



The poetry of poet of the East Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal enjoys special acceptance in Iran

Iranian President  
Seyed  
Ebrahim Raisi

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## Iranian President Raisi arrives in Karachi on third leg of Pakistan visit

KARACHI: On the third leg of his visit to Pakistan, Iranian President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi along with his delegation arrived in the port city of Karachi on Tuesday. Upon their arrival at the Jinnah International Airport in Karachi, Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah, Governor Kamran Tessori and others welcomed the Iranian president and other members of the visiting delegation. President Asif Ali Zardari's daughter, First Lady Aseefa Bhutto, was also present at the airport to welcome the visiting dignitaries. Strict security measures were in place at the airport and its surrounding areas to avoid any untoward incident.

Sources privy to the development said that besides meetings with the governor and the chief minister, the Iranian president will address members of the business forum and attend a dinner at the CM House.

Later, President Raisi visited Quaid's mausoleum and paid his respects to the founder of Pakistan. During his stay in Karachi, the Iranian president will also meet the provincial cabinet. In recognition of his services for further bolstering ties between the two brethren nations, the University of Karachi will confer an honorary PhD degree on the Iranian president.

The Iranian president touched down in Islamabad on Monday on a three-day official visit from April 22 to 24. Raisi's visit is the first by any head of state to Islamabad after the February 8 general election.

Strict security measures have been taken, including air surveillance along with temporary internet suspension during the dignitary's movement. To avoid the consequent inconvenience to the general public, the provincial governments announced a local holiday in Lahore and Karachi.

Earlier today, the Iranian president arrived in Lahore where he was warmly welcomed by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz at the Allama Iqbal International Airport. Later, the visiting dignitary held separate meetings with CM Maryam and Governor Baligh Ur Rehman. The governor hosted a luncheon in honour of the distinguished guest and his delegation. Meanwhile, the president visited the historic Government College University (GCU) and addressed the students and faculty.

Addressing the students, President Raisi said that Pakistan and Iran enjoy deep-rooted historical, religious, cultural and civilizational ties and both countries were keen to develop centres of arts and learning besides the promotion of arts and sciences.

"It was need of the hour to pay special attention to arts, sciences and technology to shine among the comity of nations."

On Allama Iqbal, the Iranian President said the poetry of poet of the East Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal enjoys special acceptance in Iran. He said Pakistan and Iran maintain the same stance on the issue of Palestine issue. President Raisi said Iran would further enhance its cooperation with Pakistan in the energy and other sectors. Meanwhile, the Iranian president visited the mausoleum of national poet Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal in Lahore. He laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum and offered fataha



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Air Asia Aviation Group (AAAG) called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-i-Sadr.

## PM seeks UK's support to promote higher education, improve quality

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday expressed the government's desire to work together with the United Kingdom to promote higher education and improve quality of education in Pakistan.

The desire was expressed during a meeting with a delegation of representatives from leading United Kingdom universities here at the PM House.

The delegation was led by International Education Champion of the UK Sir Steve Smith. The prime minister welcomed the delegation and emphasized the importance of promoting quality education, saying that it was the top priority of the government.

He expressed his commitment to ensuring that every child had access to education, and that the federal government was working with provincial governments to achieve this goal.

The prime minister said his government had established the Education Endowment Fund in Punjab, adding that a similar initiative would also be established at the federal level.

He said the government was taking steps on emergency basis for the development of the education sector in the country.

The prime minister, praising the UK's support for Pakistan's education sector, expressed his desire to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the fields of education and trade.

He highlighted that the launch of degree pro-



grammes in the universities of Pakistan and the UK on reciprocal basis was a welcome step.

The modern education especially science and technology is guarantee of development of any nation, he added.

PM Shehbaz Sharif underscored that the bilateral relations with UK spanned over decades which were further strengthening with the passage of time.

He emphasized that there should be collaboration in the fields of research and technology in the universities of the two countries.

He further said Pakistan wanted to take benefit of the capacity of the UK's education sector. The delegation expressed their interest in

collaborating with Pakistani universities and offered assistance in teacher training and capacity building.

The prime minister was informed by the delegation that the scope of the Education Gateway Pakistan was being extended which would help enhancing bilateral cooperation in the education sector.

The delegation also appreciated the warm hospitality extended to them by the prime minister and government officials.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, MNA Romina Khurshed Alam, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi, British Council Country Director James Hampson, and other high officials.

## Ayaz reaffirms resolve to further deepen fraternal Pak-Saudi ties



ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Tuesday said that Pakistan attached great importance to its long-standing brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia.

"Pak-Saudi relations are bound by unbreakable bond of religion, culture, history, and mutual trust and respect," he said during a meeting with the Saudi Ambassador in Pakistan, Nawal bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki who called on him at Parliament House. He also expressed, "The continuous upward trajectory of our bilateral ties is extremely heartening, and we are committed to taking this mutually beneficial partnership to new heights by expanding cooperation in all fields of mutual interest."

