensions up to 65 years.

Sources privy to the development said the decision was made during a recent session of the cabinet, where a summary outlining the amendments was circulated and subsequently approved. The move signifies a departure from previous policies under the PTI regime and marks a strategic shift towards bolstering governance effectiveness through the recruitment of talented individuals, technical experts, and consultants. Under the revised policy, individuals appointed to key positions can now expect salaries of up to Rs20 lacs per month, opening doors for highly qualified professionals to contribute to the federal administration. This move is expected to attract a pool of diverse talents and expertise, ultimately leading to improved performance and outcomes across various ministries and divisions. DNA

Ambassador of Pakistan Khalil Hashmi attends opening ceremony of the 41st Weifang Int'l Kite Festival held in Weifang, China



BEIJING: Ambassador Khalil Hashmi attended the opening ceremony of the 41st Weifang International Kite Festival held in Weifang, China. This event, known globally for its celebration of kite culture, drew participants from diverse segments of the society, spread across multiple nationalities. In his remarks at the opening ceremony, Ambassador Hashmi praised the Weifang International Kite Festival as a global celebration of friendship, creativity, and cultural exchange. He noted the festival's

ability to attract participants worldwide, showcasing passion for kite culture.

Drawing parallels between Weifang and Pakistan, Ambassador Hashmi emphasized the cultural significance of kite flying in both countries. Ambassador Hashmi reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening economic and cultural ties with Weifang, particularly in the field of agriculture.

Prior to the ceremony, Ambassador also had a group interaction with Mayor Liu Jianjun, highlighted the strong ties between Weifang and Pakistan, and proposed mutually beneficial cooperation. Weifang city, known as the kite capital of the world, hosts the international kite festival annually, attracting participation from diverse societal segments and many nationalities. SABAH

President condemns terrorist attack on Customs officials in DIKhan

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday condemned a terrorist attack on Customs officials in Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The president expressed his condolences with the bereaved families and paid tribute to the sacrifices of Customs officials who laid down their lives while performing their duties, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

He also prayed for the high ranks of Shuhada and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with equanimity.

The president also commended services of the Customs personnel and for their efforts to curb smuggling and reiterated the resolve to efface terrorism and smuggling.

FO says listing of commercial entities on allegations takes place without sharing evidences

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson on Saturday, commenting upon reports of United States' decision to impose sanctions against commercial entities on allegations of links with Pakistan's ballistic missile programme, said that such listings had taken place in the past without sharing any evidence whatsoever. Responding to media queries, the spokesperson, in a press statement, said while they were not aware of the specifics of the latest measures by the US. In the past, they had come across many instances where listings had been made on mere suspicion or even when the involved items were not on any control lists but were deemed sensitive under catch-all provisions, it was added.

"We have pointed out many times that such items have legitimate civil commercial uses. It is, therefore, important to avoid arbitrary application of export controls," the spokesperson

said. There was need for discussions between concerned parties for an objective mechanism to ensure access to technology in pursuit of socio-economic development, it was stressed. The spokesperson said Pakistan had always been ready to discuss end-use and end-user verification mechanisms so that legitimate commercial users are not hurt by discriminatory application of export controls.

"Pakistan rejects political use of export controls. It is a reality that the same jurisdictions, which claim to exercise strict non-proliferation controls, have waived off licensing requirements for advanced military technologies for some countries," it was added. The spokesperson said this was leading to 'arms build up; accentuating regional asymmetries, and undermining the objectives of non-proliferation and of regional and global peace and security'. APP

Finance minister briefs financial institutions on govt's economic reform initiatives

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday briefed the chiefs of international financial institutions about the country's economic reform initiatives and development priorities by the government of Pakistan. The finance minister met with World Bank's Regional Vice President for South Asia, Martin Raiser to discuss Pakistan's reform initiatives and development priorities in Washington DC.

During the meeting, the finance minister expressed satisfaction that the new Country Partnership Framework (CPF) between Pakistan and the World Bank would be finalized soon. He underlined the government's reform thrust in the areas of energy, taxation and state-owned enterprises (SOEs), highlighting the pursuit of both short and long-term goals in these crucial sectors. Referring to his earlier meetings with the senior leadership of

the World Bank, the finance minister stated that the Bank's focus on climate change, digitalization, and human capital development aligns well with the priorities of the government. The finance minister highlighted the government's vision to realize Pakistan's true economic potential in terms of sustainable economic growth. He stressed the importance of timely completion of development projects and the realization of intended impacts and outcomes, emphasizing the need for effective implementation and monitoring.

