



"I thank the people of Pakistan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the remarkable hospitality"

Chinese Premier
Li Qiang

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Hosting 23rd SCO summit a milestone for Pakistan: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday termed Pakistan's hosting of 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit as a milestone in the context of international relations.

Talking to media persons at Media Facilitation Center at Pak-China Friendship Center, he said some inimical elements were claiming that Pakistan has been isolated at international level but now the world can see that the heads of major countries had visited our country.

"Russian and Chinese Prime Ministers' arrival in Pakistan is good omen for us Pakistan reputation has been restored with this summit", he added.

He said that Pakistan had made excellent arrangements for the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization summit being held in Islamabad today.

He said after 27 years an event of this magnitude was being hosted by Pakistan. "It is definitely an honour for Pakistan to host the 23rd summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif", he remarked.

He said that Islamabad, one of the most beautiful cities of the world, has been specially decorated for this summit and the foreign delegates have given good remarks about the city.

He said by hosting this summit Pakistan had once again proved it had the capacity and capability to host such mega events.

"World leaders and delegates will take away good impressions from Pakistan which would help further promote the soft and positive image of the country."

The minister said last night, the Prime Minister hosted a dinner in honour of the distinguished guests attending the SCO Summit and cultural event also marked the occasion portraying the culture of the member countries.

He said the Media Facilitation Center had been set up for local and foreign journalists covering the SCO Summit at the China-Pakistan Friendship Centre. He said that state of the art facilities were provided at the media centre so that the journalists could perform their professional duties easily and transmit news stories about the summit.

He said during his speech Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke about regional security, counter-terrorism and climate change.

He said such forums provide opportunities to discuss issues being faced by the countries of the region.

He opined that it was also very important to promote cultural exchanges as the states of the region have many cultural similarities. "Culture plays an important role in the public and soft image of any country," he added. Bilateral meetings were also being held on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, he said, adding the PM had bilateral meetings with heads of countries including Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan and other countries.

He said during these fruitful meetings cooperation in fields of industry, energy, agriculture and promotion trade were discussed. He also said that Pakistani ministers and focal persons had held meetings with different delegates to finalise the arrangements for investment and trade. To a question, he said that there were no official requests from the both sides for a bilateral meeting with the Indian External Affairs Minister, however, the arrival of Indian delegates was a good gesture at international level. APP



ISLAMABAD: Family photo of Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Heads of delegations of the 23rd SCO Heads of Government Meeting.

SCO Heads of Delegation reaffirm commitment to peaceful cooperation and economic growth

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The heads of delegation from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to peacefully resolving disputes through dialogue and consultations besides emphasizing the importance of strengthening cooperation across various sectors, including politics, security, trade, finance, and cultural ties, to build a prosperous, peaceful, safe, and ecologically sustainable planet.

In a joint declaration issued at the conclusion of the two-day SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting held here, the heads of delegations called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth of member states by optimizing the region's potential in areas such as green development, digital economy, trade, e-commerce, finance and banking, investment, high technology, start-ups and innovation, poverty alleviation, health care, including traditional and folk medicine, agriculture, industry, transport, logistics connectivity, energy, including renewable energy, communications, science and technology, environment and climate change. The heads of delegations, reaffirming their desire to ensure stable economic and social development in the SCO region, noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy for the period up to 2030 and the Program of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states.

They stressed the need for coordinated efforts

through the mechanisms of relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans.

The event was chaired by Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and was attended by the leaders from the SCO member states including China's Premier of the State Council Li Qiang, Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin, Tajik Prime Minister Kohir Rasulzoda, Uzbek Prime Minister Abdulla Aripov, Kyrgyzstan's Chairman of Ministers' Cabinet Zhaparov Akybek, Trade Minister of Iran Seyyed Mohammad Atabek, and Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar. Besides, Mongolia is participating in the summit as an Observer State being represented by Prime Minister Oyun-Erdene Luvsannamsrai and Turkmenistan as a Special Guest represented by Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers Rashid Meredov.

Among other dignitaries attending the moot include SCO Secretary-General Zhang Ming, Director of Executive Committee SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) Ruslan Mirzayev, Chairman of the Board of SCO Business Council Atif Ikram Shaikh and Chairman of the Council of SCO Interbank Union Marat Yelibayev.

The heads of delegation noted significant shifts in the global economy due to advancements in technology and e-commerce, expressing concern over reduced investment and disrupted supply chains caused by protectionist measures and trade barriers.

Opposing unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions, the delegations emphasized the need for a multilateral trading system to support global sustainable development.

Belarus, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan reiterated their support for China's One Belt, One Road initiative, highlighting ongoing collaborative efforts to integrate this project with the Eurasian Economic Union.

The heads of delegation underscored the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to facilitate equitable interactions within the SCO. They called for sustainable and inclusive economic growth, advocating for optimization in green development, digital economy, health care, agriculture, energy, and environmental initiatives. Heads of delegation also praised Kazakhstan's chairmanship of the SCO for 2023-2024 and emphasized the importance of implementing decisions from the July 4, 2024, CHS meeting, while expressing support for China's chairmanship for 2024-2025.

They noted that the member states advocate respect for the right of peoples to independently and democratically choose their political, social and economic development, emphasizing that the principles of mutual respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of states, equality, mutual benefit, non-interference in internal affairs, non-use of force or threat of use of force are the basis for the sustainable development of international relations.

Continued on Page 4

India recognizes Pakistan for successfully hosting SCO summit

ISLAMABAD: India has recognised Pakistan for successfully hosting the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit.



Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar congratulated Pakistan during his address at the SCO meeting. He stated that India provided its full support to make the presidency a success. He noted that the summit comes at a time when global conditions are complex, with ongoing major wars impacting the world significantly. Jaishankar emphasised that the COVID-19 pandemic devastated developing countries, while climate change has adversely affected economies.