The speaker highlighted that the people of Pakistan held deep respect and affinity for Saudi Arabia, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdul Al, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman, and the people of the Kingdom.

"Both brotherly countries share the unanimity of views on important global and regional issues," he added. Referring to parliament-to-parliament relations, Ayaz Sadiq emphasized that parliamentary diplomacy was of utmost importance to strengthen bilateral relations.

Exchanges of parliamentary delegations and coordination among parliamentary friendship groups would help bring the two nations closer, he added.

During the meeting, the speaker also mentioned the invitation extended to the Chairman of Majlis-e-Shura of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to visit Pakistan.

While commenting on the rich history of mutual cooperation, he highlighted that the two Islamic brotherly countries had always supported each other in difficult times. "Saudi Arabia's support for the economic development of Pakistan is commendable," he added. Welcoming Saudi Arabia's commitment to invest in Pakistan, Ayaz Sadiq remarked that there were ample opportunities for foreign investment in Pakistan, and current economic policies were very conducive for investment.

Ayaz Sadiq also thanked the Saudi government for providing facilities and support to the Pakistani Diaspora living in Saudi Arabia. The ambassador expressed gratitude to the speaker for his gracious remarks on Pak-Saudi ties, expressing best wishes for the custodians of the Holy Haram and the desire to expand bilateral relations.

He further reaffirmed that Saudi Arabia attached great importance to its brotherly relations with Pakistan, and both the people and government of Saudi Arabia would continue to lend support for the sustainable development and prosperity of Pakistan. APP

## Chairman JCSC confers civil awards to eminent scientists, engineers



Ceremony held here on Tuesday at Chaklala Garrison.

A total of 35 awardees were conferred with the awards, whereas seven officers were awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz, 15 officers were awarded President's Award for Pride of Performance and 13 officers were awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz. The Chairman JCSC lauded the services of

the scientists and engineers; hailing them as the nation's unseen heroes. While addressing the awardees, the CJSC said, "You, all, have selflessly contributed towards strengthening the foundations of a resilient nation; and for that, we are forever indebted to you." PR

RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, on behalf of the President of Pakistan, conferred civil awards on eminent scientists and engineers from strategic organizations for their meritorious services at the Investiture

## Japanese envoy calls on law minister

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, WADA Mitsuhiro paid a courtesy call to Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Tuesday. Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest, culture and traditions, said a press release. The minister stated that Japan is a very close friend of Pakistan and has assisted in times of need. He specifically lauded the efforts of Japan during floods of 2022. Both sides also discussed the security situation and the measures which are being taken to ensure the security of all the foreign personnel present in the country. Azam Nazeer Tarar underscored the government's resolve and special focus on the security concerns. The govt was organizing a special protection unit on the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he added. He said: "We are hopeful that situation will get better in terms of economy. The Government was keen and determined for Economic revival." The ongoing work on legal reforms was also discussed between the two sides. Azam Nazeer Tarar assured the ambassador of all kinds of assistance from the Pakistan's government to facilitate the foreign dignitaries present in the country. — VOM Report

## Voters rejected PTI's narrative of hatred, hypocrisy and lies in bye-elections: Tarar



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said on Tuesday that the voters during the recent bye-elections had rejected the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's narrative of

hatred, hypocrisy and lies.

Addressing a press conference along with Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar here, he said much hue and cry was made about so-called rigging in the bye-elections but even a single proof could not be presented by the PTI leadership. He said that the outcome of bye elections also cleared doubts about February 8 general elections created by a certain political party.

By the grace of Allah Almighty, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz swept the bye-elections as the masses voted for love of Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's

economic reforms. The minister remarked that people of Pakistan had buried the PTI's narrative based on violence, duplicity and lies as not PML-N voters, but other people also voted for PML-N due to its pro-people policies and track record of serving the masses.

Regarding Bushra Bibi's health, he said funny things were being shared on social media, though all her medical tests were clear.

He said it appeared that the PTI leaders had sworn that they have to speak against the country's national and defense institutions.

He said that due to the efforts of the government, the country was moving towards progress and development. The Iranian President had vowed to increase trade volume with Pakistan upto 10 billion dollars per year.

Earlier, he said the high level Saudi Arabian delegation had also discussed prospects of major investment in Pakistan. He said the stock market had broken all previous records due to the favorable environment. APP

## LIIBS 7th Edition, Unites Stakeholders for Collaborating for Growth

Economy on right path, govt committed to accelerate growth: Finance Minister

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The 7th Edition of LEADERS IN ISLAMABAD BUSINESS SUMMIT (LIIBS) kicked off with a full house at a local hotel in Islamabad. More than 15 global speakers and 1000+ delegates were present at the event to unlock growth opportunities and collaborate for mutual benefit and advancement.

The 7th Edition of LIIBS is jointly hosted by Nutshell Group and Unity Foods Limited, in collaboration with OICCI (Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry), with Faysal Bank Limited as the Platinum partner, and InfraZamin Pakistan as the strategic partner. The theme of the event this year is "Collaborating for Growth".

