



Gov't stance of promoting partnerships and collaborations between govt, industry, academia, and civil society to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly emphasizing technologies supporting Sustainable Development Goals achievement

Federal Minister for Commerce

Jam Kamal Khan

Terrorist killed after gun battle with security forces in Balochistan's Harnai



RAWALPINDI: A terrorist was killed and another was injured in a gun battle between security forces and militants trying to intercept civilian vehicles on Sanjavi Road in Balochistan's district Harnai, the Inter-Services Public Relations

(ISPR) said on Saturday.

The exchange of fire took place today (April 27) as the security forces reacted immediately and effectively engaged the terrorists, the military's media wing added.

"Resultantly, one terrorist was sent to hell, while another got injured."

The ISPR said that the timely response by the security forces thwarted nefarious intent of the terrorists, saving innocent lives. It said that a sanitisation operation was being carried out to eliminate any terrorists found in the area.

Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts of sabotaging peace, stability and progress of Balochistan, the military's media wing added.

The military and armed forces of Pakistan have been engaged in intensifying actions to eliminate the menace of terrorism in the country.

On Thursday, the security forces killed three terrorists including two ringleaders Sohail aka Azmato and Haji Gul alias Zarkavi in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber district.

As per the ISPR, the operation was conducted by the security forces on April 24-25 on the reported presence of terrorists in the KP's tribal district. PR



KARACHI: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Qazi Faez Isa heading to lay wreath at the mausoleum of father of the nation Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah. APP



RIYADH: Advisor at the Royal Court and General Secretary of Saudi-Pak Supreme Coordination Council H.E. Mr. Mohammed bin Mazayad Al-Tuwaijri calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. APP

PM Shehbaz, Saudi Royal court advisor discuss ways to boost economic ties

RIYADH: Advisor at the Royal Court and General Secretary of Saudi-Pakistan Supreme Coordination Council Mohammed bin Mazayad Al-Tuwaijri called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here on Saturday and discussed the ways to strengthen economic ties between the two countries.

Both sides expressed exceptional warmth for further promoting economic relations between the two countries. They reviewed the progress on the Saudi investment in Pakistan, during the visit of the delegation led by Saudi foreign minister to Pakistan.

Al-Tuwaijri and his delegation expressed deep interest in the Saudi investment by the Saudi government and companies in Pakistan. He said after the visit of Saudi Foreign Minister to Pakistan, work had started on priority basis on the Saudi investment in Pakistan.

The work has started on war footing in investment in Pakistan, which includes investment from both the public and private sectors, he added. He said a delegation comprising Saudi business community and investors would soon visit Pakistan.

Al-Tuwaijri, who is In Charge of the Vision 2030 of Saudi Arabia, told the prime minister in detail about the said project.

"We want that the economic relations of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia should move forward in the backdrop of Saudi Vision 2030," says Al-Tuwaijri

He said, "We want that the economic relations of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia should move forward in the backdrop of Saudi Vision 2030."

According to the Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia would provide all kinds of assistance for providing training to the Pakistan workforce and government officials.

A detailed briefing was given to the prime minister on the reforms agenda of Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan wanted to benefit from the successful reforms policy of Saudi Arabia to modernise

governance structure of Pakistan.

He said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had fraternal relations which were strengthening with the passage of time, adding economic relations of Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had entered a new phase.

He said notable progress was made regarding investment in different sectors in Pakistan by Saudi Arabia, during the visit of the delegation led by Saudi foreign minister.

"We are moving with a lightning speed after the progress made during the visit of the Saudi delegation to Pakistan," he added.

The PM said the people of Pakistan had immense regard and respect for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Excellency King Salman Bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud.

He thanked the Saudi Crown Prince and the Prime Minister for their warm welcome and magnificent hosting.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Finance Minister and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Power Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Deputy Chairman Planning Commission Jehanzeb Khan and high level officials were also present. APP

FM stresses upon need of broadening economic diplomacy

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday emphasized on the need of enhancing economic diplomacy and efforts to bolster trade and investment ties with the foreign countries.



The foreign minister chaired an online meeting with Heads of the Missions to inter-alia review the progress made on market sounding efforts being made through Pakistan's Missions Abroad for outsourcing of airports, a press release said.

The secretary Aviation / DGCAA presented the progress review and informed that concerted efforts by Heads of the Missions in Turkey, Malaysia, UAE, Qatar, Paris, Spain, Germany, Kuwait, UK and Switzerland have reinvigorated interests of well-known airport operators, who had shown positive interests in bidding of Islamabad International Airport.

The renewed interest of foreign airport operators testified economic stability and confidence of investors in the political stability in Pakistan.

The session was followed by 9th Meeting of Steering Committee on Outsourcing of Airports, which was inter-alia attended by Secretary Aviation / DGCAA, Secretary Law & Justice, Additional Secretary MoFA ME, Additional Secretary BOI, DG ASF, DG ANF, Additional DGCAA, Additional DG FIA (Immigration), senior officer of Pakistan Customs and IFC Team.

The IFC presented progress review report and highlighted that foreign investors were showing keen interest in the bidding process of Islamabad International Airport and a healthy competition was expected.

