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Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal

## Defence Minister leads Pakistan's delegation to Kazakhstan SCO moot



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Defence & Defence Production Khawaja Muhammad Asif is leading the Pakistan delegation to Kazakhstan for the annual meeting of the Defence Ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). The meeting reviewed the regional security issues, including the defence cooperation initiatives, a news release said. The Defence Minister also held meetings with the defence ministers of the friendly countries of the SCO to discuss issues of bilateral defence cooperation. Various areas of mutual interest including respective regional security, counter terrorism, Afghanistan situation and review of national security priorities, extremist threats, border management and maritime security were also deliberated upon. Minister of Defence stated that Pakistan is deeply concerned about the escalating situation in Gaza. Pakistan has consistently advocated for a just, comprehensive and lasting solution to the Palestinian question anchored in international law and in line with relevant United Nations resolutions. He also said that Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the SCO platform. "I would reiterate that Pakistan takes great pride in our partnership with SCO and are fully committed to further deepening and expanding this association", said the Minister for Defense while addressing the forum.



**KAZAKHSTAN: Federal Minister for Defence & Defence Production, Khawaja Muhammad Asif in a group photo with Defence Ministers of member states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).**



**ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Dawoodi Bohra community called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.**

## PM directs formation of committee for consultation with provinces on carbon credits policy

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif Friday directed formation of a committee for consultation with the provinces for policy making on guiding principles for carbon credits. He was chairing the third meeting of Pakistan Council for Climate Change. The federal and provincial governments would work together for making policies regarding climate change, he said. "Our challenges regarding climate change are increasing with every passing day," he said, adding without the consultation of provinces, there was no question of policy making of any kind on the issue. The participants discussed in detail policy guidelines for foreign trading in carbon credits. He instructed that a policy draft should be presented in the next meeting of the Council after consultation with the provinces. The chief ministers of the four provinces expressed their viewpoint regarding policy making and gave recommendations. The prime minister directed that the provinces and other stakeholders should be taken into confidence regarding the important policy draft on climate change. He said Pakistan was one of the countries badly suffered from the adverse effects of climate change. It was gravely affected by the



rains in 2022 and the floods caused by them. As a servant of Pakistan, he said, he worked for the relief and rehabilitation of the flood affectees and fought the case of Pakistan all across the world regarding climate change. He said Ahsan Iqbal and Sherry Rehman and all the relevant institutions and ministries took important steps to take Pakistan out of that difficult time and to build infrastructure in the country regarding climate change. He said he and the Pakistani nation were thankful to the friendly countries and the international community particularly Secre-

tary General of the United Nations for coming to the aid of affected Pakistanis. Federal ministers including Ishaq Dar, Ahad Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb and Sardar Awais Khan Leghari, Coordinator of Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, high level officers and experts from the public and private sectors attended the meeting. The Azad Jammu & Kashmir prime minister and the chief ministers of provinces, including Gilgit Baltistan, attended the meeting through video link.

## Negative propaganda cannot undermine nation's pursuit of prosperity: COAS



Urging the nation to reject "negative forces" together, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), General Syed Asim Munir on Friday said that negative propaganda and social media trolls could not distract the nation from marching towards the development and prosperity of Pakistan. Addressing the Green Pakistan Initiative conference, the army chief said: "Let us all reject negative forces together and focus on Pakistan's journey of development and stability." He said that the armed forces of the country with the support of the nation would fail all the inimical forces bent on impeding the country's development and prosperity. "We are all a united team Pakistan - InshaAllah with the cooperation and support of the people, all efforts of those who distract and obstruct Pakistan's development journey will fail," he added. Stressing the need for overpowering economic challenges, General Munir said that complete independence without economic stability is not possible. "No instability would be tolerated in Pakistan's journey of prosperity and development," he warned. Last month, COAS Munir assured unwavering resolve of the Pakistan Army to support the government's initiatives aimed at the economic recovery of the country. He had made the remarks during a high-level meeting — with an agenda of "measures against the spectrum of illegal activities and criminal mafias" — held with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair. The meeting was attended by civil-military leadership in which measures against unlawful activities were discussed. The civil-military leadership had decided strict actions against those elements who were involved in any kind of illegal activities including corruption, smuggling power theft or running criminal mafias. PR