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue, having recently returned from Washington after deliberations with the IMF, focused on the 'need to do' on an immediate basis. Commenting on the proactive role of government he said, "Agriculture and IT exports are the two sectors that can be the driver of growth for Pakistan's economy. It is up to us as a country to come up with investable, bankable projects. There has been a 33.6% increase in agricultural loans between July and February of the current fiscal year. The government aims at alleviating inflation and providing relief to the weaker segments of society. Efforts are being made to control inflation and provide relief to the weaker segments of society. FBR tax collection increased by 30.2%, exceed-



ing the target of PKR 6,707 billion. Ministry of Finance, FBR, and the Ministry of Law are taking steps to increase collaboration in revenue collection." Welcoming the honorable public sector leadership, global leaders, and dele-

gates to the 7th Edition of LIIBS, Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Pakistan's Former Minister for Investment, reinforced the shared vision of Unity Foods Limited and Nutshell Group, for a successful, self-sufficient, and sustainable Pak-

istan. Azfar emphasized the need for collaboration between the Private, Public, and Military sectors. "Pakistan is at a crossroads, but I am optimistic that the finance team under the dynamic leadership of Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb will collaborate and do the needful. To progress as a country, we need competent teams in four main stakeholder domains: political government, bureaucracy, business leadership, and business community." Prof. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, graced the event and in a conversation titled, "The BIG Picture," he said, "We are committed to making Pakistan stand as an honorable country. Let us stop playing politics for the next few years and become an economic nation. The key to success is to compete and

collaborate simultaneously. When it comes to market share, we should compete but when it comes to industry share, we should collaborate, with this strategy we can be on a growth trajectory within the next 2 years."

In his welcome address, Lt. Gen. Omar Mahmood Hayat (Rtd), Chairman of Unity Foods Limited, while expressing his eagerness to engage in more collaborative efforts for the benefit of Pakistan's national interests, stated, "Given the current environment, if there was ever a time for a collaborative approach, specifically for businesses in Pakistan, that time is now. It is imperative to encourage participation in public-private partnerships to address industry challenges, advocate for regulatory reforms, and promote sustainable development initiatives."

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# NFC and fiscal equity

handling of fiscal matters with the approach of fiscal adhocism by the succeeding federal governments has worsened matters, leading the country to a near-default situation today. According to the latest consolidated report released by the Ministry of Finance, titled 'Federal Footprint SOEs Report FY2020-22', commercial entities under the control of the centre incurred losses amounting to a staggering Rs1.395 trillion over FY2021 and FY2022 only. Twenty-five entities made a cumulative loss of Rs665 billion in FY2021 and 31 entities made a cumulative loss of Rs730.26 billion in FY2022 – more than twice the size of the Public Sector Development Programme. As per the UN's National Human Development Report for Pakistan released in 2021, the economic privileges accorded to Pakistan's elite groups "add up to an estimated \$17.4 billion or roughly 6.0 per cent of the country's economy" that is driven by the country's tax and subsidy policies mainly benefiting the corporate sector and the feudal class. Currently, Pakistan's total expenditure stands at 19 per cent to GDP with federal expenditure amounting to 12.9 per cent and provincial expenditure at around 6.1 per cent, while total revenues stand around 11.4 per cent to GDP – a gap amounting to 7.6 per cent of GDP. The country faces a whopping tax-evasion of around Rs5.8 trillion annually – 6.9 per cent of GDP. Most of the tax evasion is reported from sectors mainly under federal control including: annual evasion on POL products estimated to be Rs996 billion and caused by smuggling, retail sector evasion

estimated at Rs888 billion, transport sector Rs562 billion, IPPs Rs498 billion, smuggling-prone items Rs355 billion, exports Rs342 billion and customs-related tax evasion at Rs600 billion. This tax compliance alone could plug leakages, injecting 5.8 per cent of GDP into the national kitty on an annual basis. In the 7th NFC, it was decided that the tax-to-GDP ratio would be increased up to 15 per cent of GDP – to be achieved till 2014-15. Nine years later and despite different wild experiments aimed at reforming the FBR, tax collection has remained stagnant whereas the provincial tax collection has increased from 0.3 per cent to over 1.0 per cent of GDP. The flawed taxation policies of centre, which rely overwhelmingly on indirect taxation, have driven inflation overwhelmingly higher. The fiscal gap borne out of the centre's inefficient policies is then bridged from the share of the provinces whose resources seem much easier to encroach upon than any effort at adopting reformative actions that require long-term and not-so-popular approaches. As a result, the centralization of financial resources has remained a bone of contention. The federal government's tendency to withhold funds and interfere in provincial affairs has impeded the progress of regional development initiatives. In contrast, the provinces have shown commendable diligence in utilizing their share of resources for the welfare of their people. One of the primary virtues of the 7th NFC Award is its ability to decentralize resources – empowering provinces to address local needs