The fora also reviewed Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and service delivery benchmarks worked out by international consultants to improve quality of services at airports.

It was assured by the heads of government agencies that all out efforts would be made for observance and adherence to service delivery benchmarks to ensure seamless passenger experience at airports.

The foreign minister stressed on IFC to expedite and complete the required tasks within stipulated time frame for outsourcing of Lahore and Karachi airports.

Palestine part of Pakistan's DNA; Mushahid tells Istanbul Int'l Conference



ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed on Saturday said that Palestine was part of Pakistani DNA whereas Palestinians resistance to brutal occupation was fully justified under international law and the UN Charter. He was addressing the three-day Istanbul International Conference, inaugurated by President Erdogan and being attended by parliamentarians and political leaders from 80 countries, a news release said on Saturday. Mushahid Hussain, who is member of the 12-member Executive Board of Parliamentarians for Palestine and Al Quds, said the entire people and political parties of Pakistan support the just cause of Palestine, as Pakistan's policy on Palestine was first enunciated by the Father of the Nation, Quaid e Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, even before the independence of Pakistan. Condemning the Gaza conflict, Mushahid termed it the 'first live televised genocide in modern history', adding that 'both Muslim regimes and West countries have let down the Palestinians, except for public opinion in Muslim and Western countries'. Giving Pakistan's track record of supporting Palestine, Mushahid Hussain referred to Pakistan being the only non-Arab country to take part in two Arab-Israeli Wars in 1967 and 1973, plus first recognition of PLO under Yasser Arafat took place at the Lahore Islamic Summit in 1974. Mushahid urged an immediate ceasefire and steps to establish an independent Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. The Pakistan Parliamentary Delegation attending the conference includes Senator Mushtaq Ahmed, MNAs Sher-yar Meher, Chaudhry Shahbaz and Junaid Akbar. The Pakistani delegates also met President Erdogan and Speaker of Turkish Parliament, Dr Noman Kurtulmus. — VOM Report

KSrelief distributes 450 food baskets in Shangla



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSrelief) distributed 540 food baskets in Shangla district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here Saturday. The assistant programme benefiting 3,150 individuals from the neediest and most vulnerable segments affected by the floods as part of the fourth phase of the Food Security Support Program for 2024, the SPA reported. The aid comes within the relief efforts of the Kingdom through its humanitarian arm, KSrelief, to needy people and countries around the world.

Minister condemns unilateral urea fertilizer price hike

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain on Saturday has condemned the unilateral price hike of Sarsabz Urea fertilizer by Fatima Fertilizer Limited.

He expressed deep concern over an increase of Rs. 561 per urea bag and urged the fertilizer company to withdraws this unilateral increase, said a news release.

The minister said that the fertilizer company must provide solid justification for sudden increases in the price of Sarsabz Urea.

He highlighted that there has been no increase in gas prices for the fertilizer industry, adding that an increase in the price of urea fertilizer without a corresponding increase in gas prices is unacceptable and unjustified.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said that in case of failure to provide solid justification, the relevant ministry would determine prices according to the laws.

He highlighted the government's commitment to protecting farmers' interests and ensuring the stability of fertilizer prices.

Efforts are being made in collaboration with provinces to eliminate hoarding of fertilizers while mechanisms are being developed to

Efforts are being made in collaboration with provinces to eliminate hoarding of fertilizers while mechanisms are being developed to check the availability of real-time stock of fertilizers

check the availability of real-time stock of fertilizers, he added.

The minister said that fertilizer companies should provide facilities to enhance farmers' productivity across the country.

Mohsin Naqvi directs new IG Islamabad to wipe out crime from capital

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday directed the new Inspector General of Police Islamabad to improve law and order situation and crackdown against criminals in the capital. In a high level meeting here, Mohsin Naqvi assigned a task to the police officials to conduct a strong crackdown against the gangs involved in the sale and purchase of drugs and apprehend also the drug mafia with the use of modern technology. He said that drug paddlers are the enemies of the future of Pakistan and thus

strictest action be taken against them while the surveillance outside educational institutions also be increased to stop the sale of intoxicants including ice and arrest the sellers.

The new Inspector General of Police Ali Nasir Rizvi gave a detailed briefing to the minister interior about the law and order situation in the meeting which was also attended by all DIGs and CTOs.

The minister ordered to ensure foolproof security of foreign nationals living in Islamabad and to establish a special protection force for the security of foreign nationals in Islamabad while special attention should be given to the security of all important offices and places including the red zone and diplomatic



enclave, he added.

He also ordered an effective action against beggar mafia and professional beggars in the city roaming freely in the city. The minister asked the police to ensure 100% registration of First Information Report (FIR) on the complaints of citizens while using delaying tactics or denying registration of FIR will initiate an action against concerned police station and SHO, he warned.

The minister also directed IG police to immediately deal with promotion cases of capital Police saying that the promotion is the employee's right that he should get on time because promotion will improve morale of police force. The minister ensured the police officials

that the steps will be taken to bring the salaries of Islamabad Police at par with the Punjab Police while ordered to fill the vacant posts in Islamabad police through fair and competitive recruitment process.