## Ahsan chairs 13th CPEC-JCC preparatory meeting, reviews arrangements for high-level delegation's visit to China

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday chaired a preparatory meeting for the 13th China-Pakistan Economic Corridor Joint Cooperation Committee (CPEC-JCC) meeting and a visit of the high-level delegation to China. He underscored the substantial success witnessed by Pakistan between 2013 and 2018, marked by an influx of approximately \$25 billion of Chinese investment within the framework of CPEC. "This investment traversed critical sectors such as energy, infrastructure, Gwadar, and telecommunications, significantly augmenting Pakistan's developmental landscape across various sectors," he said, according to a Planning ministry's news release. Despite encountering setbacks during the previous political administration, the minister said concerted efforts had been undertaken to restore China's confidence, yielding significant progress under the present govern-

ment's stewardship over the past 16 months. In his assessment of ongoing projects, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal accentuated the imperative of preparing for the second phase of CPEC. Making reference to the recent visit of China's Deputy Prime Minister commemorating the 10th anniversary of CPEC, Ahsan Iqbal outlined the incorporation of five corridors for future collaboration, with a focal emphasis on economic corridors geared towards job creation, innovation, green energy and inclusive regional development. The meeting deliberated on pragmatic strategies within each corridor, aligning them with national development objectives and priorities. Ahsan Iqbal underscored the importance of cultivating a proficient team to ensure readiness for negotiations in China. "Each project within the portfolio will be evaluated based on its contribution to the overarching vision and its potential for yielding mutually advantageous outcomes."

## Ashrafi re-elected member of Muslim World League's Supreme Council

ISLAMABAD: Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mahmood Ashrafi, Pakistan Ulema Council Chairman and International Tazim-e-Haramain Sharifain Council Secretary General, has been re-elected as a member of the Supreme Council of Muslim World League. With a longstanding commitment to the upliftment of Islamic values and the welfare of Muslim communities worldwide, Ashrafi has consistently been at the forefront of advocating for unity and cooperation within the Muslim world. Ashrafi's re-election to the prestigious Supreme Council reaffirms his influential role in shaping the discourse surrounding contemporary Islamic issues. Throughout his tenure, Ashrafi has demonstrated remarkable leadership in promoting interfaith harmony, countering extremism, and fostering dialogue among diverse Muslim sects. Ashrafi's unwavering efforts have earned him respect and recognition both nationally and internationally. As a member of the Supreme Council of Muslim World League, Ashrafi is poised to continue his advocacy for the rights and well-being of Muslims, while also contributing to the League's initiatives aimed at addressing the multifaceted challenges confronting the Muslim Ummah. APP

## Mohsin Naqvi visits Police Facilitation center, directs 24 hour service for citizens



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited a Police Facilitation Center (PFC) in Islamabad's F-6 sector to inspect the counters made for the convenience of the citizens. Mohsin Naqvi directed the officials to keep the PFC open for 24 hours for the convenience of

the citizens. He said that the citizens should be able to avail the services at facility centers at any time according to their convenience. The minister inspected various counters of the PFC and appreciated the staff for serving the citizens. He directed the authorities to provide comfortable chairs to the applicants coming for driving licenses. Naqvi met the citizens who came to the PFC and asked about the solution to the problems. Citizens welcomed the announcement of keeping the Police Service Center open 24 hours and thanked Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. Inspector General Police Islamabad Ali Nasir Rizvi gave a briefing about PFC to the minister. VOM Report

## PM to attend WEF meeting in KSA on April 28, OIC summit in Gambia on May 4: FO Spox

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is scheduled to attend a special meeting of the World Economic Forum on "Global Collaboration, Growth and Energy for Development" in Riyadh on April 28-29. Foreign Office spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch, in her weekly press briefing, told the media that the prime minister, accompanied by Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, would travel to the Kingdom at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman and WEF Founder and Executive Chairman Klaus Schwab. She said that the high-level participation in the Forum would provide an opportunity to highlight Pakistan's priorities in global health architecture, inclusive

growth, regional collaboration and balance between growth and energy consumption, besides interacting with the participating world leaders and heads of international organisations. The prime minister will visit Gambia to attend the 15th session of the Islamic Summit Conference under the slogan "Enhancing Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development," on May 4-5, 2024 in Banjul, the capital city of Gambia. The OIC summit is being held at a critical time when the Israeli atrocities in Gaza continued unabated where the Muslim world leaders will deliberate on the situation in Palestine. She said that Prime Minister Shehbaz would express Pakistan's grave concern



on genocide in Gaza, advocate for their right to self-determination, the imperative of solidarity, besides deliberating on Islamophobia, terrorism, and the challenges faced by the world, particularly the Muslim world. The prime minister will also hold bilateral meetings with the Muslim world

leaders. The OIC Summit will be preceded by the preparatory meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers on May 2-3 to be attended by Foreign Minister Dar, who will also hold bilateral meetings. The spokesperson told the media that Pakistan was witnessing a surge in provocative statements from the Indian leaders asserting unwarranted claims on the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Pakistan rejects the Indian claims as fueled by hyper-nationalism with inflammation rhetoric, such claims pose threats to regional peace and stability. She urged the Indian politicians to cease the practice of dragging Pakistan into their internal discourse aimed at gaining

electoral motives. She said that despite Indian rhetoric and assertions, IIOJK remained an internationally recognized disputed territory as the UN Security Council's resolutions clearly outlined that final status would be determined by the will of the Kashmiri people through a free plebiscite. "India would be wise to help implement those resolutions instead of harboring delusion of grandeur," she remarked. The spokesperson also condemned the ongoing vilification, stigmatization and victimization of Muslims and other minorities in India. To a question, Spokesperson Baloch said currently, there was no back channel diplomacy going on between Pakistan and India to normalize bilateral trade.