He pointed out that the burden of debt posed a serious challenge to achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Furthermore, Jaishankar referred to the SCO Charter's Article 1 that stressed on strengthening mutual trust, promoting friendship, and acting as good neighbors. He stressed the need for an honest dialogue by saying "If there is a lack of trust and cooperation, it is essential to address those issues." SABAH

Pakistan Iran discuss ways to strengthen trade relations, industrial cooperation



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran, on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) 2024 summit here on Wednesday, discussed ways for strengthening trade relations, enhancing industrial cooperation and cultural exchange. According to press release issued by commerce ministry, Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan held a productive bilateral meeting with Iranian Minister for Industry, Mining, and Trade, Mohammad Atabek. During the meeting, both ministers emphasized the importance of boosting economic ties through increased bilateral trade and investment.

They also explored avenues for collaboration in sectors of mutual interest, realizing that there was a huge potential for bilateral trade, which needed to be exploited. The ministers discussed the potential for Pakistan and Iran to cooperate more closely in the regional market and beyond, leveraging the SCO platform to facilitate trade growth and regional stability. Jam Kamal Khan highlighted strategic location of both brotherly countries as a gateway to Central Asia and Middle East. He stressed the need for stronger economic cooperation between Pakistan and Iran, not only to enhance bilateral trade but also to promote prosperity in the wider region. Both sides expressed their commitment to continuing discussions and developing action plans to overcome existing trade barriers and streamline regulations to facilitate smoother business interactions between the two countries.

PM Mikhail Mishustin met with PM Shehbaz Sharif



mutual trade turnover increased by almost 13% and exceeded 57 billion rubles.

Russia believes that our common task is to create favorable conditions for the promotion of trade, mutual investment, and the launch of new promising projects in energy, industry, agriculture, infrastructure construction, logistics and transport.

ISLAMABAD: The Russian Prime Minister thanked his Pakistani counterpart for his "warmest greetings", noting that this was his first visit to Pakistan as Prime Minister. Relations between Russia and Pakistan are based on the principles of friendship and mutual respect. The two countries are striving to take cooperation to a higher level.

The Government of Russia is focused on increasing trade and economic cooperation with Pakistan. In January-August 2024, the

Russia has increased its energy supplies to Pakistan. Russian companies are also ready to facilitate the development of Pakistan's gas industry. Moreover, Russia believes that Pakistan has great transit potential due to its favorable geographical location.

The first Russia-Pakistan Trade and Investment Forum, which was held in Moscow on October 1, boosted economic cooperation. Russian PM proposed to organize the second forum in Pakistan.

'SCO Summit to pave way for regional growth'

ISLAMABAD: "Minister for Petroleum Dr Musadik Malik, has expressed high hopes for the 23rd Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) summit, emphasizing its potential to elevate the region's economic development and stability. In an exclusive interview with media, Malik stressed the importance of regional cooperation, drawing parallels between successful international bodies such as the European Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). Malik highlighted the significant economic potential of the nations participating in the summit, representing 44% of the world's population and contributing nearly 30% to global GDP. He believes that by enhancing trade and cultural ties, these nations can unlock new opportunities for growth. "There is a tremendous opportunity for these countries to evolve strategies through dialogue. Together, we can enhance economic activity, create new businesses, and ultimately provide more jobs for the youth," Malik said, outlining one of the summit's key objectives. The minister also encouraged major players, particularly China, to bring innovative proposals to the table that could integrate into global value chains, further boosting the region's economic potential. APP

Chinese Premier Li Qiang departs after attending 23rd SCO Summit

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Premier Li Qiang left Pakistan on Wednesday after attending the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit held on October 15-16 in Islamabad. Premier Li Qiang was bid farewell at the Nur Khan Airbase by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, according to press release issued by Planning Ministry.

While seeing off the Chinese Premier, Ahsan Iqbal expressed his appreciation for the visit, saying, "We look forward to welcoming you back to Pakistan soon." He further highlighted the importance of China-Pakistan relations, stating that "CPEC is a milestone in Pak-China friendship, just like the Great Wall of China."

Premier Li Qiang expressed his gratitude towards Ahsan Iqbal for his contributions to the success of CPEC, acknowledging the minister's services in advancing the project. "I will return to Pakistan," Premier Li affirmed, emphasizing the deep bond between the two nations. "Pakistan is China's iron brother," he



stated. The Chinese Premier also conveyed his appreciation for the hospitality extended by the people of Pakistan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif during his visit. "I thank the people of Pakistan and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the remarkable hospitality," Premier Li Qiang remarked before his departure.

This visit and participation in the SCO Summit further reinforced the strong strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, and both sides expressed their commitment to deepening cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), especially in the context of Phase 2 of the project. — VOM Report

SCO-CHG adopts decisions for more vibrant role, shared economic prosperity: Dar

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday said that the Council of Heads of Government of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (CHG-SCO) meeting have adopted a number of decisions and documents to guide the future of organization with enhanced role in regional connectivity, trade, investment and economic prosperity.

Addressing a presser at the conclusion of two-day CHG-SCO summit along with SCO Secretary General Zhang Ming, the deputy prime minister/foreign minister said that it was an honour for Pakistan to organize and host the 23rd CHG-SCO meeting of the member states.

He said that they were grateful to the leaders of the member states for their constructive contributions and output. Pakistan as a chair of CHG-SCO made every effort to identify the areas of further collaboration among the member countries which included enhanced connectivity, poverty elimination and climate

change etc, he added.

He said Pakistan had already collaborated with the member countries of the region in this regard and it was due to its efforts that several areas of cooperation were now approved including the concepts of economy, trade organization, development of creative economy and creation of new economy dialogue among the SCO members.

The two-day CHG-SCO concluded in serene and idyllic Capital of Pakistan that nestled at the Margalla foothills. Pakistan hosted the global event which was attended by leaders of SCO member states who brainstormed in the backdrop of recent global challenges to economy, peace and stability. SCO is the world's largest conglomerate of the Eurasian countries on the basis of world's population, geographic location and economy with more than 23 percent global GDP.

The deputy prime minister said during Pakistan's tenure as chair of SCO, it was a year's long process to reach to these



consultations and outcome by emphasizing upon the SCO member states to uphold the Shanghai spirit.

He said the prime minister of Pakistan during his address in the CHO-SCO meeting, had reiterated country's complete commitment to SCO Charter and objectives, besides stressing that SCO was ideally placed to serve as a vital platform for the sustainable development, securing peace and attaining regional prosperity.