The minister also sought a comprehensive plan to solve the traffic problems in Islamabad while identifying areas of high traffic congestion and suggesting workable solutions, adding that Islamabad Safe City system will have to be equipped with modern requirements like Lahore Safe City. He said that the government is determined to improve the condition of police stations in Islamabad and good results will be obtained in a few months' time.

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Planet vs plastic

ZILE HUMA

Earth Day is celebrated every year on April 22 to highlight the environmental issues that are eating away our planet slowly and gradually. The theme for Earth Day 2024, celebrated this Monday, was 'Planet vs Plastics' to raise awareness about the threats of plastic being faced by our planet, calling for a 60 per cent reduction in plastic use by 2040.

According to the UN Environment Programme, the world produces 9-14 million tonnes of plastics every year, and it is projected to increase by 23-37 million tonnes per year by 2040 if we continue with our unsustainable life patterns.

When we talk about environmental pollution in Pakistan, the most pressing challenge is plastic pollution. Pakistan is among the countries that produce huge quantities of plastic every year. According to SWITCH-Asia, 3.3 million tonnes of plastic waste are produced annually in Pakistan. The sources of this waste are households, industries, medical institutions, and even the agriculture sector.

Household wastes include shopping bags, food packaging materials, etc. Industrial plastic waste is produced by different kinds of industries like automotive, electronic, packaging, etc. The agriculture sector produces plastic waste like irrigation pipes, crop protection, packaging materials for seed and fertilizer, etc.

Plastic waste produced by medical science includes surgical gloves, syringes, canula pipes, medicine coverings, etc. It is important to first analyze the problems and threats associated with plastic waste and then identify possible solutions.

First, the biggest challenge is the non-biodegradable nature of plastics. It takes thousands of years for a normal single-use plastic bag available in the market to decompose. As a result, it remains as tiny particles in our soil and water bodies, posing a threat to marine life and other plants and animals. It chokes the respiratory and digestive systems of animals.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, at least 100,000 marine animals die from plastic pollution every year. The second important problem caused by plastic waste is the blockage of drainage systems in urban areas, increasing the risks of urban flooding during monsoon.

Pakistan has already witnessed urban flooding in Karachi and Lahore –two major cities of Pakistan – over the last few years. While reasons for urban flooding in Karachi and Lahore include climate change and encroachments, experts say that blocked sewers with plastic and other waste are one of the main reasons for constant flooding.

The third important issue caused by plastic waste is an untidy and unhygienic atmosphere. Huge piles of plastics on roadsides or flying in the air during windy days affect the beautification of our cities. They are also the source of inviting and spreading many diseases. These are some of the causes and negative impacts of plastic waste in Pakistan and all over the world. It is essential to identify the solutions and implement those solutions through policies, better management, laws, and awareness campaigns.

The following possible solutions can help combat plastic waste to some extent. A very simple and basic solution is to reduce the unnecessary use of plastic in our lives. The habit of reuse is also important and should be adopted in our lives. The government and industries need to work to provide the cheapest alternative to plastic bags and packaging material in the market.

The world is already working on a global plastic treaty to end the use of plastics. Pakistan also has effective legislation in place to eliminate plastic use. Big brands and stores are either charging extra to provide plastic shopping bags or have options for alternative bags. The need is to target packaging material and small vendors like vegetable and fruit hawkers to prohibit the use of plastic bags.

But, first, it is important to give these vendors some cheap options of alternatives, raise awareness among them, and then give them time to replace. The Pakistani government also needs to take the initiative to place segregated dustbins in public places and collect garbage from doorsteps in a segregated manner. There should be proper, dedicated sites to throw garbage, and citizens not following it should be heavily fined. Researchers and education institutions need to focus on green chemistry to find easy methods to decompose existing plastics and invent easily decomposable and commercially viable options. Such actions will help reduce both the demand and supply of plastics. It is equally important to generate awareness campaigns through media and educational institutions to change the behaviour of ordinary people. Awareness in early classes will help children understand the threats of plastic use and adopt long-lasting habits of reducing, reusing, and recycling.

International organizations and governments should provide funding for academic research in this area to find local solutions to local problems associated with plastic waste. Academic discussions in the form of conferences, workshops, and seminars will help stakeholders collaborate and find out the best practices to eliminate plastic from our planet through collective wisdom.

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Dr Imran Khalid

The future of the dollar

The prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict and the Middle East crisis have resulted in a radical shift in the global landscape, one that is resonating across economic, geopolitical, and cultural realms. Among these shifts is the momentum towards multipolarity, dispersing global economic influence among several advanced economies. The complex global trends have also led to a feeling of uncertainty among stakeholders – ranging from investors to multinational corporations and individuals. As the world prepares for an election year – several countries, including the US and the UK, are preparing for elections later this year – this new wave of unpredictability haunts policy discourse and future trajectories.

Regardless of political affiliations, governments confront mounting debt burdens and substantial deficits, inviting scrutiny from vigilant financial markets. The intricate interplay of fiscal deficits, monetary policies, and global economic dynamics paints a sobering picture of the dollar's prospects. The unprecedented fiscal deficit surge and the dwindling surplus savings are the key factors that are likely to impede growth across the world, ushering in a period of deceleration and weakened investment sentiment.