Apprising the media of the visit of Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, she said during the interactions, both sides agreed to strengthen economic and cultural cooperation, turn the bilateral borders into borders of peace and cooperation, fast-track the negotiations on Free Trade Agreement and release each other's prisoners. Asked about the Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline Project, she said it was discussed during President Raisi's visit and also featured in the joint statement. She said Pakistan had significant energy needs and was exploring options for its import. She said Pakistan had noted the statements from the US authorities about the Pakistan-Iran trade and was engaged with the US and discussed all aspects of the energy needs. APP

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## Discouraging harm

DR RAMESH KUMAR VANKWANI

Undoubtedly, the most critical challenge Pakistan is facing to safeguard the ideological borders in the 21st century is in the form of the misuse of social media. I think the Ministry of Interior has correctly identified the ground facts in its report submitted before the Supreme Court of Pakistan. That there was a genuine risk of riots and anarchy on Election Day (Feb 8) due to the misuse of social media platform X (formerly known as Twitter) by some extremist elements is plausible. Ten years ago, in 2014, during a hearing before then-CJP Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jilani on the issue of protection of the rights of non-Muslim minorities, I emphasized the need to control the dissemination of hateful content in order to maintain peace in Pakistan. Similarly, after the Army Public School tragedy, when a national action plan was prepared to curb terrorism throughout the country, I demanded the prevention of hate content on social

**Under the Great Firewall of China, no external force or local facilitator is allowed to create panic on social media. In Japan last year, a government minister proposed to introduce a SIM card authentication process for internet services to ensure the positive use of social media. In my view, all kinds of internet services in Pakistan should be made subject to mobile number verification code, and in the next phase, social media organizations should be convinced to establish their offices in Pakistan.**

media. In 2017, in my weekly column published in these pages, I presented my in-depth analysis that evil elements have got such a powerful weapon in the form of social media, which is allowing them to target every sensible person who disagrees with their negative agenda. There are frequent reports appearing on international media that there is a direct link between social media and hate crimes, which is why the pressure on Facebook, YouTube and X management from the international community to curb negative views on the internet is increasing day by day.

I suggested seven years ago that the use of social media in Pakistan should be linked to SIM cards, and the government should make it mandatory for all news website owners and bloggers to publish their contact details on the website. The role of editor and fact checking should be strengthened in all media organizations.

Today, no one can deny the fact that social media is being used by anti-social elements in a systematic manner to spread hatred against opponents, and the use of foul language on Pakistani social media platforms is increasing. In such a critical situation, the government has no choice but to ban X completely.

I highlighted in my column published last month on March 21 that the parliament of Canada has introduced the Online Harm Act to combat extremism and violent terrorism through internet-based social media content. The Digital Safety Commission of Canada is being established under the said act. Similarly, in various countries including South Korea and China, it is necessary to provide real identity to use the internet.

Under the Great Firewall of China, no external force or local facilitator is allowed to create panic on social media. In Japan last year, a government minister proposed to introduce a SIM card authentication process for internet services to ensure the positive use of social media. In my view, all kinds of internet services in Pakistan should be made subject to mobile number verification code, and in the next phase, social media organizations should be convinced to establish their offices in Pakistan. Anonymous websites operated from foreign countries should be blocked for not revealing their identity and action should be taken at the diplomatic level against those foreign entities involved in anti-Pakistan propaganda. If we want to move Pakistan along with developed countries, we have to look at international countries to analyze their efforts for ensuring responsible social media in their respective societies. Today, when the international community is determined to maintain a pleasant environment through responsible use of social media, it is our national responsibility to support the efforts of the government of Pakistan for curbing the misuse of social media as well as safeguarding people from online harm in the best interest of our beloved country.

*The writer is a member of the National Assembly and patron-in-chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council. He tweets/posts @RVankwani*



Dr Khurram Abbas

# All eyes on India

The 18th Lok Sabha elections have started in India and will run till June 4, 2024. According to the Indian Election Commission, 960 million people are eligible to cast a vote. Elections will be carried out in seven phases spanning 44 days, marking these the world's longest and largest elections. There are two types of political parties contesting the Lok Sabha elections – national parties and state parties. National parties have a significant presence in several states, while state parties are confined to specific states. Through the electoral lens, these parties could be divided into three blocs. The first bloc is the ruling coalition of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The second bloc consists of the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA), while the third bloc comprises those parties that have not yet decided to be part of any of the two alliances. The ruling coalition (NDA) has claimed that it will secure over 400 seats out of 543 seats. The late Rajiv Gandhi is the only prime minister of India who secured 414 seats in Indian electoral history. The electoral dynamics of the Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha elections

are largely dissimilar. The trends of all Lok Sabha constituencies and the dynamics of constituency politics could be understood through the data available on the Indian Elections Commission's website.