effectively. By directly allocating funds to the provinces, the NFC Award eliminates not just federal bureaucratic hurdles but also the monopoly of the centre while ensuring efficient utilization of resources at the grassroots level. This devolution of financial authority has led to a surge in local development projects, improved service delivery and enhanced governance standards across some provinces. Since the NFC is a constitutional body, any revision requires a constitutional amendment with the consensus of all federating units. Blame games by the centre will not provide any solutions to the fiscal problems of the country. Instead of taking a reactive stance and unfairly laying the blame for consistently flawed fiscal mismanagement upon the provinces, it is essential that the centre works with the provinces in addressing fiscal challenges and tax reforms. In the intricate web of Pakistan's federal structure, the 7th/ last NFC award stands as a cornerstone of fiscal justice – granting equitable distribution of resources among the federating units by providing each province a fair share of financial resources for equitable distribution of resources. As the saying goes, the budget of a country and its tax systems are not neutral but deeply political – which is why fiscal justice is imperative to ensure socio-economic parity.

The writer is a member of the human rights committee of the Sindh Human Rights Commission. He tweets/posts @SukhdevHemmani\_

# Reimagining governance

MOSHARRAF ZAIDI

One of the frameworks that has been most influential in shaping my understanding of governance has been the Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness or CAR framework, developed in the early 2000s by my then-colleagues at the artist formerly known as DfID (Department for International Development). DfID used to be the development ministry within the UK government, and during Boris Johnson's run as prime minister, it was absorbed into the country's foreign ministry and is now part of the wider FCDO. DfID's ideas about governance were central to how the issue of governance was thought about for the first two decades of this century in part because the UK has had, at least until Brexit, an outsized influence on how international aid and assistance is talked about, disbursed and spent. The dizzying pace of China's growth as a global leader, the gradual withdrawal of the West from its position of moral leadership over the last two decades, and the rise of middle powers like Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia, and Saudi Arabia has meant that governance is defined more and more diversely than ever before. What was unthinkable even a decade ago is now widely embraced and what was widely seen to be sacrosanct is no longer even part of the conversation. A religious extremist like Narendra Modi is held up by Western governments and businesses as the epitome of democratic reform. Rapid economic growth and its ability to create jobs for Americans and Europeans are increasingly the only metrics that matter in Washington DC, New York, Brussels and Geneva. These changes have profound implications for countries in the 'Global South' – and especially those whose elites are lazy and incapable of finding their own voice and purpose in a fast-changing, always dynamic world. Pakistani elites are a perfect archetype for the floundering among the countries of the Global South. Remember: most developing countries are still floundering. It is easy to get caught up in the narratives of a handful of successful, positive-trajectory countries. It is also easy to misdiagnose exactly what they have got right and what most countries, including Pakistan, keep getting wrong. India is in a category all its own – even prior to the rapid economic growth it has experienced since the turn of the century, India had a tradition of forming and sticking to its own postures and approaches – both to domestic public policy and to how it related to the rest of the world. Bangladesh, as an exemplar, is over-referenced in Pakistan because it used to be the same country. It continues to enjoy impressive economic growth and admirably balance great and rising powers. But it is hardly a world-beater. Brazil, Turkey, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia are all much better positioned to be seen as exemplars. In each of these examples, the distinctive differential is how they stack up on the Capability, Accountability and Responsiveness framework. But because each of these three terms is so generic and often poorly understood, it is easy to misdiagnose exactly how more successful countries leverage their systemic capability, accountability and responsiveness – and how less successful ones waste even the little capability, accountability and responsiveness that their systems have. To see this clearly, we need to lay out each term as it relates to governance in 2024. Capability is the getting things done metric within the CAR framework. Can a system do things? Can it do them fast? Can it do them in a manner that people can see? Maybe even a manner in which people like that things are getting done? Can a system do things within a reasonable budget, or at least a budget that doesn't make the thing that is being done unpopular? Capability is not just the "delivery" angle of governance. It is delivery aligned with context – political and financial. Traditionally, Pakistan has been seen by foreigners as a high-capability country, largely because of a well-trained generalist bureaucracy that can hang with the best in the world when it comes to speaking about Pakistan. The Pakistani elite have hung their hat on this generic capability for the last two decades at great cost because even though the bureaucracy continues to be very highly capable by the metrics of twenty years ago, it has gradually lost the relevance and ability to be effective by the metrics of today. The big deltas that have worked against Pakistani 'capability' in this era have been demography, global geopolitics, and technology. Accountability is the most misleading of the three legs of the CAR framework. It traditionally means exactly what it seems to mean – but in Pakistan, it has always meant something different. Accountability is the formal recognition that individuals and organizations are answerable for their performance. First-order reactions to this in Pakistan are always about civil-military relations, or about financial management and fiduciary risk. But these are distractions from what accountability should mean. Accountability is whether anyone is ever rewarded for getting things done (demonstrating capability) or punished for not getting things done. Listen to the most seasoned political analysts in Pakistan and they will tell you, "Vote delivery ka nahin hai". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif – whose entire personal brand is built on delivery – laments this. His opponents, both inside his party and among the opposition, celebrate it. But the wider point gets missed here – much to Pakistan's disadvantage. Accountability is impossible if there are no institutionalized or formal relationships between key actors in the critical pathways of governance. The dismantling of the 2006-2010 reforms (Lawyers Movement, 18th Amendment, 7th NFC) has had a cancerous and enduring impact above all: it has destroyed whatever little accountability there was in the Pakistani governance landscape. From the patwari, to the judge, to the station master, to the commander, to the district commissioner, to the sub-inspector, to the XEN, there is a wholesale erosion of the system's ability to do the things it is supposed to do. Here too, demography and technology have played a role – but a bigger and more important story in this might be the manner in which a focus on accountability is lost because of the third leg of the CAR framework: responsiveness.