Apart from geopolitical analysis, technical projections are also indicating a downward trend for the US Dollar Index which measures the dollar's strength against a basket of major currencies. Forecasts say that the dollar is likely to decline to 96-96.2 by 2026-28 from its current standing at 102.4. Moreover, as the US administration intensifies sanctions, risks associated with holding dollar-denominated assets amplify, prompting central banks and policymakers to seek diversification in international financing.

The message is clear: the once unsailable dominance of the dollar is facing headwinds, signalling a potential downward spiral in the years ahead. The US dollar is facing challenges that demand attention. As nations in the Global South grapple with the risks inherent in relying on a currency subject to the whims of a

single nation, the allure of alternatives grows.

The weaponization of the dollar, whether through monetary manipulation or punitive sanctions, exacts a toll felt far beyond America's borders. With nearly a third of the world's GDP ensnared in sanctions, the imperative to diversify becomes urgent. IMF data reveals a decades-low confidence in the dollar, mirrored by a surge in gold prices and a wary eye on inflation. America's economic ascendancy has long been rooted in the bedrock of free markets; recent political manoeuvres threaten to erode this foundation. Protectionism, trade barriers, and corporate infringements undermine the very principles that propelled the nation to prosperity.

For emerging markets in the Global South, the spectre of becoming the next target looms large. As China grapples with trade tensions, others watch nervously, wondering if they are next in line. In this uncertain landscape, self-reliance becomes increasingly attractive, calling for nations to chart their own financial destinies. The US Treasury's response to pandemic-induced deficits, marked by a surge in T-bill issuance, coupled with the Fed's aggressive interest rate policies and growing reserve balances, has created a complex policy matrix. As T-bill issuance skyrockets by 125 per cent since 2019 and reserve balances balloon by 118 per cent, the strain on the US economy has become palpable.

These factors suggest an inevitable easing of the Fed's monetary stance in the coming years. The escalating pressure on the US economy, fuelled by mounting interest payments on T-bills and reserve balances, leaves little room for complacency. As the dollar depreciates, emerging economies stand poised to reap the benefits. A weakening greenback augurs well for global liquidity and relaxed financial conditions, providing a boon for financing in these markets. In this shifting financial landscape, gold and bulk commodities stand as hope for stability, their already lofty prices are likely to remain elevated. Central banks, wary of overreliance on the dollar, are diversifying their reserves, while more countries are now striving for self-sufficiency amidst supply chain disruptions and the imperative of green transformation.

The risks of societal polarization and economic destabilization loom ever larger. In central banking, the dollar reigns supreme, constituting a stag-

gering 58.9 per cent of global reserves. Its dominance is further underscored by the paltry shares held by other currencies like the euro, yen, yuan and pound. Even in private markets, the dollar maintains a commanding presence, cementing its status as the preeminent currency of choice in the complex web of global finance.

Right after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, stringent sanctions on Russia – a bid to cripple its economy – birthed unintended consequences. Far from surrendering, Russia rallied, championing alternative financial networks, challenging the dollar's hegemony. This de-dollarization wave has now extended globally, from India to South Africa, heralding a shift in economic dynamics. The weaponization of the dollar has catalyzed a significant shift, with nations forging paths towards financial independence.

As China and Russia spearhead their systems, America's grip on global finance faces unprecedented challenges. The movement towards de-dollarization signifies not just an economic reordering but also a geopolitical recalibration, shaping the contours of international power.

The BRICS alliance has also emerged as a formidable challenger to the established dominance of the G7, heralding a shift in the global economic order. While the G7 commands a significant share of the world's GDP, the growing influence of BRICS nations promises to narrow this gap in the coming years. Anchored by a combined population exceeding 3.6 billion, BRICS wields substantial demographic power and is poised to surpass 50 per cent of the global population with potential new additions.

Their collective economic might is underscored by a 25 per cent share of global goods exports, positioning them as key players in the realm of international trade. To bolster economic resilience, BRICS nations are exploring avenues to promote the use of local currencies in transactions, mitigating risks associated with exchange rate fluctuations and reducing reliance on the dollar.

India, in particular, is spearheading efforts to boost exports by advocating for the use of its currency in international trade, a move echoed by other countries grappling with dollar shortages or Western sanctions. At the heart of the push for financial autonomy lies a pervasive concern among global capitals: the spectre of American sanctions leveraging the full force of its currency, as seen in the crip-

pling measures against Russia. This apprehension fuels the recent surge in de-dollarization efforts, as nations strive to shield their economies from potential future vulnerabilities.

From the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system to the advent of the euro in 1999, and from the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis to the present, doubts about the dollar's supremacy have persisted. Notably, the proportion of central bank reserves held in dollars dipped below 58.9 per cent in the final quarter of last year, down from nearly 70 per cent in 2000, underscoring the steady march towards de-dollarization.

Amidst aspirations for financial autonomy, smaller economies are being increasingly cautious of dollar-denominated debts. This, along with efforts to bolster regional trade alliances, propels nations to seek alternatives to the dollar. The dollar's surge also escalates import bills for essential commodities like fuel and food. Particularly vulnerable are nations reliant on imports, where soaring dollar values quickly strain budgets.