The results of the 15th till 17th Lok Sabha elections largely divide Indian electoral constituencies into three categories. The first category consists of around 100 seats where the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will not be able to secure a single seat. These constituencies are dominantly in the southern and western parts of India.

Since 2004, the BJP's vote share in these constituencies has not improved as compared to its popularity in other constituencies of India. In the previous election, the BJP performed worst in these constituencies and ended up somewhere between fourth and seventh position.

The second category consists of 200 seats where the two arch-rivals, the BJP and the Indian National Congress (INC), will be primary contenders. The centre and northern part of India – the Hindi belt – belongs to the second category of constituencies.

Since 2014, the Congress has gradually lost its space in these 200 constituencies. In 2014, the BJP secured 112 out of 200 seats. This figure further improved in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections when the BJP secured 182 out of 200 seats, which is a remarkable achievement in electoral politics. Due to the Congress's worst per-

formance, the NDA secured 303 seats in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. There are several reasons for this consistently worst performance for the Congress in the previous two Lok Sabha elections. These include the incumbency factor, the absence of strong and charismatic leadership, internal rifts, the Modi factor, Hindutva's popularity, and allegations of nepotism and corruption, etc.

These collective issues restricted the Congress to 52 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 elections. On the contrary, the BJP's perception management through consistent media campaigns, promotion of Hindu nationalism, propagation of a strong and aggressive foreign policy, temple politics, and perception of development under Modi's rule has helped the ruling party sweep the Hindi belt of India.

If the Congress overcomes a few of these issues and secures around 90-100 seats, it will significantly affect the BJP's political and strategic ambitions, which seems less likely.

The BJP's primary contenders in the third category are state parties in India, such as the All-India Trinamool Congress (AITC), Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), etc. This is the largest category among all three categories with 243 constituencies out of the total 543 seats of Lok Sabha.

These constituencies are primarily concentrated in the south, south-west and south-east of India. The performance of these

regional political parties as compared to the Congress against the BJP has been significantly better in the previous two Lok Sabha elections.

In 2014, the BJP secured 92 seats, while in 2019 it secured 118 out of 243 seats. Significant space exists for the BJP in this category, and any improvements anywhere between 160 and 180 seats out of 243 will help the BJP cross the 362 mark required to secure a two-thirds majority in Lok Sabha. This is why the focus of the BJP's political campaign has been the constituencies in this category. The BJP has adopted a two-pronged strategy to strengthen its position in these constituencies, which includes frequent visits by the BJP's top leaders, including Modi, Amit Shah, and Rajnath Singh and establishing electoral alliances with the local parties.

The first two categories are largely predictable in recent Lok Sabha elections. The third category of constituencies will be proven the real battleground for the 2024 Indian elections, with the BJP trying to improve its vote percentage.

The results of the third category will tell whether the BJP secures a two-thirds majority or falls short of its dream of amending the Indian constitution.

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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



When this news reached Pakistan, a shocked Sharif called a Defence Committee of the Cabinet meeting in Islamabad and vowed that "she [Pakistan] would give a suitable reply to the Indians...". After reviewing the effects of the tests for roughly two weeks Sharif ordered the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission to perform a series of nuclear tests in the remote area of the Chagai Hills. The military forces in the country were mobilised at war-readiness on the Indian border. Internationally condemned, but extremely popular at home, Sharif took steps to control the economy. Sharif responded fiercely to international criticism and defused the pressure by attacking India for nuclear proliferation and the US for the atomic bombing of Japan: Under Sharif's leadership, Pakistan became the seventh declared nuclear-weapon state, the first in the Muslim world. The conservative government also adopted environmental policies after establishing

the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency. Sharif continued Bhutto's cultural policies, though he did allow access to Indian media. The next year the Kargil war, by Pakistan-backed Kashmiri militants, threatened to escalate to a full-scale war[156] and increased fears of a nuclear war in South Asia. Internationally condemned, the Kargil war was followed by the Atlantique Incident, which came on a bad juncture for the Prime minister Sharif who no longer had broad public support for his government. On 12 October 1999 Prime Minister Sharif's attempt to dismiss General Pervez Musharraf from the posts of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and Chief of Army Staff failed after the military leadership refused to accept the appointment of ISI Director Lieutenant-General Ziauddin Butt his replacement.[157] Sharif ordered Jinnah International Airport to be sealed to prevent the landing of a PIA flight carrying General Musharraf, which then cir-

led the skies over Karachi for several hours. A counter coup was initiated and the senior commanders of the military leadership ousted Sharif's government and took over the airport. The flight landed with only a few minutes of fuel to spare.[158] The Military Police seized the Prime Minister's Secretariat and deposed Sharif, Ziauddin Butt and the cabinet staffers who took part in this assumed conspiracy, placing them in the infamous Adiala Jail. A quick trial was held in the Supreme Court which gave Sharif a life sentence, with his assets being frozen based on a corruption scandal. He came close to receiving the death sentence based on the hijacking case.[159] The news of Sharif's dismissal made headlines all over the world and under pressure from US President Bill Clinton and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia Musharraf agreed to spare Sharif's life. Exiled to Saudi Arabia, Sharif was forced to be out of politics for nearly ten years.

