



The importance of exploring opportunities for nurturing emerging talent and enhancing the capabilities of local industries through NICAT

Air Chief Marshal
Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu

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CJCS visits IDEAS-24, holds wide-ranging talks with officials of different countries



RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, NI (M), Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (CJCS) on Thursday visited the 12th International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS-24) and held wide-ranging talks on the sidelines. The CJCS held separate meetings with numerous officials including Defence Ministers, Commanders of Armed Forces and other important officials from different countries, including Turkiye, Azerbaijan, South Africa, Argentina, Malaysia, UAE, Cambodia, Kingdom of Eswatini, Gambia, Brunei, Maldives and Malawi, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the aforementioned meetings, key aspects of the defense and security relationship were discussed. All parties reflected on various areas of bilateral security and cooperation, especially in defense production.

The dignitaries expressed a strong interest in deepening their engagement with Pakistan's defense sector.

The CJCS also gave a keynote speech at a seminar, titled "Pakistan's Defence Production and Potential: Challenges and Way forward".

The Chairman JCSC emphasized that Pakistan's defence industry is the force behind equipping the battle-hardened Armed Forces of Pakistan. He further said that through superior R&D and using innovative and cost-effective solutions, Pakistan's defence industries are not only fulfilling country's essential defence requirements but also exploring avenues of collaboration in the international defence market.

He noted that the platform of IDEAS is an ideal opportunity for publicizing Pakistan's well-developed Defence Industrial Complex to the international community.

The Chairman JCSC also visited Pakistan Pavilion and lauded the efforts of Tri-Services in showcasing Pakistan's indigenous defence related equipment manufactured at par with global standards. He also appreciated the efforts of DEPO for organising the event and thanked all foreign companies for their participation.

The 12th International Defence Exhibition and Seminar-24 (IDEAS-24) was organised at Expo Center Karachi from November 19 to 22, 2024 under the auspices of the Defence Export Promotion Organization (DEPO). PR



ISLAMABAD: PM Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced a Rs5 million award and presented a commendatory shield to an FBR officer Ijaz Hussain who identified a sales tax fraud worth trillions of rupees..

PM announces Rs5 mln award for FBR officer to identify massive sales tax fraud

PM Shehbaz for ensuring third party validation in all government procurements

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday announced a Rs5 million award and gave away a commendatory shield to an FBR officer Ijaz Hussain who identified a sales tax fraud worth trillions of rupees.

The prime minister, talking to the officer, who called on him at the PM House, appreciated his dutifulness and honesty. The act of the FBR officer is the outcome of the prime minister's ongoing drive for FBR reforms and curbing the tax evasion, according to a PM Office press release.

In the meeting, the prime minister said that there was no dearth of dutiful and competent officers but they needed to be acknowledged. Expressing satisfaction over the positive outcomes of FBR reforms, the prime minister called for tightening the noose around the tax-evaders and their facilitators and strictly punishing them.

He instructed the FBR to thoroughly investigate the identified tax fraud and take the perpetrators to the task by engaging an highly capable legal team. In the briefing, it was told that the credentials of an 80 years old lady was used for the sales tax fraud which was pointed

out by Ijaz Hussain on March 4, this year. It was told that under the sales tax fraud, Rs370 million were also transferred initially which was being recovered as a main culprit has already been arrested. Prime Minister Shehbaz directed to identify and punish the FBR officers who facilitated this tax fraud. He said the government was striving to widen the tax base and the measures like the FBR reforms and digitisation would also help prevent such offences.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed the relevant authorities to ensure third party validation including quality insurance in all the government procurements. Chairing a meeting held here to review good governance and public procurements, the prime minister also directed to bring reforms in Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) and purge the authority of any type of influence. "Procurement of services and purchasing in all government institutions in a transparent way is the top priority of the government," the prime minister said adding that ensuring transparency in the government institutions' procurement would help building the foreign investors' confidence on Pakistan. The prime minister directed to establish a committee, separate from the pro-

urement agency, to address complaints related to the procurement process.