Dar said "The joint communique just signed by the leaders is a comprehensive

document covering economy, trade, industry, investment, climate change, public health, culture, poverty elimination, women etc." The heads of government also resolved to further strengthen their commitment to SCO objectives, he added. The joint communique also stressed upon the global economic system and open and transparent system for shared and actionable future. DPM Dar said that the outcome of the joint communique reflected the resolve of the leaders to working together with mutual respect and close cooperation to overcome the future challenges for the shared future of the region.

He said the Heads of Delegation considered it important to continue joint efforts to counter protectionist trade measures that were contrary to WTO rules and regulations, as well as to continue working on strengthening the rules-based WTO, non-discriminatory, open, equitable, inclusive and transparent multilateral trading system, based on the WTO.

They also opposed protectionist actions,

unilateral sanctions and trade restrictions that undermine the multilateral trading system and impede global sustainable development, he added.

The heads of delegations noted the importance of implementing the SCO Economic Development Strategy and the Programme of Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO member states, he added. The deputy prime minister/foreign minister said they also stressed the need for coordinated efforts through the mechanisms of relevant cooperation in order to implement the respective action plans. The communique also instructed to ensure the implementation of the Concept for the Establishment of the Base of Economic Preferences of the SCO Member States, the Concept of Cooperation between Trade Promotion Organizations of the SCO Member States and the Framework for Cooperation of the SCO Member States in the Development of Creative Economy.

They also stressed the importance of

implementing the Concept of Cooperation in the Development of the "New Economic Dialogue" between the SCO member states, he added.

The leaders also showed their concerns to various challenges, and uncertainties in the global economy with restrictive trade. SCO leaders also welcomed the roads and ports connectivity and stressed upon to intensify efforts for the development of SCO bank, investment and fund while the SCO budget for the year 2025 was also approved, he further informed.

Dar said that Pakistan had passed on the responsibilities of the CHG-SCO chair to Russian Federation for the 2025 and reiterated continued and full support to their presidency. Secretary General of SCO Zhang Ming, in his remarks, congratulated Pakistan in making the tremendous efforts for hosting such a high-level meeting. He said the meeting focused on practical cooperation regarding the implementation of the outcome of the previous meeting on trade activities and business council. INP

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AI: a tale of two futures

SHAUKAT AHMED

As the AI revolution unfolds, humanity confronts two divergent paths and radically dissimilar realities. This is a tale of two futures, presenting us with a profound choice that holds the promise of either utopian progress or dystopian decline. As we grapple with the duality of our creations, the decisions we make will shape the destiny of our world. We can journey toward a horizon of hope and harmony, where AI elevates humanity to new heights, solving once-insurmountable problems and enhancing our lives in unimaginable ways – eradicating diseases, unravelling complex global challenges, fostering unprecedented economic growth and social equity, and unlocking vast potential for human creativity and progress. Or we can descend into an abyss of discord and despair, as AI plunges us into a dystopian nightmare, becoming a tool of manipulation, oppression, and chaos, exacerbating inequalities, eroding privacy, and undermining the very fabric of society. This future is marred by widespread unemployment, social fragmentation, and the omnipresence of surveillance and control, with human agency eclipsed by the cold, calculating logic of machines. Unlike the technological revolutions before it, AI ventures into realms of cognitive skill and complex decision-making, once considered exclusive to human intellect and impervious to automation. This distinction epitomises both its promise and peril. AI systems developed by Google Health can analyse medical images with accuracy levels comparable to or surpassing human experts, occasionally detecting subtle anomalies that may elude even veteran radiologists – revolutionising early disease detection. Medical breakthroughs are accelerating as Atomwise, BenevolentAI, and Insilico Medicine leverage AI to reduce research timelines from years to months, fast-tracking drug discovery and therapeutic advancements for diseases like cancer and Alzheimer's. Tesla's and Waymo's autonomous self-driving vehicles navigate complex urban environments, making split-second decisions to ensure passenger safety, promising a future with drastically reduced traffic accidents, increased productivity, and improved accessibility for the elderly and disabled. In the financial sector, institutions like JPMorgan Chase and FICO utilise AI for real-time fraud detection and risk assessment, safeguarding millions of transactions every second. AI-driven quantitative trading firms, such as Citadel Securities, Two Sigma, and Renaissance Technologies, deploy advanced algorithms to execute trades at speeds and scales beyond human capability, significantly shaping market dynamics and liquidity and are capable of generating substantial returns. Education undergoes a paradigm shift with Carnegie Learning's AI-powered adaptive systems, calibrating instruction to individual needs and learning styles, radically democratising access to quality education. Casetext and LexisNexis, AI-centric research platforms, are transforming the legal landscape by sifting through vast troves of case law, extracting relevant precedents and providing data-driven insights to support legal reasoning – in hours rather than days. Beyond broad applications that are reshaping industries, AI is also touching lives on a profoundly personal level, offering solutions to life-altering challenges that go far beyond bytes and algorithms. Jennifer Wexton, a US Representative from Virginia, was diagnosed with progressive supranuclear palsy (PSP), a rare and aggressive neurological disorder that left her unable to speak in 2023. In a remarkable application of AI technology, Eleven Labs, a voice AI company, stepped in to help. Using recordings of Wexton's speeches from before her diagnosis, Eleven Labs created a synthetic version of her voice, preserving her unique vocal characteristics and intonation. This AI-generated voice allows Wexton to communicate in a way that is recognisably her and authentically personal. Showcasing an even more ambitious application of AI in assistive technology, a groundbreaking fusion of neuroscience and artificial intelligence is pushing the boundaries of what's possible in restoring human functionality. Companies and research initiatives like Neuralink and BrainGate are developing implantable devices that can translate neuronal activity into digital signals with increasing precision. This technology aims to enable individuals with severe motor disabilities to control computers or prosthetic limbs using only their thoughts. While still primarily in the research and clinical trial phases, these innovations represent a quantum leap in our ability to restore function and dignity to lives impacted by paralysis or limb loss. This is not science fiction; it's our rapidly evolving new reality and these advancements, though revolutionary, are just a prelude to the symphony of change AI is orchestrating across countless fields. However, each advance carries the weight of ethical considerations and significant societal impact, prompting urgent questions about how to navigate this sea of innovation responsibly. Innovations of unprecedented and disruptive magnitude need guidance, direction, and a moral compass to yield more prosperity than peril. Regulation seems like the immediate and obvious solution to establish guardrails. After all, ensuring AI is safe, fair, and beneficial requires thoughtful governance. Regulation does play a crucial role, but more as a referee than a coach because it is reactive. In contrast, competition among tech companies is proactive, advancing the field faster than any regulatory body could mandate. The most critical initiative in steering AI toward the utopian future is found within the heart of its creation and the fundamentally competitive nature of the AI ecosystem itself. Every breakthrough by one company ignites a cascade of responses from competitors, driving an ever-quickenening cycle of innovation and progress. At first glance, this merciless race for market ascendancy may seem to fuel corporate greed rather than human good. However, the arms race for AI superiority, unlike historical conflicts, doesn't end with one winner hoarding all the spoils. This is not a zero-sum game; it's a thriving ecosystem of progress, where competition among tech giants becomes an unlikely yet powerful force for good because, in their pursuit of supremacy, these titans are compelled to be equally competitive in addressing societal concerns.