The presidency of Musharraf featured the arrival of liberal forces in national power for the first time in the history of Pakistan.[160] Early initiatives were taken towards the continuation of economic liberalisation, privatisation and freedom of the media in 1999.[161] The Citibank executive, Shaukat Aziz, returned to the country to take control of the economy.[162] In 2000 the government issued a nationwide amnesty to the political workers of liberal parties, sidelining the conservatives and leftists in the country.[163][164] Intending the policy to create a counter-cultural attack on India, Musharraf personally signed and issued hundreds of licenses to the private sector to open new media outlets, free from government influence. On 12 May 2000 the Supreme Court ordered the Government to hold general elections by 12 October 2002.

To be continued....

## Showbiz

### Emma Stone shares her real name, 'would like to be' called by it

The actress revealed that Emma is her stage name



Emma Stone is getting particular about her name - a lot. In an interview with The Hollywood Reporter, the two-time Oscar winner disclosed that, wherever feasible, she likes to be addressed by her given name, Emily, with her co-star Nathan Fielder in The Curse. In reality, the 35-year-old said, "No," in response to the outlet's question on whether she would correct a fan who referred to her by her true name rather than Emma. "That would be so nice. I would like to be Emily." "People that I work with" refer to her as Emily "when I get to know them," Stone said. She also mentioned that Emily Stone "was taken" by an actress who was a SAG-AFTRA member

before her, which is why she chose to go by "Emma Stone" as her stage name. "Then I freaked out a couple of years ago," she told the outlet. "For some reason, I was like, 'I can't do it anymore. Just call me Emily.' Nathan calls me Em, which is easier." In November 2018, Stone said that, coincidentally, she had wanted to be called Emma since she was a small girl and her favourite Spice Girl was Baby Spice, also known as Emma Bunton. "Growing up, I was super blonde, and my real name is Emily, but I wanted to be called Emma because of Baby Spice and guess what? Now I am," the Poor Things star said during an appearance on The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon.

## Tech

### Diamonds can now be grown in lab



A new method for creating diamonds in the lab without severe pressure has been devised by a research team led by Rod Ruoff at the Institute of Basic Science (IBS) at the Ulsan National Institute of Science and Technology (UNIST) in South Korea. The method, according to the researchers, may make it easier to create longer films and larger diamond crystals, which have numerous uses in modern electronics and optics, according to Interesting Engineering. Artificial or lab-grown diamonds are not a recent finding. Using molten iron sulphide, General Electric found this process almost 50 years ago. The Earth's mantle, where dia-

monds are naturally created, is replicated using the High-Pressure, High-Temperature (HPHT) process.

The liquid metal transforms into diamonds when temperatures hit 2,552 degrees Fahrenheit (1400 degrees Celsius) and pressure reaches at least five gigapascals (1 Pa = 10,000 atm).

The alternative method, chemical vapour deposition (CVD), is less pressure-sensitive but necessitates specialised equipment for semiconductor production.

A diamond seed is also used in both methods to aid in the initiation of diamond creation. The UNIST team's method, on the other hand, eliminates this necessity and places these diamonds at standard atmospheric pressure. Many years ago, Ruoff noticed that the synthesis of diamonds may not need higher pressures. A 2017 study showed that liquid gallium dissolves carbon atoms and binds them into a solid sheet-like graphene when exposed to methane gas.

Ruoff believed that under the right conditions, this process could also result in diamonds and began working on developing it.

## Health

### NYU doctors successfully perform first-ever combined heart pump, pig kidney transplant

First-ever heart pump and gene-edited pig kidney transplant helps woman with heart, kidney failure

Surgeons from the New York University Langone Health performed a combined mechanical heart pump and gene-edited pig kidney transplant for the first time for a 54-year-old woman with heart and kidney failure that required routine dialysis.

New Jersey native Lisa Pisano was not a candidate for a human transplant.

"I was pretty much done," Pisano told CBS News. "I couldn't go up the stairs. I couldn't drive. I couldn't play with my grandkids. So when this opportunity came to me I was taking it."

Dr Robert Montgomery, NYU Langone Trans-

plant Institute director, said she is currently "doing very well" in recovery.

Pisano's surgery, that took place earlier this month, is only "the second known transplant of a gene-edited pig kidney into a living person," and "the first to include the pig's thymus gland to aid against rejection," the hospital said.

The transplant surgery took place eight days after the heart pump — a left ventricular assist device or LVAD — was implanted.

This comes a month after surgeons at Boston's Massachusetts General Hospital transplanted a pig kidney into 62-year-old Rick Slayman, marking the first successful procedure of its kind in a

living human patient in the world.

Scientists are using genetic modification to better match animal organs to humans to counter rejection issues with animal-to-human transplants, or xenotransplantation.