De-dollarization serves as a shield against currency volatilities and mounting import expenses, offering respite to vulnerable economies. While the dollar's appreciation may signal strength for the US economy, its impact on emerging markets is far more negative. As the greenback strengthens, the economies of emerging markets bear the brunt, grappling with currency devaluation and stifled growth prospects.

Data analysis reveals a telling inverse correlation between the value of the US dollar and the performance of emerging market economies, as evidenced by the MSCI Index and GDP growth trends. A depreciating dollar offers a glimmer of hope for these nations, ushering in relaxed financial conditions and increased liquidity. The current situation, with the DXY index hovering around 103, reflects a 7.0 per cent appreciation since January 2022, driven in part by Federal Reserve rate hikes. However, this appreciation comes at a cost, exerting downward pressure on the currencies of emerging markets.

As policymakers navigate this complex terrain, the delicate balance between dollar strength and emerging market resilience remains a pivotal consideration, with far-reaching implications for global economic stability.

The writer is a freelance contributor.

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

Pakistan

The Congress Muslim League rapprochement was achieved at the Lucknow sessions of the two parties in 1916 and a joint scheme of reforms was adopted. In the Lucknow pact. As the scheme was

commonly referred to, the Congress accepted the principle of separate electorates, and the Muslims, in return for 'weight age' to the Muslims of the Muslim minority provinces, agreed to surrender their thin majori-

ties in the Punjab and Bengal. The post Lucknow Pact period witnessed Hindu Muslim amity and the two parties came to hold their annual sessions in the same city and passed resolutions of identical contents.

KHILAFAT MOVEMENT
 The Hindu Muslim unity reached its climax during the Khilafat and the Non-cooperation Movements.

To be continued....

Showbiz

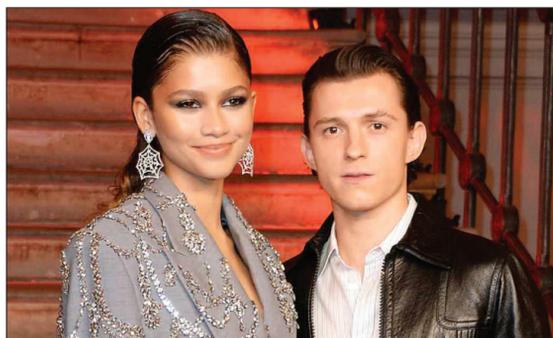
Zendaya, Tom Holland are 'totally supportive' of each other

Zendaya and Tom Holland's relationship was confirmed in 2021, years after they first met in 2016

Zendaya and Tom Holland are the ultimate power couple.

An insider recently told People Magazine, "They are proud of each other's successes and totally supportive. This is a plus in their relationship making it equal." As Zendaya, 27, takes the center stage to promote her latest film, The Challengers, Tom, 27, has taken the backseat from the limelight.

Still, though, that doesn't mean the Euphoria star neglects her beau. In fact, their relationship is characterized by mutual care and consideration. "They are caring toward the other. It's not a case where one is caring and the other isn't so much," they said. "They are great people and are



there for the good and the bad. As busy as they are, this is super important," the insider added.

Previously, another source told the outlet that Zendaya and Tom – who have been dating since at least 2021 – have already discussed marriage.

"There has been talk of marriage, and that is a reality," they said.

Zendaya and Tom met while filming MCU's Spider-Man, where Tom played the titular character while Zendaya played his love interest, Mary Jane Watson. Their journey from co-stars to close friends, and eventually partners, has been marked by Zendaya's supportive presence as Tom navigated the challenges of newfound fame.

Tech

Apple partnering with OpenAI for new iPhone features

Apple is reportedly increasing talks with OpenAI to help bring generative AI features to the iPhone despite continuous discussions with Google.

The report was revealed via Bloomberg's Mark Gurman, who noted that Apple has "renewed discussions with OpenAI about using the startup's technology to power some new features coming to the iPhone later this year." Earlier this year, a discussion between the two companies took place but things had turned quieter, according to Gurman. This occurred while Apple and Google continued to discuss the licensing of Gemini, the Google's chatbot, for use on the iPhone. Gurman confirms that the discussion could lead to nothing while Apple was found authenticating deals with both OpenAI and Google, according to iMore. However, a bunch of AI-focused features are anticipated to be offered by iOS 18 as headline additions to the iPhone's operating system. Additionally, multiple reports have indi-



cated that whichever company Apple collaborates with will work to make available a chatbot-style interface.

Alongside OpenAI, the makers of ChatGPT, AI startup Anthropic of the Claude 3 chatbot, have also been involved in talks to some extent, as per Gurman.

The current curiosity is whether the iPhone 16 will experience the debut of new generative AI features that make use of the A18 chip as Apple initiates pivoting hardware to help on-device execution of AI tasks.

Health

Is plant-based meat better than real meat?

Plant-based meat serves as alternative to animals but may not be best

Researchers compared the effects of genuine meat versus plant-based meat substitutes on cardiovascular health and diabetes risk in a recent study that was published in The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition.