The writer is an analyst and commentator.

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



In 1989, Bhutto ordered a military intervention in Afghanistan, which failed, leading her to dismiss the directors of the intelligence services. With US aid she imposed the Seventh Five-Year Plan to restore and centralise the national economy. Nonetheless, the economic situation worsened when the state currency lost a currency war with India. The country entered a period of stagflation, and her government was dismissed by the conservative president, Ghulam Ishaq Khan. The 1990 general election results allowed the right-wing conservative alliance the Islamic Democratic Alliance (IDA) led by Nawaz Sharif to form a government under a democratic system for the first time. Attempting to end stagflation Sharif launched a program of privatisation and economic liberalisation. His government adopted a policy of ambiguity regarding atomic bomb programs. Sharif intervened in the Gulf War in 1991, and ordered an operation against the liberal forces in

Karachi in 1992. Institutional problems arose with president Ghulam Khan, who attempted to dismiss Sharif on the same charges he had used against Benazir Bhutto. Through a Supreme Court judgement Sharif was restored and together with Bhutto ousted Khan from the presidency. Weeks later Sharif was forced to relinquish office by the military leadership. **Nawaz Sharif, 1998** As a result of the 1993 general elections Benazir Bhutto secured a plurality and formed a government after hand-picking a president. She approved the appointments of all four four-star chiefs of staff: Mansurul Haq of the navy; Abbas Khattak of the air force; Abdul Waheed of the army; and Farooq Feroze Khan chairman of the joint chiefs. She oversaw a tough stance to bring political stability, which with her fiery rhetoric earned her the nickname "Iron Lady" from her rivals. Proponents of social democracy and national pride were supported, while

the nationalisation and centralisation of the economy continued after the Eighth Five-Year Plan was enacted to end stagflation. Her foreign policy made an effort to balance relations with Iran, the United States, the European Union and the socialist states. Pakistan's intelligence agency, the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), became involved in supporting Muslims around the world. ISI's Director-General Javed Nasir later confessed that despite the UN arms embargo on Bosnia the ISI airlifted anti-tank weapons and missiles to the Bosnian mujahideen which turned the tide in favour of Bosnian Muslims and forced the Serbs to lift the siege of Sarajevo.[150][151][152] Under Nasir's leadership the ISI was also involved in supporting Chinese Muslims in Xinjiang Province, rebel Muslim groups in the Philippines, and some religious groups in Central Asia.[151] Pakistan was one of only three countries which recognised the Taliban government and Mullah

Mohammed Omar as the legitimate ruler of Afghanistan.[153] Benazir Bhutto continued her pressure on India, pushing India on to take defensive positions on its nuclear programme. Bhutto's clandestine initiatives modernised and expanded the atomic bomb programme after initiating missile system programs. In 1994 she successfully approached France for the transfer of Air-independent propulsion technology. Focusing on cultural development, her policies resulted in growth in the rock and pop music industry, and the film industry made a comeback after introducing new talent. She exercised tough policies to ban Indian media in the country, while promoting the television industry to produce dramas, films, artistic programs and music. Public anxiety about the weakness of Pakistani education led to large-scale federal support for science education and research by both Bhutto and Sharif.

To be continued.....

# Showbiz

# Tech

## Sydney Sweeney slammed by her producer: 'She can't act'

Sydney Sweeney answered the producer showing of her assets

Actress Sydney Sweeney was contacted a few days ago regarding some regrettable remarks producer Carol Baum had made to her during a Dead Ringers 1988 screening. They stated that "I don't understand Sydney Sweeney. I was watching this film, With Everyone But Me, on the plane because I wanted to see it, to know who she is," the interviewee said, making it clear that the production was "an unwatchable film", while leaving the leading lady with the harshest criticism: "Explain this girl to me. She's not pretty, she can't act. Why is she so good?" Baum added. Baum's derogatory comments have already prompted a forceful reply from Sweeney's reps, who expressed dissatisfaction with the producer's

actions. "How sad that a woman in a position to share her knowledge and experience would choose to attack another woman. If that is what she has learned in her decades in the industry and feels it is appropriate to teach her students that way, it is disgraceful. To unfairly disparage a fellow producer speaks volumes about Ms. Baum's character," the publication says. To date, Sweeney has showed little regard for the opinions of those who despise her. However, the actress released some images this past weekend while having a great time in Mexico, which have been taken as a reaction to the backlash she has been receiving lately. A sweatshirt bearing a special message for them.