"The human immune system rejects organs from animals, but Dr Montgomery and his team used a pig kidney with one gene altered to make it more compatible," LaPook explains.

LaPook adds this procedure was done under the Food and Drug Association's "compassionate use" protocol.

"So it's not approved yet — but what an amazing technological tour de force," he said.





## Pakistan pushes for stopping Israeli war machine to end Palestinians' slaughter in Gaza

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has called on the United Nations and the world community to consider "further measures" against Israel to secure a ceasefire in Gaza and an end to its "plausible genocide" of the Palestinian people in the besieged enclave. Speaking in the United Nations Security Council's ministerial-level debate on the Middle East situation, Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, did not specify the measures but pointed out that Israel's war in Gaza has spread the conflict to adjacent regions and further escalation must be prevented. "Yet, unless Israel's war machine is stopped from further slaughter in Gaza, there is an ever-present danger that war and violence will spread and possibly engulf the entire Middle East and beyond," the Pakistani envoy said. "Today," he went on to say that the 15-member Council has "three urgent responsibilities - to halt Israel's genocidal war in Gaza; to prevent the further spread and escalation of war; and to revive the peace process towards a two-State solution to establish durable peace and security in the Middle East. Addressing the regional ramifications of the Gaza conflict, Ambassador Jadoon cautioned against the conflict's spread to neighbouring areas such as the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Iran. He urged all parties to exercise restraint to prevent further escalation. Ambassador Jadoon also underscored the timeliness of Palestine's re-submitted application for UN membership, which, he said, is in accordance with regional initiatives advocating for a two-State solution. Expressing disappointment over the UN Security Council veto on Algeria's draft resolution for Palestine's full UN membership, he pointed to the overwhelming support signalling Palestine's rightful place in the international community. Ambassador Jadoon reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering support for Palestine's quest for self-determination, emphasizing that UN membership is a crucial step towards rectifying historical injustices and fostering conditions for meaningful negotiations." Pakistan, he said, was committed to a two-State settlement based on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds as the capital of a Palestinian State. On the opening day of the debate, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres urged an end to the deadly cycle of retaliation and called on the international community to work together to avert a full-scale regional conflict, first by ending hostilities in Gaza and ultimately by realizing the two-State solution. "This moment of maximum peril must be a time for maximum restraint," said the UN chief. Detailing limited progress and ongoing challenges despite Israel's recent commitments to improve aid delivery, he said Palestinians are facing widespread starvation and Israel must fully and actively facilitate humanitarian operations immediately. "The ultimate goal remains a two-State solution," he said, stressing: "The international community has a responsibility and a moral obligation to help make this happen." Spotting other conflicts in the region, including in the occupied West Bank, Lebanon and the Red Sea, he said: "We have a shared moral obligation to advance a comprehensive Middle East de-escalation effort, in order to reduce risks, increase stability, and pave the way towards peace and prosperity for the countries and people of the region and beyond." APP



WUHAN: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf in a group photo with officials of Pakistan Navy and China shipyard during launching ceremony of 1st HANGOR Class submarine of Pakistan Navy at Shuangliu Base at Wuhan China. INP

## Ambassador Jemal inaugurates Ethio-Pakistan Unity Enclave at FCCI to celebrate Green Legacy Initiative

VOM Report

FAISALABAD: Ethiopian Ambassador to Pakistan Jemal Beker Abdula on Friday inaugurated Ethio-Pakistan Unity Enclave at the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI). The FCCI set up the enclave at its vicinity to celebrate the Ethio-Pakistan Fraternity Under Green Legacy Initiative launched by the chamber in collaboration with the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad. Ambassador Jemal and FCCI President Dr Khurram Tariq launched the initiative by planting saplings of indigenous species at the enclave. A large number of people from all walks of life including business and religious community, academia, students, civil society and media took part in the plantation campaign under the Green Legacy initiative of Dr Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Jemal lauded the FCCI leadership and all those who had contributed to the historic initiative of the Ethiopian Embassy that was aimed at fostering fraternity and brotherhood between the two countries through the Green Legacy Initiative. He said it was imperative for both Ethiopia and Pakistan to share their experiences, knowledge and expertise to fight the looming threat of climate change together. The ambassador recalled the devastation unleashed by the flash floods in Pakistan in 2022 that he had personally witnessed during his visit to the tent cities of Sindh.



Highlighting importance of the Green Legacy Initiative, he said the visionary leader of Ethiopian PM Dr Abiy Ahmed worked out a home grown solution to the climate change under his Medemer philosophy that advocated for alignment of all resources to resolve home grown problems. He said the Ethiopian Prime Minister had been mobilizing the whole nation under the Green Legacy Initiative since 2019 and so far, more than 32.5 billion seedlings were planted across the country in the last five years which included saplings of fruits like avocado, papaya, banana, oranges, olives and many others. Likewise, coffee, animal feed and flo-

ral plants were also planted taking "us closer to our target of 50 billion seedlings until 2025", he added. In addition to that, he said, more than 150,000 nurseries were set up in the country as well as over a million jobs created through the Green Legacy Initiative. FCCI President Dr Khurram expressed gratitude to Ambassador Jemal Beker Abdula for introducing the Green Legacy Initiative in Pakistan. He said history had been made with the launch of Ethio-Pakistan Unity Enclave at the FCCI Sustainability Park which reflected growing relations between the two countries.