He also briefed Mr. Raiser on the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) as a one-window facility for investment promotion and facilitation. Both sides agreed on the need for reforms in the agriculture sector, water management, and waste-water treatment. The finance minister also met with Brent Neiman, Deputy Under Secretary for International Finance at the U.S. Department of Treasury, on the sidelines of the

IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings in Washington D.C. Finance Minister briefed Mr. Neiman on Pakistan's positive economic indicators in the wake of the Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) signed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). He informed that the government has prioritized reforms in taxation, energy sector, and state-owned enterprises (SOEs). He underscored the United States' significance as Pakistan's largest trading partner and a key source of remittances and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). He briefed Mr. Neiman on the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in facilitating foreign investment into the country. Finance Minister welcomed his visit to Pakistan after the presentation of the budget and assured full support in this regard.

Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with Jin Liqun, President of the Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and discussed with him Pakistan's economic tra-

jectory and explore avenues for enhancing cooperation in infrastructure development. During the meeting, the finance minister briefed the AIIB President on Pakistan's positive economic indicators, including improving foreign exchange reserves, a stable currency, declining inflation rates, and a surging stock market. He highlighted the renewed institutional and foreign inflows into the market, on the back of the successful 9-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The finance minister informed Mr. Jin Liqun that Pakistan was looking to enter into a larger and extended program with the IMF, building upon the progress achieved under the SBA. He identified broadening the tax base, fixing the energy sector, and undertaking state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms as key priorities of the government. The minister expressed gratitude for AIIB's support in the aftermath of the devastating 2022

floods, particularly the co-financing of US\$ 250 million for the RISE-II program of the World Bank. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to continue working closely with AIIB on the infrastructure development of the country. The minister appreciated AIIB's additional commitment of US\$ 500 million in project assistance and acknowledged the satisfactory progress on project implementation and disbursements. The finance minister has met with Mr. Makhtar Diop, Managing Director of the International Finance Corporation (IFC). In the meeting, Finance Minister briefed Mr. Diop on Pakistan's positive economic indicators, including improving foreign exchange reserves, stable currency, declining inflation rates, and a surging stock market. He highlighted the renewed institutional and foreign inflows into the market, bolstered by the successful 9-month Stand-By Arrangement (SBA) with the IMF. He informed the IFC Managing Director that

Pakistan looked forward to entering into a larger and extended program with the IMF. The finance minister identified broadening tax reforms, fixing the energy sector, and undertaking state-owned enterprise (SOE) reforms as key priorities of the government. He expressed gratitude to IFC for its support in the outsourcing of the Islamabad airport, which will be followed by similar initiatives in Lahore and Karachi. He noted with satisfaction the uptick in IFC activities in the country and requested the corporation's support in assisting the government in shifting its PSDP to PPP mode. Other engagements of the finance minister included luncheon meeting with CMU of the World Bank, participation in the High-Level Closed-door Roundtable on Financial Markets Access: Challenges and Opportunities organized by the Middle East and Central Asia Department (MCD), IMF and meeting with Mr. Andrew Torre, Regional President, VISA.

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Forgotten cinema

DR NAAZIR MAHMOOD

The World Bank has sounded the alarm on the 'historic reversal' of development for poor countries. Nearly half of the world's least-developed countries are experiencing a widening income gap with the wealthiest economies, for the first time since the turn of the century. The concentration of wealth in the hands of a few rich people has been a consistent feature in most countries around the world. The list of the 14 richest people whose net worth is more than \$100 billion is interesting, featuring 10 Americans and one each from France, India, Mexico and Spain. Their collective wealth is nearly \$2,000 billion, enough to eradicate extreme poverty and illiteracy around the globe.

The same applies to wealth concentration in countries like India and Pakistan. Call it 'elite capture' if you will, India and Pakistan are two of the worst examples of economic and social injustices. Though India has at least some achievements to show the world and has become one of the largest economies, this is just one side of the picture.

Pakistan is even worse as its economy has shrunk, growth lingered, population increased, poverty expanded, and education lagged. The 'elite' that comprises big business owners, feudal lords, industrialists, and civil and military bureaucracy appears to be least interested in doing something concrete to modify an inherently unjust system.

The plight of the poor is not a new phenomenon. Just read the works of Charles Dickens and Thomas Hardy to understand what poverty looked like in Great Britain. Similarly, the short stories by Chekov, Gorky, Maupassant, and Premchand are great to understand the economic imbalance in France, India and Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Here I would like to recommend two silent movies from nearly a century ago: German masterpiece 'Metropolis' (1927) and Charlie Chaplin's 'Modern Times' (1936). Both serve as an indictment of an increasingly capitalist and industrialized world that treated its ordinary citizens as the 'wretched of the earth', to borrow from Frantz Fanon.