The writer is an entrepreneur based in the US and UK, and a shareholder in several companies developing AI technologies, including some mentioned in this article. Email: sar@aya.yale.edu



Hassan Baig

The fight against poverty

the Middle East experience such widespread deprivation and lawlessness.

As an ally of China, Pakistan could follow the Chinese model to reduce poverty, though other economic models – American, European, Indian, Taiwanese, or Singaporean – could also be pursued for economic growth and development. An immediate start to a comprehensive poverty reduction programme is needed, as current social safety net initiatives like the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) are inefficient and insufficient to tackle poverty. One challenge in addressing poverty is accurately measuring it in monetary terms. The current definition of the poverty line does not account for all aspects of poverty. Poverty extends beyond food security and encompasses the entire Human Development Index and socio-economic indicators. The international poverty line is an average of poverty lines in the world's poorest countries. In Pakistan, a labourer earning Rs600 a day is technically above the poverty line, but in reality, he or she is enduring extreme poverty. With such high food inflation in Pakistan, this amount is barely enough to survive, as the labourer struggles to secure even two meals a day, let alone meet other social needs. This is why an upward revision of the international poverty line is urgently needed. Infrastructure development is key to economic growth, which contributes to poverty reduction. The resources for infrastructure development could be arranged by sacrificing some of the non-development expenditure. Pakistan needs to develop farm-to-market roads, which are absolutely necessary for growth and to reduce poverty as part of sustainable development on a long-term basis. GDP growth can contribute a lot to poverty reduction, subject to the conditions that fair distribution of wealth be ensured through a better transparent taxation system. There is also a need to achieve GDP growth of not less than six per cent for at

least a decade to effectively fight against poverty. The debt trap along with other issues are hurdles on the way to achieving such figures of growth in the short term. These issues may be addressed at the earliest opportunity to achieve that goal. Massive industrialisation and investment are other areas of concern for Pakistan to promote large-scale manufacturing to enhance exports. The hurdle in the way of the manufacturing sector is the rising cost of production. That needs to be addressed to enhance production through manufacturing; the best strategy for that could be to functionalise the special economic zones as suggested in the CPEC between Pakistan and China. Besides industrialization, developing industrial clusters, internet-based e-commerce and the use of artificial intelligence (AI) may contribute a lot to economic development and would also reduce poverty in return. Technology is the key now. There is a need for more focus on such initiatives to address the issues of poverty and unemployment. IT and telecom are the new key initiatives to address issues that are hampering our economic growth.

Even though poverty reduction has been a significant focus for the government and international organisations, poverty is rising – engulfing almost 40 per cent of the population of Pakistan, pushing them below the poverty line. Government initiatives have been in the form of a poverty alleviation fund providing microfinance and livelihood support, BISP cash transfer to poor families, and the Ehsaas programme for poverty reduction launched in 2019. Besides government efforts, various NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs) have also been contributing a lot to reducing poverty in Pakistan, prominent among them the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), Save the Children and Oxfam in Pakistan. International organisations including the United Nations, World Bank and the Asian Development Bank have been sponsoring multiple programmes and projects to address the

issue of poverty in Pakistan. The UN has been working on sustainable development and poverty reduction. The World Bank has been supporting poverty reduction initiatives through various projects and programmes. The Asian Development Bank has been providing loans and technical assistance for poverty reduction. The IMF has also been emphasising addressing issues of poverty by extending social security programmes for the poor to reduce poverty through BISP and Ehsaas. Poverty reduction is not possible without economic growth and development in the country. The crucial decision long awaited here is to activate the local government system. An inclusive political system needs to be evolved through consensus to achieve the goal of a stable economic system. No system whatsoever can deliver without consensus and basic tenets/principles on which the entire foundation of the building is based. A national dialogue is the need of the hour to achieve political and economic stability. Once the goal of economic stability is achieved, then all other programmes can take shape to achieve the desired results of economic growth and poverty reduction. The SCO Summit may be the start of such stability in the days to come. There is a need to devise a strategic plan to start ambitious poverty reduction programmes to save the poor from the brunt of high food inflation. The non-development budget should be reduced to enhance public sector development spending to achieve high growth that would contribute to poverty reduction in return. The fight against poverty has a long way to go in Pakistan to mitigate its worst effects. But that is the only way to proceed, whatever the strategy is adopted to achieve this goal. In fact, our survival hinges upon economic growth and poverty reduction.