## Masood Khan advocates for strong national defense capabilities amid challenging environments



CHARLOTTE, NC: In a address at the World Affairs Council of Charlotte, North Carolina, Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, Masood Khan emphasized the need for Pakistan to bolster its defense capabilities due to the challenging environment posed by its neighbors. He expressed hope for the continuation of defense relations between Pakistan and the United States (U.S.).

Ambassador Khan stressed the importance of both nations investing in security and non-security sectors. He urged Pakistan and the United States to work together through all diplomatic means to ensure regional peace and stability. Furthermore, he highlighted the need for both countries to focus on trade and investment, particularly increasing direct foreign investment from the United States into Pakistan. During his two-day visit to North Carolina, a southeastern U.S. state with a population of approximately 10 million and a GDP of \$560 billion, Ambassador Khan briefed attendees on the Pakistan-U.S. relationship. He described the relationship as value-based, with a history of strategic partnership despite fluctuations and differences of opinion.

Speaking on the post-withdrawal period from Afghanistan, Ambassador Khan mentioned Pakistan's role in safely evacuating allied troops and assisting in the relocation of 75,000 Afghans. He added that Pakistan is currently aiding Afghans awaiting U.S. visas. Highlighting the growth of Pakistan's tech industry as a hopeful aspect of strengthening Pakistan-U.S. relations, Khan remarked that Pakistan was rapidly becoming part of a developing ecosystem. He pointed out that American venture capitalists were funding Pakistani tech startups and that approximately 80 American companies, most of which are Fortune 500, were conducting profitable business ventures in Pakistan.

Ambassador Khan asserted that Pakistan was on its way to becoming a tech hub in the region. He noted that the United States was the largest exporter of goods and services to Pakistan, amounting to \$8.4 billion, and suggested that cooperation in healthcare, climate change, technology, and agriculture should be further strengthened.

Responding to a question about the country's tourism potential, the ambassador showcased the various types of tourism in Pakistan, including adventure, religious, and environmental tourism, which attract millions of tourists from around the world each year. He invited participants to visit Pakistan and experience the country's rich tourism potential firsthand.

## CJ LHC, HCBA delegation discuss legal issues, matters of mutual interests

LAHORE: Led by President High Court Bar Association (HCBA) Multan, Malik Sajjad Haider Maitla, a delegation called on Lahore High Court (LHC) Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmad Khan on Friday. Secretary-General Syed Anees Mehdi and Senior Advocate Malik Masroor Haider Usman were also among the delegation. The delegation extended an invitation to the chief justice to visit the High Court Bar Association Multan at the earliest. The leaders of the lawyers apprised the chief justice of the issues faced by the bar associations in the Multan division and discussed matters of mutual interest. They praised the initiatives taken by the chief justice for the convenience of lawyers and litigants and offered suggestions for the welfare of the bar associations. President of the High Court Bar Association Multan requested the chief justice to increase

the number of judges at the LHC's Multan Bench, as the current shortage was causing a backlog of cases. He also suggested that lawyers from the Multan bar be considered for appointment as judges in the LHC. Additionally, the delegation demanded air conditioners and 500 executive chairs for the High Court Bar Association Multan's conference hall, adequate funds for lawyers' welfare, and the establishment of a ladies' bar room and day care center for female bar members. The chief justice said that the provision of speedy and quality justice was the top priority of the LHC, and lawyers might support in making the justice system more effective. He promised to address the issues of the Multan division bar associations on a priority basis and utilize all available resources for the welfare of young lawyers. INP

## Chairman COPHC lauds MoMA's efforts at Gwadar Port, Free Zone



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Yu Bo of China Overseas Ports Holding Company Ltd (COPHC) called on Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Friday and appreciated the ministry's consistent support and efforts in facilitating the operational activities at Gwadar Port and Free Zone. The meeting comprehensively covered various developmental areas and key policy recommendations essential for enhancing the port's efficiency and competitiveness, said a press release. Qaiser Sheikh assured the ministry of Maritime Affairs' commitments to move forward to work collaboratively towards the development of Gwadar Port & Free Zone as a cornerstone of regional trade and economic development. APP