'Metropolis' is a more demanding film experience than 'Modern Times' which blends entertainment while educating its viewers in a characteristic Chaplin style. Both are silent cinema classics and have drawn admiration and respect from audiences for decades.

If you like watching movies and are more interested in educating yourself than in sheer entertainment, start with 'Metropolis'. The enjoyment aspect you can cover while watching 'Modern Times'. There was a time when we used to hunt for such movies, but now it is much easier through online streaming - you can watch movies anywhere, anytime.

The theme of these movies is industrialization and mass production in early 20th-century Europe and America. Though both have graduated from industrial to post-industrial and information-based economies, fundamental contradictions in society remain the same, revolving around wealth concentration in a few hands. 'Metropolis' is more futuristic and based on science fiction, portraying humanity's struggle against science and technology and the compulsive urge in some people to use them for exploitative purposes. Both films reveal workers as the cogs tied to the city's machinery. Austrian director Fritz Lang and British actor and director Charlie Chaplin both shared a vision of a grim society and used some of the most impressive images in film history. For example, the opening shots of both films are similar. Lang shows depressed and haggard workers slowly entering a factory located under the city of 'Metropolis'. Chaplin uses a similar sequence with a more hilarious impact by substituting workers with a herd of sheep that follow each other in a bustling city. Both cities have two distinct classes: industrialists with ample resources and workers enduring a barebones existence of backbreaking work.

The story of 'Metropolis' also concerns forbidden love between a young man from the industrial class and a girl who is an activist preaching against the class divide. There is also an element of deceit involving a robot duplicate of the girl, culminating in a revolution with a disaster of sorts. It has a clear message to fight against injustices. But the film was called communist propaganda. Later, the same thing happened to 'Modern Times'. Years later, both appear on the list of the greatest films ever made. While 'Metropolis' blends graphics and hand-drawn animation that appear seamless, 'Modern Times' is a milestone for its visual impact. Fritz Lang and Charlie Chaplin drew their inspiration from America's skyscrapers they saw as structures where people worked as slaves for the good of the dominant elite. In 'Metropolis', a capitalist and a scientist use the face of the activist girl to superimpose on a human machine that brings chaos to the world of workers. In the end, the workers unite and destroy both the robot and the scientist while the industrialist mends his ways and begins respecting the workers.

Charlie Chaplin launched 'Modern Times' nearly a decade after Lang's movie, which was released before the Great Depression. By 1936, the economic depression had had its devastating impact on American society, and there were repeated dust storms in the country, culminating in the Dust Bowl of the late 1930s that John Steinbeck so skillfully documented in his novel 'The Grapes of Wrath', which was adapted for film in 1940. That was the time when the clouds of another major war were hovering over the world and the military industry was thriving while people were toiling just to make a living. 'Modern Times' was farsighted for its time, as it showed the struggle of people to renounce alienation from their work and preserve humanity in a mechanized world. Karl Marx used the concept of alienation to expose the process in which workers feel foreign to the products of their labour. This is as meaningful today as it ever was. 'Modern Times' was perhaps the last great silent film, but it spoke volumes about the tramp in a derby hat who experienced the economic and political consequences of the Great Depression.

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Kamila Hyat

Living off disaster

cases, to Gilgit and other larger towns in the area, and in many cases live lives of extreme poverty because their lands and ability to grow agricultural materials has been taken away from them. The hotel owners who put up the establishments in the area, in some cases say or at least claim that they pay money to Attabad residents. There is no way of ascertaining how far this is true and the poverty of the people of Attabad, now living in other areas, puts into question the claims and projections of the hotel owners who in many cases are making large profits as a result of the beauty of a lake which came into place as a result of disaster.

is no safe natural water for people to drink in the Gwadar area - one of the main causes of the disease and the consequently poor quality of life of the people in the area. The issue was raised most effectively by Maulana Hidayat Rahman of the Jamaat-e-Islami and his Haq Do Tehreek which continued over many months in the Gwadar area before his arrest just before the 2024 election. Maulana Hidayat was sensible enough to include women from fishing communities in his effort and ensured they participated in the protests and walks that followed his efforts. Today he has been elected an MPA in the Balochistan Assembly. However, there is a very real

Karachi, Lahore, and elsewhere. Even the best-known housing communities initially involved the theft of land from people who desperately needed this to meet their most basic needs. Even parts of the country's capital Islamabad are built essentially on land stolen from the people who originally lived there and who saw their villages as homes that will now never be returned to them.