## Astronomers detect Milky Way's second-largest known black hole

WASHINGTON: Astronomers have discovered a black hole with a mass about 33 times greater than that of our sun, the biggest one known in the Milky Way aside from the supermassive black hole lurking at the centre of our galaxy. The newly identified black hole is located about 2,000 light-years from Earth - relatively close in cosmic terms - in the constellation Aquila, and has a companion star orbiting it, researchers said on Tuesday. A light year is the distance light travels in a year, 5.9 trillion miles (9.5 trillion km). Black holes are extraordinarily dense objects with gravity so strong that not even light can escape, making it difficult to spot them. This one was identified through observations made in the European Space Agency's Gaia mission, which is creating a huge stellar census, because it caused a wobbling motion in its companion star. Data from the European Southern Observatory's Chile-based Very Large Telescope and other ground-based

observatories were used to verify the black hole's mass. "This black hole is not only very massive, it is also very peculiar in many aspects. It is really something we never expected to see," said Pasquale Panuzzo, a research engineer at the French research agency CNRS working at the Observatoire de Paris and lead author of the study published in the journal Astronomy & Astrophysics. For instance, the black hole, called Gaia BH3, and its companion are traveling within the galaxy in the opposite direction of how stars typically orbit in the Milky Way. Gaia BH3 probably formed after the death of a star that was more than 40 as massive as the sun, the researchers said. Black holes that result from the collapse of a single star are called stellar black holes. Gaia BH3 is the largest-known stellar black hole, according to astronomer and study co-author Tsevi Mazeh of the Tel Aviv University in Israel.

# Health

## Face yoga may make you look younger

Face yoga — or targeted motions that work the muscles in your face — is promoted as a means to reshape your face and make you appear younger on social media. Some people say face yoga poses can help skin glow, smooth out wrinkles, and plump up the cheeks. However, more research is needed on this, according to Health. Interestingly, reducing eye strain and jowls, which create the illusion of a "double chin," may be within your reach.

Three distinct layers comprise the face, which is situated above the skull. The skin is the outermost layer. Beneath that, there are two distinct layers of fat: subcutaneous fat, located directly beneath the skin layer, and deep fat, situated beneath the subcutaneous fat. These fat pockets line together and are what give your face shape and fullness. Under the fat are the facial muscles, most of which are quite small. As you age, gravity pulls your skin downward, which can cause your face to sag.

The fat layer in the face that gives younger faces their plumpness disappears, giving the face a more empty appearance. Additionally, the bones and skin start to thin. Face yoga targets specific facial muscles through specific facial movements or by using your hands and fingers to massage your face. Notably, only injections or cosmetic surgery may restore lost facial fat; these exercises cannot. Alternatively, doing face yoga could help you build up some muscle and smooth out your skin





## Romina, Swiss official vow to bolster agriculture resilience collaboration



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam on Tuesday held a meeting with Elise Lee, Asia head of Swiss company Pula, to discuss implementation of climate change resilience frameworks for federal and provincial governments through comprehensive insurance.

During the meeting, both sides agreed to close collaboration and consistent engagements aiming to bolster agricultural resilience in Pakistan, a news release said. Elise Lee expressed her keen desire to work together with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination in the agricultural sector.

## Shaheera Shahid visits Press Council of Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Shaheera Shahid visited Press Council of Pakistan's (PCP) Secretariat on Tuesday and lauded its performance in addressing the problems faced by journalist community. According to a press release issued here, the secretary said appointment of Chairman PCP Arshad Khan Jadoon would further improve the performance of the institution.

She said that opening of one-window operation had improved confidence in the journalists and public. On the occasion, the PCP chairman said that all-out efforts would be made to address the issues facing journalist community and general public. He expressed the hope that coordination between the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the PCP would further help resolve the issues faced by the journalists. Earlier, the senior officers gave a detailed briefing to the Federal Secretary about the PCP's performance. APP

## Pak-Canada bilateral relations stable, excellent: Canadian High Commissioner

ATTOCK: Canadian High Commissioner in Pakistan Leslie Scanlon has said that bilateral relations between Pakistan and Canada are stable and excellent and they have been established for 70 years now.