Because plant-based diets contain a wide range of health-promoting nutrients such vitamins, fibre, and antioxidants, it has been discovered that these diets are good for metabolic and cardiac

health, according to Medical News Today. However, because of ingrained financial, historical, and cultural pressures on meat consumption, as well as long-standing cultural and societal norms, adopting such diets can be difficult for people who frequently consume meat.

As a result, there is a green meat alternative. Plant-based meat analogues (PBMA) are designed to act as a copy of the taste and texture

of real meat. It uses sustainable ingredients and have become increasingly popular worldwide.

While PBMA were higher in sodium, potassium, and calcium, nutrient analysis showed that the animal meat diet contains more protein.

Moreover, other research suggests that proteins from PBMA might not be as easily taken in as those from animal meats. This really affects insulin and gut hormone responses differently.



Baligh stresses starting education exchange programs with UK

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Muhammad Balighur Rehman has said that Pakistan attaches great importance to its long-standing relations with Britain stressing the need of starting education programs between the two countries.

He was talking to a delegation of UK Higher Education leaders led by Sir Steve Smith which called on him at Governor House Lahore on Saturday. Punjab Education Minister, Rana Sikandar Hayat Khan, was also present on the occasion. The delegation comprised Dr Wendy Alexander, Scotland's Education Champion, notable delegates from UK universities and British Council Pakistan representatives.

Muhammad Balighur Rehman welcomed the participants of the delegation. Talking to delegation, he said that the exchange of such educational delegations would help promote cooperation in higher education and research between Pakistan and the UK.

The Governor Punjab further stated that the government was taking steps to advance higher education and social welfare through research commercialization, innovation and collaboration. He said that he wants the academia associated with the UK universities to strengthen the educational exchange with the universities of Punjab.

He said that he would like to express his sincere gratitude to the UK Government, British Council, Universities in the UK and HEC representatives for their collaborative endeavors aimed at internationalizing higher education through the promotion of principles such as quality, equity and transparency.

Balighur Rehman expressed the hope that this continued cooperation will have a positive impact on the future of higher education.

ANF recovers 74 kg drugs in three operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting three operations across the country managed to recover 74 kg drugs and arrested two accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 70 kg hashish was recovered from Saranan area in Pishin.

In second operation, 2.2 kg opium, 1.5 kg hashish and 1 kg Ice were recovered from an accused rounded up near Motorway Toll Plaza Sheikhpura.

In third operation, 150 grams Ice was recovered from an accused arrested in Hayatabad Peshawar. Separate cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused while further investigations are under process. INP

CM Maryam orders setting up integrated health system in Murree, Galiyat

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid a visit to Samli Syed Muhammad Hussain Government TB Sanatorium Hospital in a torrential rain on Saturday. The CM ordered to establish an integrated health system in the whole area including Murree, Galiyat, said a handout issued here. She directed to set up a helipad and an airstrip to shift patients from the hilly areas in case of an emergency. While directing to fully functionalize the mother and child block immediately, she underlined the need to undertake prompt measures for the appointment of doctors, staff along with establishing their residences. Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered to establish general wards in the Samli Hospital and directed to set up the latest cardiac block. An Oncology Unit will also be established for the cancer

treatment in Syed Muhammad Hussain Government TB Sanatorium Hospital. Medicine, Surgery, Urology, Ortho, Eye and ENT wards will be established. The chief minister directed to run transport immediately in order to shift the patients to Tehsil Headquarter Hospital and Samli Hospital in Murree. She inspected OPD, wards, other sections and inquired from the lady doctor about the hospital and the treatment of patients. Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to undertake prompt measures for the treatment of a brother of a woman in the OPD and said that even if a helicopter is required to shift the patient will be provided. She also visited the TB ward and inquired after each and every patient. She inquired from the patients about their treatment and prayed for their early recovery. INP

Pro-Palestinian activists disrupt speech of German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas at the Asma Jahangir Conference

Alfred Grannas says the mother of all basic human rights is the protection of human dignity

LAHORE: Pro-Palestinian activists disrupted the speech of German Ambassador to Pakistan Alfred Grannas when he took the podium to speak at the Asma Jahangir Conference 2024 titled 'People's Mandate: Safeguarding Civil Rights in South Asia'.

Announced by the Asma Jahangir Legal Aid Cell (AGHS), the two-day conference is being organized in collaboration with the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) and the Pakistan Bar Council (PBC).

Just moments after the ambassador began his speech, the protester can be heard saying, "Excuse me, Mr Ambassador. I am shocked by the audacity that you are here to talk about civil rights while your country is brutally abusing the people speaking for the rights of the Palestinians." The activist also questioned the envoy about his government's complicity in the ongoing genocide, as his speech was largely aimed at exploring the state of human and civil rights in South Asia, including Pakistan. "Why your country is brutally abusing the people speaking for the rights of the Palestinians," the activist said,

addressing the German envoy. His comments drew applause and cheer from the crowd, while chants of "Free, Free Palestine" and "From the River to the Sea" could be heard. Ambassador Grannas, who was visibly taken aback, began shouting while asking the protesters not to shout. He also gestured at the students while waving his left hand in the air, asking them to "go out". "If you want to shout, go out, and there you can shout because shouting is not a discussion. That it is [sic]... if you want to discuss..." the envoy said, soon after which the conference went off-air for a while on a digital media platform's YouTube channel. However, the speech by Ambassador Grannas resumed in a matter of few minutes. As Grannas resumed his speech, he remarked that the "mother of all basic human rights is the protection of human dignity", as well as the inviolability of human dignity. "This actually brings [Germany] in communal-ity with Pakistan, because there are not too many countries in the world that have an explicit guarantee of the inviolability of human dignity," he