This is a tragedy. The cases of Attabad Lake and Gwadar simply highlight the many tragedies that exist around the country. People have no qualms about living off disaster and what it brings. We need to encourage everyone to think twice about this. Essentially, disaster tourism, as it is called, should be banned. It indeed exists around the world. Regions with active volcanoes are one example of this, but in our context, there is a need to highlight the situation in which so many people live without adequate drinking water or perhaps no water at all and without livelihoods or the right to fish their own waters. This is a problem that needs far more publicity and attention in the local media as well as by other forums. It is true that some, like the HRCF, have repeatedly taken up the situation in these areas but many more voices need to be raised if we are to see genuine change and a situation in which people can live in their own ancestral villages and earn through the means that they have known for years.

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The beautiful Attabad Lake, and the mix of hotels that have now crept up around it, create a new tourist spot in the country. For some people in Hunza, the emergence of this spot has been a boon. But as tourists from various areas 'troop' to these hotels and new different places on the holidays aimed at admiring the wondrous mountains of Hunza, Skardu and surrounding areas, they do not seem to realize that they are living off the blood of the persons killed when the landslide of 2010, which created the Attabad Lake, occurred. The landslide led to deaths in the villages above the lake, notably in the village of Attabad, after which the lake is named, but also in surrounding villages. Around 6,000 persons were displaced. Other counts put the figure at around 10,000. Another 25,00 were temporarily forced to leave their homes. For some of these persons, food supplies were cut off due to the presence of the lake, cutting off the Karakoram Highway, which is of course the main artery in the region. The road has now been essentially restored, but those days and the disaster that ended in the creation of Attabad Lake, live on in the memories of the people of Gojal where the lake was created. It will also live in the memories of the people of Attabad, now an abandoned village, who moved, in most

The cases of Attabad Lake and Gwadar simply highlight the many tragedies that exist around the country

In Gwadar, other tourists inhabit a world where posh hotels stand at the centre of the world. From these buildings, they look down on beautiful coastal areas and pristine beaches of Gwadar. But they do not appear to realize that there is another world in Gwadar, a world inhabited by impoverished fishing communities whose livelihood has been stolen from them by the permission granted to trawlers, many of them from another country, to fish the waters off Gwadar. The result is that there's no catch left for the fishermen who go out in their tiny boats facing hostile waters each time there's a storm or rainfall. Ironically, despite the recent rains that hit the area, there

feared that no matter how much people like Rahman are able to achieve, there will always be two kinds of places in Gwadar - one inhabited by the tourists who visit the area and its pristine beaches, and the other lived in by impoverished people whose livelihood has been taken away and who seem not even to have the right to stage peaceful protests over what has happened. This is true of much of Pakistan. There are two lives everywhere. Elaborate housing communities have been built on land stolen from poor villagers who were not able to protect their lands. The efforts to set up hotels and housing estates along the Ravi are just one example of this. There are many others in

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



General Zia-ul-Haq (right)
 This period of military rule, lasting from 1977 to 1988, is often regarded as a period of persecution and the growth of state-sponsored religious conservatism. Zia-ul-Haq committed himself to establishing an Islamic state and enforcing sharia law.[127] He established separate shariat judicial courts[128] and court benches[129][130] to judge legal cases using Islamic doctrine.[131] New criminal offences of adultery, fornication and types of blasphemy, and new punishments of whipping, amputation, and stoning to death, were added to Pakistani law. Interest payments for bank accounts were replaced by "profit and loss" payments. Zakat charitable donations became a 2.5% annual tax. School textbooks and libraries were overhauled to remove un-Islamic material.[132] Offices, schools and factories were required to offer prayer space.[133] Zia bolstered the

influence of the Islamic clergy and the Islamic parties.[131] whilst conservative scholars became fixtures on television.[133] Thousands of activists from the Jamaat-e-Islami party were appointed to government posts to ensure the continuation of his agenda after his death.[127][131][134][135] Conservative Islamic scholars were appointed to the Council of Islamic Ideology.[129] Separate electorates for Hindus and Christians were established in 1985 even though Christian and Hindu leaders complained that they felt excluded from the county's political process.[136] Zia's state-sponsored Islamization increased sectarian divisions in Pakistan between Sunnis and Shias due to his anti-Shia policies[137] and also between Deobandis and Bareilvis.[138] Zia-ul-Haq forged a strong alliance between the military and Deobandi institutions.[139] Possible motivations for the