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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



China lent Pakistan tens of billions of dollars in order to develop Pakistan's infrastructure and build a China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that would allow China access to cheaper, more efficient trade routes. One of the program's grandest projects was the development of the Gwadar seaport and a highway connecting it to China's Xinjiang province. However, with the development projects paid for through hefty loans from China that required employment of Chinese businesses, Pakistan's debt ballooned. Sharif's foreign outreach agenda stepped on the toes of the military

establishment and the opposition. When opposition protests in 2014 provided a premise for the military to oust Sharif with popular support, the military instead used the opportunity to pressure Sharif to defer to military generals on matters of foreign policy and defense. The 2015 leak of confidential international financial documents known as the Panama Papers linked three of Sharif's children to offshore companies that they had allegedly used to purchase real estate in London. Sharif and his children denied any wrongdoing, but a corruption probe was opened into the matter. In 2017 the

Supreme Court disqualified Sharif from holding public office, forcing his resignation. He was replaced by Shahid Khaqan Abbasi as prime minister. Sharif's brother Shehbaz Sharif was selected to lead the PML-N party in the next elections. Sharif and his family went into exile, and in July 2018 he and his daughter Maryam Nawaz Sharif were convicted in absentia. They returned to Lahore on July 13 to serve their sentences, saying that they were giving themselves up for the people of Pakistan at a "critical juncture" ahead of the elections. They were arrested shortly after arriving. When the elections were held in late

July, Imran Khan's PTI party outperformed the PML-N. To guarantee security in the highly contentious election, the military had stationed at least 350,000 troops at the polling stations, and the Election Commission had granted the military express judicial power at those polling stations. While Khan praised the elections as the fairest in Pakistan's history, the PML-N and the other parties expressed concern that the military had interfered in the elections, especially after their poll observers were ordered to leave polling stations before votes were counted.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Cameron Diaz on reclaiming her life and returning to big screen

Cameron Diaz opens up about her Hollywood hiatus and triumphant return



After dominating Hollywood for years, Cameron Diaz shocked fans by stepping away from the spotlight in 2014. Now, a decade later, she's ready to return, with several exciting projects lined up. At Fortune's Most Powerful Women Summit, Diaz shared her reasons for taking a break from acting. "It was something I just had to do. It felt like the right thing for me to do to reclaim my own life and I just really didn't care about anything else. Nobody's opinion, nobody's success, no one's offer, no one's anything could change my mind about my decision of taking care of myself and building the life that I really wanted to have." In the past decade, the actress has

built a fulfilling life outside of Hollywood. She married Good Charlotte rocker Benji Madden, welcomed two adorable children, Raddix and Cardinal, and launched her clean wine brand, Avaline, with partner Katherine Power. Now, she is poised to return to the big screen in Netflix's *Back in Action* alongside Jamie Foxx, premiering in January 2025. She's also rumored to be joining the cast of *Shrek 5* and is in talks to star alongside Keanu Reeves in the dark comedy *Outcome*. Diaz credits her family for encouraging her to return to acting. "It was just the right time for my family. After Covid, we were in the house for a long

time, which was amazing and the problem was we would probably stay there, we would still be there right now." Her husband, Benji Madden, played a significant role in her decision. "He was like, 'You've been supporting us and building the family' and supporting him in his businesses, he's like, 'It's time for us to support you and let Mommy ascend and do her thing.' He's like, 'Let me see you do it girl.' I was like, 'Alright, here we go.'" Diaz also couldn't resist the opportunity to work with Jamie Foxx again. "I couldn't say no to Jamie. He said, 'Come with me' and I said, 'OK let's do it'; it's our third film together so it's really great."

Tech

New iPad Mini revealed by Apple, pre-orders open ahead of next week's launch

Apple has quietly announced a new iPad Mini, the first update to its smallest tablet since 2021, through a press release. Starting at \$499, the updated Mini is available for pre-order now and will be on sale from next Wednesday. The latest model is mainly a performance upgrade, featuring Apple's new A17 Pro chip, which boasts a 30% faster CPU, a 25% faster GPU, and a Neural Engine twice as fast as before. The base model now comes with 128GB of storage, up from 64GB. It also supports the new Apple Pencil Pro, appealing to artists who prefer the compact Mini. With faster Wi-Fi 6E and a faster USB-C port, the new Mini improves on many fronts while keeping the same design. One noticeable design change is the colour options, with new purple and blue models. However, the colours are more muted than the vibrant hues seen on the iPhone 16. The last iPad Mini redesign in 2021 brought significant changes, and this latest version sticks closely to that design while offering a power boost to support Apple's AI advancements.

The latest model is mainly a performance upgrade, featuring new A17 Pro chip, which boasts a 30% faster CPU

Apple also mentioned that the new device supports hardware-accelerated ray tracing for enhanced gaming visuals. The iPad Mini has always been something of an outlier in Apple's tablet range, similar to the iPhone SE. While it has a loyal fanbase, particularly among pilots, the larger iPad models tend to be more popular. Apple updated its other iPad models earlier this year, leaving some to wonder about the Mini's future. However, the company appears content to keep the Mini on a different update cycle from the rest of its lineup.

Health

Scurvy is still around — and cases are rising. Why a severe lack of vitamin C can cause the condition

Most people are aware that eating plenty of fruits and vegetables is important for overall health. But not having enough — or any — fresh produce raises the risk of developing a serious health condition like scurvy, which indicates a severe vitamin C deficiency. While it was once linked to 18th-century sailors living off limited diets for long sea journeys, scurvy still exists. In fact, a new case report in the Canadian Medical Association Journal details how a 65-year-old woman ended up hospitalized after mostly living on a diet of canned soup and fish, with no fresh produce. Nearly 6% of people in the United States have a vitamin C deficiency; data also shows that scurvy cases are rising in this country. So, what is scurvy, exactly, and what are the major symptoms to look out for? Here's what you need to know.

Scurvy is a disease caused by a severe lack of vitamin C in your diet, according to the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Vitamin C, which is also called ascorbic acid, "is essential for the synthesis of collagen, a protein that helps maintain the integrity of connective tissues like skin, blood vessels and bones," Scott Keatley, a registered dietitian and co-owner of Keatley Medical Nutrition Therapy, tells Yahoo Life. "Without enough vitamin C, the body can't produce or repair collagen effectively, leading to a wide range of symptoms," he says. There are a few symptoms someone might experience with scurvy. "Symptoms of scurvy usually start with fatigue, weakness and irritability," Keatley says. "As the deficiency worsens, more serious symptoms appear, such as swollen and bleeding gums, joint pain, easy bruising, dry skin and

poor wound healing." In severe cases, scurvy can lead to anemia and internal bleeding, Keatley says. It can even be deadly if left untreated. Scurvy is rare in the U.S., but it happens. "Historically, scurvy was described in sailors without access to fresh fruits and vegetables," Dr. Mehruba Anwar Parris, an assistant professor of emergency medicine at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and a medical toxicologist at New Jersey Poison Control Center, tells Yahoo Life. Now, older adults who aren't getting proper nutrition are the most vulnerable, per the U.S. National Library of Medicine. Scurvy mostly happens today due to poor dietary habits, Claudia Castaneda Tinoco, a registered dietitian at NewYork-Presbyterian/Columbia University Irving Medical Center.