said, referencing Article 14 of Pakistan's Constitution. "When it comes to the role of the judiciary here, the Constitution guarantees the rights. But it's the courts that interpret, safeguard and develop further those rights," Grannas said. He noted that the most important rule of the judiciary is safeguarding rights and preventing the rule of law from being substituted with the rule by law. He also noted that the judiciary must not only protect rights on paper but put them into practice. Grannas praised Pakistan's courts for interpreting the law to the people's benefit, saying, "a very concrete example is that there is no [compulsion] in attesting in criminal procedures." He also noted that the court's interpretation of Article 14 led to the ending of the "infamous two-finger test in rape cases." "So you see, these things have concrete consequences and positive effects on us all." The ambassador acknowledged the importance of conferences like these, stating that courts do not operate in

a vacuum. "Courts need input; courts need inspiration. And these intellectual and academic discussions here, the things that are developed here serve for the courts to draw inspiration," Grannas said. He noted that the results of these academic writings are used and incorporated in the court's ruling when protecting and developing basic human rights. "I think it's a useful exercise that we are here, and I wish us all fruitful discussions," the ambassador concluded. When reached out for a comment by a private TV channel regarding the envoy's mic being muted, Munizae Jahangir — journalist and board member of the Asma Jahangir Foundation, clarified: "German ambassador mic was not muted at all, we don't have that technology or above all, the intention." She also maintained that the conference had arranged a "full panel on Palestine" and with great difficulty got a noted human rights activists recognised as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International. SABAH



ISLAMABAD: District Judiciary Judges in a group photo with Hon'ble Mr. Justice Athar Minallah at the Federal Judicial Academy.

Govt to promote collaboration with industry, academia, civil society, says Jam Jamal

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan has reiterated government's stance of promoting partnerships and collaborations between government, industry, academia, and civil society to drive innovation and entrepreneurship, particularly emphasizing technologies supporting Sustainable Development Goals achievement. He was addressing a ceremony organized by Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) in collaboration with IPO-Pakistan on the occasion of World Intellectual Property Day noting IP's enabling role across sectors, supporting advancements in healthcare, sustainable agriculture, and clean energy solutions. Jam Kamal Khan endorsed ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari's proposals for the establishment of a world class Expo-Center, IT Park and formation of an Industrial Estate demands for promoting trade and investment opportunities in the federal capital. The minister commerce pledged the incorporation of business community's proposals in the upcoming federal budget to promote businesses in Pakistan and also said that ICCI's demand for curtailing

the tenure of traders elected bodies from two years to one year will be given due weight. Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that the business community especially the Islamabad Chamber is committed to promote the cause of intellectual property rights for the promotion and strengthening of the businesses. He said that the establishment of a world class Expo Centre, a IT Park and an Industrial Estate in Islamabad will assuredly create employment opportunities for youth, nurture exports and augment badly needed foreign exchange earnings. The ICCI President also mentioned Islamabad Chambers' initiatives for the purpose by citing the holding of a Business Opportunities Conference in UAE and Thailand trip to attract foreign investments through joint ventures. Chairman Intellectual Property Organization (IPO) Pakistan, Farukh Amil said adherence to IPRs will enhance Pakistan's reputation as a business and investment-friendly country adding that SMEs should benefit from the services of IPO-Pakistan for better protection of their patents, copyrights, and trademarks. The guest of honour, US Intellectual Property Counselor for South Asia John

Cabeza gave a comprehensive briefing over the subject. Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik while underscoring the significance of Intellectual Property Rights demanded the shortening of traders elected bodies terms to one year for enabling maximum members to represent the community. Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari underlined the need for more connectivity with friendly countries especially the Asian and African states for the prosperity of the country. He also mentioned ICCI's successful endeavors on the count. He further said that ICCI is going to hold an importance conference to highlight the importance of direct connectivity to promote economic ties with other countries. In their video messages Director General WIPO Duren Hang and Pakistan's Permanent Representative to UN Ambassador Bilal Ahmed highlighted the importance of Intellectual Property Rights. ICCI SVP Faad Waheed, VP Azhar ul Islam Zafar, DG IPO Pakistan Shahzia Adnan, former Foreign Secretary Assad Majeed Khan, ED Social Protection Safdar Sohail enlightened the audience during penal discussion. At the end Chambers shields were also distributed among the guests and key speakers.

Sindh CM launches week-long immunization campaign in 25 districts

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has said that eradication of polio was a collective responsibility, therefore district administration, local bodies, civil society members and our partners must work together to save our children from the crippling disease of polio.

"This he said while presiding over a meeting of the Provincial Task Force for Eradication of Polio here at CM House on Saturday.

"We are launching a week-long National Immunization Campaign from Monday, 29th April in 25 districts, therefore all the deputy commissioners and SSPs must ensure its success by supporting the polio teams in administering Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) to children below 5-years of age," he added.