Islamization programme included Zia's personal piety (most accounts agree that he came from a religious family),[140] his desire to gain political allies, to "fulfill Pakistan's raison d'être" as a Muslim state, or the political need to legitimise what was seen by some Pakistanis as his "repressive, un-representative martial law regime".[141] President Zia's long eleven-year rule featured the country's first successful technocracy. It also featured the tug of war between far-leftist forces in direct competition with populist far-right circles. President Zia installed many high-profile military officers in civilian posts, ranging from central to provisional governments. Gradually the influence of socialism in public policies was dismantled. Instead a new system of capitalism was revived with the introduction of corporatisation and the Islamization of the economy. The populist movement against

Bhutto scattered, with far right-wing conservatives allying with General Zia's government and encouraging the military government to crack down on pro-Soviet left-wing elements. The left-wing alliance, led by Benazir Bhutto, was brutalised by Zia who took aggressive measures against the movement. Further secessionist uprisings in Balochistan were put down successfully by the provincial governor, General Rahimuddin Khan. In 1984, Zia held a referendum asking for support for his religious programme; he received overwhelming support. Benazir Bhutto in the US in 1988. Bhutto became the first female prime minister of Pakistan in 1988. After Zia assumed power, Pakistan's relations with the Soviet Union deteriorated and Zia strove for strong relations with the United States.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Keanu Reeves to star in Ruben Ostlund's disaster movie 'The Entertainment System Is Down'

The storyline is still unknown

Keanu Reeves is in talks to star in Ruben Ostlund's much awaited next film, The Entertainment System Is Down, which is a two-time Palme d'Or winner, Variety has confirmed. Although the precise storyline of the film is still unknown, Ostlund has hinted at it multiple times, describing it as a social satire that takes place on a lengthy journey when the entertainment system malfunctions, causing passengers to become agitated and chaotic. For the past five years, the Swedish director has been gathering anecdotes for the film, and he recently finished writing the screenplay. Although Reeves' precise role in the movie is unknown, it most likely involves dark humour consistent with



Ostlund's style of black comedy. Along with several other worldwide

talents, Reeves will be a member of the ensemble cast. Triangle of Sadness, which won the Palme d'Or at the 2022 Cannes Film Festival, will be followed by this film from Ostlund. Even more ambitious than his English-language debut Triangle of Sadness, which included a large cast including Woody Harrelson and Harris Dickinson along with exotic settings, The Entertainment System Is Down is set to be Ostlund's most ambitious picture to date. Regarding the project, Ostlund stated to Variety last year that it will examine "how modern human beings are wrecked under these circumstances" and be "a study of how human beings interact in this little laboratory that is a plane."

Tech

Comet caught on camera by astronomers covering Solar Eclipse



Achieving a remarkable feat, astrophotographer Petr Horálek has managed to click a very rare picture consisting of a comet, during the April 8 Solar Eclipse seen in Northern America, Universe Magazine reported. The comet known as a "SOHO-5008" was spotted approaching the Sun as it delved into totality. Comets are huge frozen snowballs made of dust and ice that orbit around the

sun. Usually, they remain frozen, however, during their orbit when they reach the Sun, these frozen snowballs heat up and start spewing dust and gases. These flying objects are not that unique, as per the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), five thousand of them have been spotted up till now. The head of the Sungrazer project Karl Battams, had already predicted in advance that SOHO-5008 would be visible in the sky during the April 8 solar eclipse. Besides Horálek and several other astronomers also managed to spot the comet. Thai amateur Worachate Boonplod, just hours before the start of totality, spotted an unusually bright comet approaching the Sun in the Kreutz orbit. Astronomers have been witnessing comets for years, the first comet ever spotted was the Great Comet in 1680. Other discoveries were made in May 1882 when a group of astronomers travelled to Egypt to observe a solar eclipse and were delighted to witness the appearance of a comet.

How much salt intake makes you prone to heart diseases?

Sodium or salt can damage your heart health

Many people, especially those who should limit their sodium intake due to heart health concerns, ingest more of this element than is advised daily. This is supported by a recent study that discovered individuals with cardiovascular disease (CVD) were ingesting more than twice as much sodium per day - 1,500 mg - as is advised. The study participants ingested an average of 3,096 mg of sodium daily, with 89% exceeding the recommended daily intake.