دشمن کی گریوٹ

اسلام آباد

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق پاکستان خطی ترقی کیلئے اپنا پھر پور کردار ادا کرتا رہے گا، عالمی برادری کو فروغ میں بربریت رونے کیلئے اقدامات کارہنوں کے، مشرق وسطیٰ میں پائیدار امن کیلئے آزاد فلسطینی ریاست کا قیام ضروری ہے، وزیر اعظم شہباز شریف

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

عمران خان کا آکسفورڈ یونیورسٹی کا چانسلر بننے کا خواب ادھورا، حتمی فرما سے باہر کسی کو بلائیے

عمران خان کا آکسفورڈ یونیورسٹی کا چانسلر بننے کا خواب ادھورا، حتمی فرما سے باہر کسی کو بلائیے ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

پاکستان چین کا مشترکہ ترقی کی راہداریاں بنانے کے عزم کا اظہار

پاکستان چین کا مشترکہ ترقی کی راہداریاں بنانے کے عزم کا اظہار ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ہر ملک کے خود مختار گروپ میں شرکت کے حق کا احترام کرتے ہیں، امریکہ

ہر ملک کے خود مختار گروپ میں شرکت کے حق کا احترام کرتے ہیں، امریکہ ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او اجلاس پاکستان کیلئے اہمیت کا حامل ہے، حسین حسانی

ایس سی او اجلاس پاکستان کیلئے اہمیت کا حامل ہے، حسین حسانی ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

علی امین نے وزیر اعلیٰ تاحال ہیلی کاپٹر استعمال نہیں کیا، منزل المسلم

علی امین نے وزیر اعلیٰ تاحال ہیلی کاپٹر استعمال نہیں کیا، منزل المسلم ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

بھارتی درخواست پر اسحاق ڈار اور جے شنکر کی غیر معمولی ملاقات

بھارتی درخواست پر اسحاق ڈار اور جے شنکر کی غیر معمولی ملاقات ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

امید ہے تمام سیاسی و جمہوری قوتیں قوم کو اتفاق رائے کا متحدہ سرگرمی رہنما

امید ہے تمام سیاسی و جمہوری قوتیں قوم کو اتفاق رائے کا متحدہ سرگرمی رہنما ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

اپوزیشن اور اربن کو 16 ارب سے زائد کی آفر زاری، اسد قیصر

اپوزیشن اور اربن کو 16 ارب سے زائد کی آفر زاری، اسد قیصر ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

اعتماد اور تعاون میں کمی دور کرنے کی ضرورت، دوستی کو فروغ دینا چاہیے، بھارتی وزیر خارجہ

اعتماد اور تعاون میں کمی دور کرنے کی ضرورت، دوستی کو فروغ دینا چاہیے، بھارتی وزیر خارجہ ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

منفی پروپیگنڈا نظر انداز کر کے ملک کو مضبوط کرنا ہوگا، شرجیل میمن

منفی پروپیگنڈا نظر انداز کر کے ملک کو مضبوط کرنا ہوگا، شرجیل میمن ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

پشاور و ماہرین کی سابق ناظرین

پشاور و ماہرین کی سابق ناظرین ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

صدر مملکت نے قومی اسمبلی، سینیٹ کے اجلاس آج طلب کر لیے ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق



اسلام آباد، بھارتی تعاون تنظیم اجلاس کے اختتام پر شہباز شریف کے ساتھ رکن ممالک کے سربراہان کا گروپ فوٹو

ایس سی او اجلاس کیلئے بہترین انتظامات، مہمان اچھا تاثر لے کر جائینگے، عطاء تارڑ

ایس سی او اجلاس کیلئے بہترین انتظامات، مہمان اچھا تاثر لے کر جائینگے، عطاء تارڑ ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

خوراک کا 14 فیصد حصہ ضائع ہو جاتا ہے، مراٹھی شاہ

خوراک کا 14 فیصد حصہ ضائع ہو جاتا ہے، مراٹھی شاہ ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

انٹرنیشنل سیاست ناکام ہونے پر گھٹیا منصوبہ بنایا گیا، مریم نواز

انٹرنیشنل سیاست ناکام ہونے پر گھٹیا منصوبہ بنایا گیا، مریم نواز ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

سرفراز بیٹی کا بیورو سٹی اساتذہ کی تنخواہوں کی ادائیگی کا حکم

سرفراز بیٹی کا بیورو سٹی اساتذہ کی تنخواہوں کی ادائیگی کا حکم ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

منفی پروپیگنڈا نظر انداز کر کے ملک کو مضبوط کرنا ہوگا، شرجیل میمن

منفی پروپیگنڈا نظر انداز کر کے ملک کو مضبوط کرنا ہوگا، شرجیل میمن ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق ایس سی او کانفرنس، رکن ممالک کانے اقتصادی ڈائیلاگ پر اتفاق

Arrangements at SCO Media Facilitation Center lauded



ISLAMABAD: "In a bid to boost economic cooperation, Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan here on Wednesday recognized significant potential for increasing trade between the two countries, which currently is valued at just US\$ 8.63 million.