The meeting was attended by Minister Health Dr Azra Pechuho, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Home Secretary Iqbal Memon, IG Police Ghulam Nabi Memon, Commissioner Karachi Hassan Naqvi, Secretary School Education Zahid Abbasi, Adl IG Karachi Imran Yakoob, Secretary Health Rehan Baloch, EOC Coordinator Irshad Sodhar, DG Health Dr Waqar, Chairman Rotary Aziz Memon, Ms Melissa of Unicef, Dr Zain of WHO and other concerned.

The Divisional Commissioner, DIGs of Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and Larkana participated in the meeting through video link. Murad Ali Shah said that polio had been eradicated from the entire region, except for Afghanistan and Pakistan, both of which have two cases each. He explained that due to frequent inter-provincial population movements and even from Afghanistan, the country was struggling to eradicate the polio virus. Minister Health Dr. Azra Pechuho, informed the CM that two cases of polio had been detected in Balochistan's Dera Bugti and Chaman districts.

The CM was told that the environmental samples (ES) collected from all the districts showed that 43 areas of 11 districts were infected with polioviruses. They include 13 areas of Karachi East, three each of Central, Malir and Korangi, Hyderabad and Sukkur, Six each of South and Keamari, and one each in Jamshoro Jacobabad and Badin.

The chief minister directed the district administration, local bodies and solid waste management authorities to ensure proper cleanliness in the districts where poliovirus has been detected.

"The Health Department would share the list of the poliovirus-infected UCs with local bodies and towns and even with the district administration to ensure proper cleanliness, efficient disposal of wastewater and provision clean drinking water in the areas so that its impact could be control," he said and added that the Health Department would take necessary measures to purge such areas from the virus.

It was pointed out that in February 2024 national immunization Days were observed in which 38743 cases of refusal were reported. At this, the CM said that no parent would be allowed to refuse to administer polio drops to his or her children. "If you find any refusal case inform the district administration and they will take strict action," he said.

ECP launches Election Monitoring Center for KP Tehsil Council by-elections

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up the Election Monitoring and Control Center (EMCC) to register and resolve public complaints during the upcoming local government by-elections for the Chairman Tehsil Council scheduled for April 28. According to the ECP spokesperson, individuals can contact this center to lodge any complaints regarding the elections taking place in six districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The center has enlisted trained staff to promptly address grievances and ensure timely resolution," stated the spokesperson. The ECP has set up control centers at four levels to register public complaints and swiftly address them. These control rooms are located at provincial, divisional, and district levels, in addition to the Election Commission Secretariat in Islamabad. The control room will stay in communication with pertinent personnel and stakeholders. It will remain operational until the conclusion of the electoral process. He prompted individuals to file their concerns regarding bye-elections with EMCC through email at complaints@ecp.gov.pk, emphasizing the availability of a round-the-clock helpline at 051-111-327-000 for their convenience. APP

Pakistan Professionals Forum held in Beijing exploring collaborative opportunities

BELJING: The Pakistan Professionals and Students Forum themed "Building Bridges Between Academia and Industry" was held on Saturday.

This timely discussion explored the critical relationship between Pakistan's educational institutions and the professional world, particularly students, according to China Economic Net (CEN).

Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi addressed the PPSF Forum that as Pakistan continues to strengthen its economic ties with China through initiatives like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), it

is essential to ensure that the country's workforce is equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to thrive in this evolving landscape. The forum provided a platform for key stakeholders from academia and industry to engage in constructive dialogue and identify strategies to better align educational curricula with the needs of enterprises.

Affia Shajia Awais Education Attaché at Pakistan's Embassy in Beijing said that one of the key focal points of the forum was the role of academia in equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to thrive in today's dynamic job market.



GILGIT: A young vendor selling colorful balloons at roadside. APP

Bilawal felicitates people on commemorating 87 years of Sindh Assembly



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has extended warmest congratulations to the people of Pakistan, especially those in Sindh and their esteemed democratic institution on the momentous occasion of the Sindh Assembly commemorating 87 years of its parliamentary journey. According to a press release issued from the Media Cell Bilawal House on Saturday, he remarked that the inaugural session of the Sindh Legislative Assembly was convened on April 27, 1937. He emphasized the enduring legacy of democratic perseverance, noting that even prior to the formation of Pakistan, our forefathers steadfastly championed democratic ideals.

Highlighting the pivotal role of Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto in the inception of the first Sindh Assembly, he lamented that a conspiracy deprived him of participation in its maiden session. "Despite the concerted efforts to sideline his party, both Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto and Sir Abdullah Haroon's party secured a majority in the Sindh Assembly. However, despite this majority, Sir Shahnawaz Bhutto's party was denied the opportunity to form the government. Instead, the then Governor extended the invitation to a party with merely three members in the House, disregarding the mandate of the majority party," he pointed out. Bilawal Bhutto reiterated that despite facing numerous conspiracies and injustices, our predecessors remained steadfast in their commitment to fortifying democratic institutions. He emphasized that the annals of his party's history are replete with a relentless struggle to bolster democracy and its institutions, spanning from the pre-partition era to the present day. APP