The results were presented at the Annual Scientific Session of the American College of Cardiology. "Sodium helps to balance the water in your body," explained cardiologist Jayne Morgan, MD, clinical director at the Piedmont Healthcare Corporation in Atlanta, GA. "It even supports the proper functioning of muscles and nerves," added Dr Morgan who was not involved in the study. "There is a saying in medicine, 'Where sodium

goes, water follows," she told Medical News Today. "This is why salt increases the blood volume in your bodies. The effect of this is an increase in blood pressure. The increased blood pressure then forces your heart to work harder, which then eventually puts you at risk of heart disease," Dr Morgan said. Dr Morgan noted that excess sodium has long been linked with the hardening and stiffening of the arteries and atherosclerosis.



Health

Registration of pilgrims under private Hajj scheme in progress: Ashrafi

LAHORE: Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi has announced that the registration of pilgrims under the private Hajj scheme is in progress, with 24,000 pilgrims slated to participate in the Road to Makkah project this year. He made these remarks during a press conference held at the Lahore Press Club, where he was joined by representatives from Hajj Organisers Association of Pakistan (HOAP), including Saeed Ahmed Malik, Chaudhry Ehsanullah, Malik Abdul Khaliq, Chaudhry Muhammad Adil, Khalid Mahmood Bhatti, Pir Shafaat Ahmed Boudla, and Zeeshan Qamar. Ashrafi, who is also the patron-in-chief of HOAP, noted that this year, certain private tour operators were offering Hajj packages at a more affordable rate compared to pilgrims participating in the government Hajj scheme. He emphasized that due to enhanced self-accountability measures, private pilgrims would not encounter issues as they have in the past. "It is imperative to provide written documentation to pilgrims detailing all the facilities to be provided during the sacred journey," he added.

Furthermore, Ashrafi mentioned that the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah was dispatching high-level officials to train Pakistani pilgrims. With the concerted efforts of Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, he said high-level Saudi delegations had visited Pakistan. He remarked that Pakistan's shift towards trade rather than aid signified a significant development, with Saudi Arabia and other Islamic nations poised to play pivotal roles in Pakistan's future economic and financial advancement. He commended the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony for implementing corruption-free measures, expressing praise for the current government and the minister for their efforts in this regard.

Pak-Afghan border road blocked again due to floods

CHITRAL: The Arando road which connects Pak-Afghan border area has been blocked once again due to floods just a day after reopening, leaving passengers stranded and vehicles stuck on the road.

According to APP Correspondent, The road was closed for 10 days due to heavy stones and mountains on the road but was reopened after continuous hard work by the Communications and Works Department (C&W). However, a series of rains on Thursday night caused floods in different nullahs and streams, blocking the road again. Passengers including women and children were left stranded for hours and vehicles were stuck on the road. The C&W department has mobilized machinery to clear the road but work is on hold until the floodwaters recede.

The department has also started desilting and channelization in the middle of Drosh goal nullah to prevent further damage. Locals are demanding that the government take immediate action to restore the road and compensate those who have suffered losses due to the floods. APP

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman pledges to thwart any attempts to normalize relations with Israel for financial gain

Firmly rejects the two-state solution to the Palestine issue

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Engineer Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has pledged to thwart any attempts to normalize relations with Israel for financial gain, firmly rejecting the two-state solution to the Palestine issue. Speaking at the Palestine Solidarity March outside the US consulate in Lahore on Saturday, Hafiz Naeemur Rehman reiterated his stance against the government, which he said came to power through fraudulent means, asserting that the people have lost faith in it to champion the cause of Palestine. Nevertheless, he emphasized that the JI demanded the government to raise its voice for Palestine or brace itself for the wrath of the people. Referring to Qaid-i-Azam's stance, he denounced Israel as an illegitimate state, formed by seizing Palestinian

Muslim land. He said Pakistani rulers now are being offered dollars to recognize Palestine and relinquish Kashmir, warning that the nation would vehemently resist such schemes. Hafiz Naeemur Rehman called for a summit of Muslim nations and non-Muslim states sympathetic to the Palestinian cause to advocate for a ceasefire. He urged Islamabad to extend medical assistance to Gazans, especially children, as a minimum gesture of support. This march marked the first public gathering led by JI Emir after assuming office. Thousands, including children and women, attended the solidarity rally. Hafiz Naeemur Rehman condemned the US, Israel, and India as the three foremost terrorist countries responsible for civilian bloodshed and gross human rights violations. SABAH

European Film Festival to start from May 15, featuring an exciting fusion of cinema

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd European Film Festival will start from May 15, featuring an exciting fusion of cinema, culture, and diversity in the federal capital. Film enthusiasts from Islamabad and three other cities across Pakistan will get a unique opportunity to discover European cinema at the third European Film Festival. The film festival will take place in four cities across Pakistan, including Islamabad, Peshawar, Quetta, and Gujrat, from May 15 to May 28, 2024. The European Film Festival is a celebration of cinema that brings together filmmakers, actors, and cinema enthusiasts. It provides an opportunity for Pakistani audiences to discover the rich and diverse world of European cinema and get a glimpse into the cultural and social issues that shape modern European societies.