The discussion for improving bilateral trade was made during a meeting between Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema and Minister of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic, Daniyar Amangeldiev and his delegation on the sidelines of SCO Summit. Pakistan's exports to Kyrgyzstan stand at US\$ 3.33 million, while imports from the Central Asian nation reached US\$ 5.3 million in the fiscal year 2022-23. On the occasion, Cheema vowed to enhance trade between Pakistan and Kyrgyzstan and highlighted the need to enhance these figures and address the existing trade imbalance. He expressed appreciation for the Kyrgyz delegation's participation in the 23rd Council of Heads of Government meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in Islamabad, according to press release issued by Economic Affairs Division (EAD). The Minister acknowledged the productive outcomes of the 4th Session of the Pak-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) held in November 2023 and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to following up on these agreements. Moreover, various sectors for mutual cooperation were discussed, including trade, agriculture, energy, mining, digital development, tourism, health, banking, and education. He also emphasized on the importance of convening Joint Working Groups (JWGs) to foster collaboration in key sectors such as agriculture and trade. The Minister expressed eagerness to host the upcoming 5th Session of the IGC in Islamabad and reiterated Pakistan's dedication to strengthening ties through this mechanism. The meeting also focused on finalizing the 'Transit Trade Agreement' and related MoUs for cooperation in agriculture and trade. According to EAD press release, this fruitful discussion marks a significant step forward in enhancing economic ties between Pakistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, reflecting a shared commitment to collaboration and mutual growth.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif receiving the Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar at the venue of the 23rd SCO Council of Heads of Government Meeting.

Students misled to run 'malicious' campaign over fake incident: CM Maryam

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said on Wednesday that a mountain was made out of a molehill to malign the image of Pakistan.

Addressing the media here in connection with an alleged rape of a college student, she said an issue was made about something that did not exist.

She said students were misled to run an "ugly" campaign. "A girl was named as a victim. The girl had been admitted to the hospital since October 2 and was in the ICU."

She said that the police received information that the incident of rape had taken place. After which the police took immediate action.

A conspiracy was hatched after failing to spread anarchy, she said and added that those who hatched the conspiracy would be taken to task.

The chief minister said a story was fabricated. False accusations were made against the girl. Police wanted to be complainant. But, I think, the Punjab government should be the com-

plainant as this is not just the case of one girl. Chief Minister Maryam introduced a student Mahnoor during her press conference who was sitting beside her.

Mahnoor said she did not want to talk to media [regarding the incident]. A teacher asked her to raise voice for her rights.

The teacher stood by an anchor who wrote her a script to read on camera. But, Mahnoor said, she did not read that script.

The chief minister said the registration of the college should not have been cancelled abruptly and all matters should have been explored before any hurried decision.

She said an incident [of violence] took place in Gujarat and it was linked to the Lahore incident.

She vowed that she would not spare those who are involved in propaganda, who tried to defame the girl. She said the accounts of those involved in social media campaign have been traced and a crackdown on them would be launched soon.

Islamabad transforms into city of lights

ISLAMABAD: "Capital Development Authority (CDA) has illuminated the Federal Capital with breathtaking decorations during 23rd Council of Heads of Government (CHG) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit, creating an atmosphere of festivity and national pride.

The city's stunning transformation highlights Islamabad's scenic beauty while paying homage to the prestigious event, which saw heads of state and dignitaries from member nations gathering to discuss regional cooperation and development.

The 3D illumination effort spearheaded by the CDA is a feast for the eyes, with vibrant lights bathing the city's landmarks and key thoroughfares. Buildings and monuments in key areas such as Constitution Avenue, Sarena Chowk, and Rawal Dam Chowk adorned with intricate floral patterns and glowing motifs that repre-

sent both Pakistan's rich cultural heritage and the unity of SCO member states.

These installations offer a spectacular view, especially during the evening, when the cityscape comes alive with vivid hues of light. Visitors and citizens alike are captivated by the artistic lighting and floral designs, which blend modern technology with traditional aesthetics.

From twinkling lights lining roads and bridges to large-scale projections on buildings, Islamabad has been transformed into a city of beauty, befitting the importance of the summit. The beautification is not only a visual spectacle but also a representation of Pakistan's commitment to hosting international leaders.

The summit will focus on crucial issues such as regional security, economic cooperation, and cultural exchange among SCO member states. As Islamabad continues to shine under the glow of these vibrant lights, the 23rd SCO Summit stands as a beacon of Pakistan's commitment to fostering regional unity and cooperation.

The carefully planned decorations serve as a warm welcome to the visiting delegations, offering a glimpse of Pakistan's hospitality and its dedication to playing a key role on the global stage.



ISLAMABAD: Tajikistan's Prime Minister, Kokhir Rasulzoda, has wrapped up his visit to Pakistan after attending the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) conference, and is heading back home. Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, bid him farewell.

President underlines economic cooperation with Turkmenistan

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday underlined the importance of increasing economic cooperation and business-to-business relations between Pakistan and Turkmenistan for the mutual benefit of the two countries.

He also called for greater linkages between the stock exchanges of the two brotherly countries to improve economic cooperation. The president expressed these views while talking to Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers/Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan, Rashid Meredov, who along with Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan Atadjan Movlammov, called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan attached great importance to its ties with Turkmenistan, which were based on common values, religion and culture.

He called for working together for the shared prosperity and stability in the region and the betterment of the people of Pakistan and Turkmenistan.

The president also affirmed Pakistan's commitment to the early completion of the TAPI Gas pipeline project, adding that the project would greatly help in the economic develop-



ment of the two countries. Rashid Meredov thanked the president for participation in the International Forum on the 300th birth anniversary celebrations of Magtymguli Faragi in Ashgabat, saying that it was a great gesture of respect for the Turkmen people.

He also conveyed the special greetings of President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, and National Leader of the Turkmen People and Chairman of the People's Council of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, to President Asif Ali Zardari.

Ayaz lauds Pakistan's pivotal role in fostering regional cooperation via SCO platform

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt congratulations to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and all other stakeholders for the successful organization of the 23rd Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit. The prestigious event, attended by heads of governments and senior officials from member states, showcases Pakistan's growing stature on the international stage. In a statement, Ayaz Sadiq emphasized the significance of the SCO in strengthening cooperation and collective action across key areas, including sustainable development, regional connectivity, economic integration, climate action, and poverty alleviation. "The outcomes of this summit will undoubtedly contribute to a safer, more prosperous future for the region and the world," he noted. The Speaker also expressed his appreciation for the tireless efforts of all those involved in making the event a resounding success. "Their dedication, hard work, and commitment to excellence have brought immense pride to Pakistan. Alhamdulillah, their efforts have paid off, and it is truly a proud moment for the nation."

SCO Heads of Delegation...

Continued from Page 1

They reaffirm the commitment to the peaceful settlement of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultations. They emphasized the importance of leveraging regional potential and international cooperation to foster broad, equitable interactions in the SCO region based on international law and mutual respect.