## Treasury benches call Opposition in Senate to unite for fighting national challenges

ISLAMABAD: The members of the treasury benches on Friday called the Opposition members in the Upper House of the Parliament to unite for fighting national challenges with consensus. The Senate session started debate with the two-point agenda of tabling the copy of the President's address before both the Houses during the joint session on April 18th and the motion of thanks to extend the House's gratitude to the President for his address to the joint sitting of the Parliament. The meeting of the Upper House of the Parliament commenced with the recitation of the verses of the sixth chapter of the Holy Quran "Al-An'am" in which the Almighty commanded the Holy Prophet (PBUH) not to associate himself with those who create divisions within the religion and proclaim that he is blessed with following of the true religion, the right path of truth and the Lord will reward them who do associate others with Him. Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar moved the agenda

second item of laying on the table of the House copy of the Address of the President made under clause (3) of Article 56 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the joint session of the Parliament. The Chairman Senate ruled the action against the agenda being late. Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Senator Sherry Rehman while taking at the floor, extended her felicitations to the Chairman for holding the maiden proceedings after his charge in an exemplary manner. "President Zardari's suggestion should be welcomed as he has invited all political parties while giving them the discretion to decide to turn a new page in the history of the nation by according unity for the national cause," she said. The PPPP Senator underlined that her party had rendered sacrifices but never tainted the honour and prestige of the state. "PPP claims with honour that no witch hunting and political vindication done in any of its tenure," she added. APP

## UK higher Education leaders visit CUI



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Higher Education Leaders from the UK along with British Council officials visited COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) on Friday to explore avenues of cooperation in higher education sector. The visit was aimed at building sustainable person-to-person and institution-to-institution contacts and collaborations with British universities. The delegation is visiting Pakistan from April 21 to 27 under the Pak-UK Education Gateway - a partnership project between HEC and the British Council. Delegates from the University of Glasgow, University of Salford, Cardiff University, University of London, Queen Mary University of London, Staffordshire University, University of Exeter, INTO University and Bangor University were part of the visit. Senior officials from the UK's Department for Education and Trade, Department for Education and Office for Students and the British Council also

accompanied the delegates. Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar, Rector of CUI welcomed the delegates on behalf of COMSATS University and shared the historic exchanges with UK that had contributed to the development of CUI as one of the leading institutions of learning in Pakistan. In his welcome address, Rector Prof. Dr. Sajid Qamar said, "CUI has had a longstanding affiliation with the universities in UK. It is really heartening to have UK Higher Education Leaders here to explore and potentially discover more opportunities and avenues where our faculty and students can be engaged with UK universities". He thanked the Scottish Higher Education Trade Envoy for their cooperation in providing scholarships to female students of CUI. Dr. Hamid Omer, T.I., Head International Office informed the delegates on CUI's past engagements with the United Kingdom. He revealed that former Prime Minister of the UK, The Rt Hon Lord Cameron visited CUI in April 2011. Around 20 collaborative agreements have been signed with UK universities.

## IP rights crucial in achieving SDG: Jam Kamal

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan Friday emphasized the vital role of Intellectual Property (IP) Rights in driving innovation, creativity and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the country. The minister reaffirmed the government's resolve to prioritize the development of a robust national Intellectual Property (IP) framework that fosters innovation and creativity for ensuring equitable access to the benefits of IP, especially for marginalized communities. Addressing Seminar organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) to commemorate World Intellectual Property Day 2024, the minister said that Pakistan was blessed with huge natural resources and need to channelize these resources and streamline the direction. This day holds special significance as we reflect on the crucial role of Intellectual Property in fostering innovation, creativity and ultimately advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), he added. The theme of the event was IP and SDGs: Building our Common Future with Innovation and Creativity as the

event was also attended by the senior officials from the Ministry of Commerce, IPO and businessmen and academia. Jam Kamal said that government will promote partnerships and collaborations between government, industry, academia, and civil society to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, with a strong emphasis on technologies and solutions that support the achievement of the SDGs. The minister stressed the need to focus on leveraging IP as a strategic tool to accelerate progress towards the SDGs and said that the Ministry of Commerce was committed to advancing policies that strengthen the IP ecosystem, particularly in rela-

tion to sustainable development. The government was also intended to invest in capacity-building initiatives to enhance awareness and understanding of IP Rights among entrepreneurs, researchers and innovators for enabling them to leverage IP effectively for sustainable development, he added. He said that the the country was passing through challenging time and stressed the need for bringing more innovation to enhance the competitiveness of local products to capture international markets and to enhance exports from the country. The minister lauded IPO-Pakistan and the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry for the commem-

oration of this important day and expressed the commitment to promote IP Rights and raising awareness. Highlighting the significance of IP Rights, the minister said that these rights are fundamental drivers of innovation and creativity. He said that it incentivize individuals and businesses to invest in research and development, which in turn leads to the creation of new technologies, products, and services. This innovation, he said spurred by IP protections, plays a critical role in addressing the challenges outlined in the SDGs, from eradicating poverty and hunger to promoting sustainable economic growth and fostering inclusive societies. In our pursuit of the SDGs, IP serves as a powerful enabler across various sectors, he said adding that it supports advancements in healthcare by facilitating access to clean water and life-saving medicines and treatments. The minister said that the IP rights were also vital for sustainable agriculture through the protection of plant varieties and agricultural innovations, adding that it also encourages clean and affordable energy solutions by safeguarding technological developments in renewable energy. APP