Nobody could stop their anti-govt movement now, says Maulana Fazlur Rehman

Says February 8, 2024 general elections were more rigged than that of 2018



fight. Politicians were always used [by establishment]."

Speaking at the public gathering, Maulana Fazl said: "People of Balochistan do not accept the results of the February 8 elections."

Referring to the massive rigging in the recent elections, the JUI-F chief said: "These assemblies are sold and bought."

He further said that they had launched a movement against the rigging in the 2018 elections, adding that they would continue to remain on the front line in protest against rigging in the recent polls. "We will not allow fake government to run with this movement," he vowed.

He pledged that the JUI-F would vigorously oppose the widespread electoral fraud witnessed in 2024, indicating plans to extend their movement to Karachi and Punjab. SABAH

PM to pay official visit to China in May: Rana Mashhood

PESHAWAR: Chairman of Prime Minister's Youth Program, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan has said that the friendship between Pakistan and China was beyond any doubt, but during the last regime, not only the CPEC project was destroyed, but also an attempt was made to spoil the relations between the two brotherly countries.

He expressed these views while talking to the media during his visit to China Window, a Chinese cultural center established in Peshawar.

According to a press release issued here on Saturday, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan visited different galleries of China Window, signed the friendship wall and recorded his comments in the visitor's book. He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shabbaz Sharif wants to make Pakistan a partner in economic development and that is the reason why he is bringing investment from Pakistan's friendly countries to Pakistan so that the country can stand on its own feet.

From May 14, the Prime Minister will



make an official visit to the People's Republic of China, which will restore the confidence of the brotherly neighboring country and the CPEC project will move towards success quickly, he added.

In response to a question, Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan said that the current federal government's focus is on youth.

Along with higher education, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed

to increase the technical training of the youth so that the talented youth are not only sent abroad but their skills can also be fully utilized in Pakistan.

Recognizing the importance of languages, including Chinese, Rana Mashhood disclosed that he had instructed relevant institutions to initiate language programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of different countries.

He specifically mentioned plans to include the Chinese language in the programs offered by the National Commission for Technical and Vocational Training.

Rana Mashhood expressed appreciation for the establishment of the Chinese Cultural Center in Peshawar, foreseeing it as a pivotal hub for further enhancing the bonds between Pakistan and China. He reiterated his commitment to providing all possible cooperation in strengthening this friendship.

Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan further said that many countries including China and Saudi Arabia are planning to invest in Pakistan in various fields. Thousands of talented people will also get an opportunity to perform services in the country and abroad. He appreciated the establishment of the Chinese Cultural Center in Peshawar and said that it is commendable that the China Window will prove to be a center for further strengthening the friendship between Pakistan and China. He also assured of all possible cooperation. INP



ISLAMABAD: An attractive view of the famous Faisal Masjid with a with beautiful flowers blooming to mark spring season. APP

Security personnel deployed for by-elections must uphold neutrality, maintain peace: ECP

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Saturday directed the security personnel, excluding armed forces, deployed in by-elections to maintain neutrality, assist officers, ensure peace, avoid conflicts, arrests, or interference, report irregularities, and uphold impartiality, particularly during the counting process.

In a code of conduct issued for law enforcement agencies deployed on election duty, the arrest of suspects is only permitted upon instruction from polling staff.

Law enforcement personnel deployed for the by-elections in Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan must adhere to the code, ensuring they perform their duties lawfully to assist the Election Commission of Pakistan in conducting fair and peaceful bye-elections in 2024.

According to the guidelines outlined by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), security personnel are required to carry out their duties within the boundaries of their assigned mandate and in compliance with the law. This is to ensure the facilitation of free, fair, transparent, and peaceful bye-elections in 2024. Each gazetted law enforcement officer will exercise powers delegated by the Election Commission of Pakistan under Section 193 of the Elections Act, 2017, and cooperate with District Returning Officers, Returning Officers, and Presiding Officers as per Section 83(a) of the same Act.

Assist the Presiding Officer in ensuring smooth and effective polling station operations, maintaining order, and removing any individuals who misbehave or disobey orders. Remain impartial and neutral throughout the electoral process, providing full cooperation

to the Presiding Officer to ensure uninterrupted voting.