They highlighted the need to enhance trade and economic ties through the "New Economic Dialogue" concept among SCO member states.

They also stressed the importance of leveraging the digital economy and technological innovations to boost regional competitiveness and ensure that technology benefits all. The Heads of delegations stressed the importance of deepening cooperation in the field of information security, the relevance of the "digital divide" issue and advocated for exploring the creation of a mechanism for cross-border data exchange. They noted the role of standardization tools in trade facilitation and called for the promotion of mutually beneficial and equal

interaction between the SCO member states, as well as the exchange of experience in these areas. They acknowledged the significance of the SCO Industry Ministers' Meeting and proposed its next session in 2025, emphasizing that support for creative industries will enhance competitiveness, reduce unemployment, and foster sustainable growth in the region. They supported establishing an exchange of experiences on national industrial policies and IT standardization. They emphasized the importance of developing micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises to drive economic growth and job creation, advocating continued cooperation under the 2018 Memorandum of Understanding. Heads of delegation emphasized the importance of a unified energy vision, calling for continued cooperation in energy infrastructure, security, and investment in renewable energy. They reaffirmed the importance of implementing the road map for increasing the use of national currencies in mutual settlements and supported proposals for an independent settlement mechanism and converging payment systems.

Climate-resilient farming critical for global food security

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: "Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam emphasized the necessity of sustainable agricultural practices to combat climate change, which is vital for global food security and the well-being of populations. In her World Food Day message, PM's aide highlighted that climate change adversely affects food security and sustainable agriculture through interconnected mechanisms. Increased temperatures, altered rainfall patterns, and extreme weather events jeopardize agricultural productivity, leading to higher food prices and increased vulnerability for low-income communities. Projections indicate that millions more could face hunger by 2050 due to these impacts.

Emphasizing the critical need for climate-resilient farming, she highlighted that Pakistan, being one of the most climate-vulnerable countries, faces severe impacts from extreme weather



events like floods and heatwaves, which threaten agricultural productivity and food security. Khurshid Alam noted that rising agricultural demands intensify competition for resources, necessitating a transformation in farming practices to support a growing population while addressing climate challenges. She advocated for adaptation strategies, such as crop rotation and drought-resistant varieties, which enhance resilience against climate variability and contribute to carbon sequestration and stressed the importance of com-

munity engagement, asserting that empowering local communities through education on sustainable practices strengthens local food systems and reduces dependence on external markets.

Ms Alam also pointed out that climate change affects nutritional quality and food availability, particularly in vulnerable regions, exacerbating malnutrition and poverty levels and stressed urgent action to create sustainable food systems that can withstand climate impacts while ensuring nutritional adequacy for all populations.

"The effects of climate change disproportionately impact marginalized groups, including women and low-income farmers," she stated, emphasizing the need to address these disparities for improved food security and community resilience.

She concluded that diverse cropping systems can enhance ecological performance, soil health, and biodiversity, ultimately playing a critical role in achieving food security amidst climate change challenges.

SCO vital for Pakistan's regional peace efforts: Dastgir

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz prominent leader Khurram Dastgir Khan Wednesday highlighted the vital role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in offering Pakistan a prominent stage to demonstrate its dedication to peaceful resolution and open communication.

"By leveraging the SCO platform, Pakistan can effectively showcase its commitment to regional stability and cooperation, bolstering its international reputation," he said while talking to a private news channel.

"Pakistan's involvement in the SCO enables the country to demonstrate its peaceful intentions and resolve challenges through diplomatic means," he added.

Dastgir Khan said, "SCO provides a vital platform for Pakistan to engage in peaceful dialogue and resolve conflicts through diplomatic means.

"The organization offers a unique opportunity for countries to come together and address their differences peacefully, fostering regional stability and cooperation," Khan underscored. "The SCO has emerged as a robust and influential platform, captivating the attention of Western nations," Khan noted.

"As a key player in regional politics, Pakistan's participation in the SCO reinforces its commitment to peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and regional stability," he added. APP

Nawaz Sharif hosts dinner to Bilawal, Fazl

LAHORE: PML-N President Nawaz Sharif will host dinner to the PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto and JUI head Fazlur Rehman at Jati Umra on Wednesday. JUI chief has reached Lahore to hold meeting with former prime minister Nawaz Sharif to discuss over the constitutional amendments under consideration. The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) and Pakistan People's Party (PPP) reached over an agreement on constitutional amendments following their four-hour long meeting in Karachi yesterday.

President summons NA, Senate sessions today

ISLAMABAD: "President Asif Ali Zardari has summoned the sessions of the National Assembly and Senate to be held separately on October 17.

The president has summoned the session of National Assembly on October 17 (Thursday) at 4:00 pm, while that of Senate on October 17 (Thursday) at 3:00 pm, the President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release on Wednesday. President Zardari has summoned the sessions of both Houses of Parliament under Article 54 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan.

Kazakh envoy admires SCO Council meeting in Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin on Wednesday called the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government meeting in Pakistan significant for the economic and trade ties between the member countries in the near future. Talking to Media, he said Kazakhstan and Pakistan are important members of the SCO forum, and both countries have a key role in SCO and in future the two nations will play their major role in the economic and political sphere of SCO forum. The ambassador said the relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan will be further improved through SCO. He said that economic and trade activities between the two countries are at their peak recently and they will play their role for economic integration between SCO member states.

He said Prime Minister of Republic of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov has participated in the SCO Council of Heads of the Government and a meeting was also held on the sideline of SCO between the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Prime Minister of Kazakhstan. Ambassador Kistafin said that during the meeting both sides emphasized the need to enhance trade and investment, and also focused on regional connectivity and security. To achieve this shared objective, both the leaders emphasized the need to maintain regular and high-level contacts, he said. The ambassador said that Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also recalled his visit to Astana in July earlier this year for the SCO Council of Heads of State meeting and appreciated Kazakhstan's contributions to strengthening cooperation among SCO countries. He said both sides also agreed to convene the meetings of Joint Working Groups on trade and agriculture at the earliest and added Kazakhstan sees Pakistan as a leading trade partner in South Asia. APP