She said the Canadian government and people are connected with Pakistani government and people and this relationship is increasing prosperity between the two countries. She expressed these thoughts while talking to the media at the opening ceremony of Mohammad Khattab Khan Eye Care Free Hospital established on 10 kanals of land by Pakistani brothers Parvez Akhtar and Aqeel Ahmad Khan in Khorakhel village of Hazro tehsil of Attock. Earlier, Mrs. Muhammad Khattab Khan, Aqeel Khan, Parvez Khan and their family received a grand welcome on their arrival in Khorakhel. Famous anchor person Syed Iqarul Hassan, prominent intellectual Syed Qasim Ali Shah, senior journalist Nisar Ali Khan, MD Al Mustafa

Trust UK Sadaf Javed, former provincial minister Jahangir Khanzada, MPA Qazi Ahmed Akbar, former moderator of Formal Zeb Alam Khan, prominent and local people including Saqi Khan, Sajjad Khan were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, the Canadian HC said that he was very happy to be in Khorakhel, where he paid tribute to Mrs. Khattab Khan, Parvez Khan and Aqeel Khan in wonderful words for starting such a big public welfare project.

The Canadian ambassador said that the Prime Minister of Canada has good intentions and good words for Pakistan. Iqarul Hasan and Qasim Ali Shah paid tribute to the efforts of Canadian Pakistani brothers Parvez Khan and Aqeel Khan in wonderful words and termed their outstanding philanthropic plan as worthy of emulation adding that both the brothers have done a historic public service. APP

## Empowering youth through financial support top priority of govt: Mashhood



ISLAMABAD: Chairman of Prime Minister Youth Program Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Tuesday said that empowering youth through financial support was the top priority of the government.

He expressed these views during a meeting with Deputy Governor of State Bank of Pakistan Salim Ullah.

The Chairman further said that providing better economic opportunities and making the young generation more financially independent and self-sufficient, there was an urgent

need to provide them an economically friendly environment, so that they would be able to have a prosperous future. The meeting deliberated on strategies to increase access to financial services for the youth under the Prime Minister's Youth Business and Agriculture Loan Scheme.

Rana Mashhood said that bursting potential of the youth should be utilized to ensure their role in the development and prosperity of Pakistan. The Chairman reiterated his commitment to work closely with the State Bank of Pakistan to

ensure concrete initiatives for the development and empowerment of youth across the country.

The constructive dialogue between the Youth Program Chairman and the State Bank of Pakistan Deputy Governor laid a promising foundation for future partnerships and initiatives.

On the occasion, the Deputy Governor of SBP said that collaboration was imperative to involve the youth in economic development and stabilise the economy of Pakistan. APP



LAHORE: Visiting President of Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi is being seen off by Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman & Federal Minister for Housing & Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada upon his departure to Karachi at Allama Iqbal International Airport.

## UNICEF representative calls on Education Minister, discusses education sector challenges

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) representative in Pakistan Mr. Abdullah A. Fadil called on the Minister of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui here on Tuesday and discussed the challenges being faced by the education sector of Pakistan.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani in addition with senior officials of the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training. Minister Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui welcomed Mr. Abdullah A. Fadil and acknowledged the services of UNICEF in the education sector of Pakistan.

He appreciated the role of UNICEF in helping Pakistan in its bid to create equal access to quality education for the people of Pakistan. Federal Minister said that there is a dire need to address the issue of Out of School Children and the broader gap of access and quality of education on an emergency basis.

Dr. Khalid said that the ministry of education is working on a holistic plan to create a National Education Framework under which the federation and the provinces will be equal stakeholders.

Minister said that this policy will be launched within a month and will bring all the stakeholders on the same page. He said that all the



provinces along with donor partners will be taken on board to create a national consensus.

Dr. Khalid said that the primary goal is to drastically reduce the Out of School Children in Pakistan and that can only be done with a national, concerted and focused effort.

Secretary Education Mr. Mohyuddin Ahmed Wani said that this seemingly insurmountable crisis can only be addressed if we can make the solution of the education crisis a cornerstone of the broader narrative of economic progress. Mr. Wani said that the federal government will pledge support for the underprivileged areas of the provinces such as slums to ensure broader inclusiveness under the National Education Policy.

Mr. Abdullah A. Fadil said that UNICEF has

been present in Pakistan since 1948. He said that UNICEF supports efforts to increase access to quality education for all children in Pakistan, with a focus on marginalized and vulnerable populations. This includes initiatives to improve school enrollment, retention, and learning outcomes, as well as promoting inclusive and child-friendly learning environments. Mr. Abdullah highlighted that UNICEF spent \$150 Mn from 2018-2013 on its education program in Pakistan and that this budget has been increased to approximately \$250 Mn for the next five years.

Mr. Abdullah said that the forum of Foundational Learning Alliance, which includes all the major donors in Pakistan, would be keen to join the concerted effort under the banner of the National Education Policy.

## Pakistan Business Council's delegation calls on Power Minister



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Pakistan Business Council called on Minister for Power Division Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari here Tuesday. Challenges confronted to Industrial sectors of the country came under discussion during the meeting, said a press release issued here.

During the meeting, the delegation highlighted issues affecting the industries and presented recommendations to improve the power sector. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said the recommendations presented by the Pakistan Business Council have already been included in the ongoing reform agenda of the power sector.