As per the code, exhibit courteous and impeccable conduct when interacting with voters and polling staff, while remaining resolute and fair in compliance with the law in all situations. Offer assistance and guidance to individuals outside the polling station in the event of confusion or disturbances, ensuring a calm and secure environment conducive to voting. Conduct thorough frisking/checking of each voter to prevent the entry of any weapons, explosives, or prohibited items, including mobile phones, which may pose a threat to the integrity of the polling process.

Ensure voters are efficiently queued, with priority given to elderly, transgender individuals, pregnant women, women with infants, and voters with disabilities. Concentrate solely on maintaining a peaceful and transparent polling process outside the polling station, following the directions of the Presiding Officer. Note that only one polling agent per candidate is permitted at each polling booth, with only one agent allowed to observe the counting and tabulation of results, as per the code. Polling agents and observers are legally entitled to obtain copies of Form-45 and Form-46 from the Presiding Officer during the counting process. Additionally, ensure the security of the Returning Officer's office premises until the result consolidation is complete, and safely store polling materials in the Commission's strong room. Adhere to all election and relevant laws, aiming to build public trust by maintaining a secure environment and upholding law and order throughout the election process. Note that District Returning Officers/Returning Officers may visit polling

stations at any time.

Accredited observers and media personnel are permitted to enter polling stations. Media personnel, along with cameras, can film the voting and counting processes, excluding the screened-off compartment to maintain ballot secrecy. Security personnel, including police, must not ask voters to produce their "Perchees" or prove their identity, as this is the responsibility of the polling officer. No eligible voter should be denied entry to the polling station, as voting is their inviolable right.

Ensure impartiality and avoid any actions that may suggest bias. Refrain from assuming the responsibilities of polling staff under any circumstances. Do not handle any election materials, including ballot papers, stamps, or electoral rolls. Only allow authorized polling staff to handle such materials. Avoid engaging in arguments or altercations with candidates, their agents, polling agents, observers, or media personnel. Refrain from interfering with the duties of the Presiding Officer, Assistant Presiding Officer, or Polling Officer. Report any irregularities observed outside the polling station to the Presiding Officer and follow their instructions.

Do not object to the presence of candidates, their agents, or observers during the counting process. Only make arrests at the polling station if explicitly instructed to do so by the Presiding Officer. Refrain from interfering with the counting process and ensure a peaceful environment outside the polling station until the completion of the counting process, unless malpractice is identified, in which case inform the officer in charge immediately for further action. APP

Delegation of World Food Program calls on KP CM Gandapur

PESHAWAR: A delegation of the World Food Program called on the Chief Minister (CM) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur here at CM Secretariat on Saturday.

The delegation was led by World Food Program Country Director Ms. Coco Ushiyama. In the meeting, the issues related to the activities carried out under the World Food Program in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, especially in the adjoining districts, were discussed.

Discussions on further expanding the scope of cooperation between the provincial government and the World Food Program in various fields were also held. The two also agreed to further enhance cooperation in various fields.

Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said that the provincial government values the cooperation and collaboration of the World Food Program. The provincial government needs more support from other donor organizations including the World Food Program for merging districts, the CM added.

The World Food Program's program of providing educational scholarships to the girls of the merged districts is commendable, CM said, adding that promotion of education in the merged districts and employing the people is the main priority.

Special attention from the government and donor organizations is needed to bring the merged districts into the national stream, Ali Amin Gandapur told the delegation. He said that the infrastructure in these districts has been badly affected during the anti-terror operations, the Chief Minister informed the delegation. He said that farm-to-market roads need to be constructed in the merged districts.

He said that special attention needs to be given to rehabilitation works in these districts. He said that provincial government is planning to construct small dams to ensure food security.

Foreign investment in stock exchange promising for economy: Atif Ikram

ISLAMABAD: President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Atif Ikram Sheikh while reacting to the foreign historic investment in the stock exchange has said that the investment of foreign investors in the stock exchange is welcome. Stock exchange has seen such a huge investment after seven years.

The reason for the bullish trend in the market is the expectation of bilateral agreements in the Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia and positive news of expected Saudi investment in RekoDak due to the efforts of the SIFC Forum.

Atif Ikram Sheikh further stated that foreign investors buying shares in the Pakistan Stock Exchange was a positive sign of confidence in our current government. In one day, non-resident investors purchased shares worth \$234 million in the stock exchange, which was beneficial for the economy. INP