He said the power sector reforms would be implemented with a clear timeline after approval from the Prime Minister. The reforms would promote favorable environment for industrial growth in Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif witnesses the signing of different agreements between China and Pakistan regarding cooperation in various fields.

## Abai's poetry laid foundation for modern Kazakhstan: Amb Kistafin



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Tuesday said that national poet and intellectual of Kazakhstan Qunanbaily Abai's left an indelible impression on the socio-economic landscape and culture of Kazakhstan and his ideas are the foundation for modern Kazakhstan. "His ideas laid the groundwork for the Kazakh cultural renaissance of the 20th century," he said.

"Qunanbaily Abai's poetry and

books have been translated into many languages of the world, which taught the whole world about humanity, peace and common prosperity," he added. Sharing details on book launching ceremony, he said that "Book of Words" by Abai, translated into Pashto, Punjabi, Sindhi, and Balochi, alongside a Kazakh-Urdu-English phrasebook. Abai's poetry laid foundation for modern Kazakhstan: Amb Kistafin The ceremony was organized by the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in collaboration with the National Library of Pakistan and the Embassy of Kazakhstan to Pakistan.

Today, Abai Qunanbaily's legacy is alive and thriving, inspiring generations of writers, thinkers, and activists, he said. The Ambassador said that during Qunanbaily Abai's era, several important socio-political and socio-economic changes occurred in Kazakhstan. Abai's creative poetry affected the philosophical thinking of educated Kazakhs, he said. The leaders of the progressive Alash Orda movement saw him as their inspiration. He participated in the governing of the country and played a certain role in trying to resolve complicated problems of society. Throughout his life, Abai faced number of challenges, including political oppression and personal tragedy, he said. Despite these obstacles, he remained committed to his principles and continued to inspire others through his writings and actions. He advocated for the modernization of Kazakh society, including the promotion of education, the empowerment of women, and the preservation of Kazakh cultural heritage. Abai's poetry laid foundation for modern Kazakhstan: Amb

Kistafin Abai passed away in 1904, but his legacy lives on and his contributions to Kazakh literature, culture, and society continue to be celebrated and studied, both in Kazakhstan and around the world, he said. Today, he is remembered as a national hero and a symbol of Kazakh identity, his works and ideas continue to inspire generations of readers and thinkers. Throughout his life, Abai created about 170 poems; made 56 translations of world classic works; invented and recorded about twenty melodies that were used by composers. Abai's main works include the "The Book of Words", "Masgud", "Iskander", "The Tale of Azim" and many others.

"The Book of Words", he said this collection of poems and philosophical reflections is Abai's magnum opus. It encompasses a wide range of themes, including love, nature, spirituality, and social justice. This book consists of 45 short parables and philosophical treatises. Abai wrote his "Books of Words" in his late years, having experienced the temptations of power and the hardships of earthly affairs, the recognition of the people and the loss of loved ones.

## President for comprehensive efforts to prevent heart diseases

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday underscored the need to create awareness and undertake comprehensive efforts to prevent cardiovascular diseases in Pakistan.

He urged the need to educate people about adopting healthier lifestyles to prevent heart diseases in the country. The president expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAHA), led by its President Major General (ret'd) Masud-ur-Rehman, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, the president expressed concern over the rise in cardiovascular diseases and emphasised the need for a comprehensive Heart and Non-Communicable Diseases prevention programme. He said that steps should be taken to enforce the display of health advisories about the quantity of sugar in carbonated and sugary beverages. The head of the delegation briefed the President about the role of PANAHA in disseminating information about the spread of heart diseases and its risk factors among the general public.

He apprised that PANAHA had been making efforts to prevent, minimize and control fatalities due to angina, heart failure and heart attack.

He informed that Association aimed to educate the people and impart training regarding the recognition of cardiac arrest and providing Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) to save lives. He further apprised that PANAHA had also helped the victims of natural disasters, besides treating poor patients and children. The president appreciated PANAHA's role in promoting cardiac health and advocating for healthier lifestyles and assured them of his full support in this regard.

## Afghan refugees' management require substantial resources; int'l community support necessary, says Muqam

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for States and Frontier Regions (SAFRON) Engineer Amir Muqam on Tuesday urged the international community, through UNHCR leadership's, to increase funding and support to meet the growing needs of the Afghan refugees that required substantial resources. The minister held a virtual interaction with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Filippo Grandi over zoom to discuss issues of Afghan refugees, a news release said. He said the Government of Pakistan remains committed to the solutions and strategy for Afghan refugees. Amir Muqam said: "We are immensely grateful for UNHCR's ongoing support and partnership in managing the Afghan Refugees' situation. "We look forward to continuing our collaboration to ensure the safety and dignity of refugees within our borders." He said: "We emphasize our dedication to facilitating voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation. We see UNHCR's support in ensuring these processes are well supported and that returnees have viable prospects upon their return." APP