He also stressed to appoint qualified, professional, and experienced experts at PPRA on merit.

The prime minister instructed all government departments to use e-Procurement (e-PADS) besides establishing special procurement cells in government departments for purchasing and acquiring services.

Transparency in government affairs is essential for national development, he said.

During the meeting, the prime minister was informed that the review of the PPRA Ordinance and related rules and regulations had been completed, and the amendments would soon be presented to the federal cabinet for approval.

The aim of these amendments is to ensure transparency in the procurement process and to align them with contemporary requirements, the meeting was told.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahmad Khan Cheema, Petroleum Minister Dr Musadik Malik, Minister of State for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, PPRA Board members, World Bank Country Director and other relevant high officials attended the meeting.

Mohsin Naqvi, UK's Hamish Falconer discuss strengthening Pak-UK relations



ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday met with Hamish Falconer, the UK's Deputy Foreign Minister for Pakistan and Afghanistan, to discuss enhancing bilateral ties and areas of mutual interest. The meeting, held in Islamabad, was attended by British High Commissioner Jane Marriott and Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, Dr. Muhammad Faisal. Discussions centered on fostering closer collaboration and implementing joint measures to bolster Pak-UK relations.

Minister Naqvi expressed warm wishes to Falconer and reaffirmed his commitment to further solidifying the historic friendship between the two nations. He emphasized the importance of transitioning from mutual cooperation to a sustainable economic partnership, citing the UK as a "strong and excellent friend of Pakistan." The leaders highlighted the need for greater bilateral and regional synergy while addressing contemporary challenges. Naqvi underscored Pakistan's dedication to ensuring the rights and safety of minority communities, calling their protection a top priority. He also stressed the necessity of coordinated efforts to counter baseless rumors and propaganda on social media platforms. Falconer's visit is expected to infuse new warmth into Pak-UK relations and pave the way for enhanced cooperation in diverse fields. DNA

PTI founder's jail statement seeking release reflects his growing anxiety, frustration: Atta Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday said that the PTI founder's statement from jail, seeking release to delay protests, reflected his growing anxiety and frustration. In a striking comment on the PTI founder's statement, Attaullah Tarar said that the statement, "If you release me from jail, I will postpone the protest," was an admission of the prisoner's frustration and panic. Tarar stated that it has been proven that the call for chaos on November 24 was aimed at securing a 'deal'. He remarked that the person who once vowed never to engage in a deal was now incessantly shouting 'deal, deal' and was set on waging war against the federation. Tarar stated, "The only deal you'll get is with the law, which you have violated." INP

Aleem holds separate meetings with Turkish & Azerbaijan ministers in Baku



BAKU: On the eve of COP 29, global forum held at Baku, Azerbaijan, Federal Minister for Communications, Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan held meeting with Turkish Minister for Transport and Infrastructure Abdulkadir Uraloglu in which they discussed further enhancing the existing brotherly and trade relations between the two countries. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that the friendship between Turkey and Pakistan spans upon many decades which will further increase in the coming days. He said that Pakistan will welcome Turkey invest in different sectors. He informed the Turkish Minister of

Transport about the ongoing projects in Pakistan's communications sector and offered Turkey's participation in them.

In Baku, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan also held separate meeting with Azerbaijani Minister of Digital Development and Transport Rashad Nabyev in which the successful holding of COP 29 in Baku was appreciated. They agreed to further cement relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that a large number of Pakistani community in Azerbaijan is associated with education, employment and tourism while Pakistan is interested in G2G activities in various sectors with Government of Azerbaijan. He described his stay in Baku as pleasant and positive in which he had the opportunity to exchange views with Ministers from different countries. The Transport Ministers of Turkey and Azerbaijan in separate meetings appreciated the participation of the delegation from Pakistan led by Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan and assured them of full cooperation from their countries. SABAH

The 15th Council Meeting of ERRA held under the chairmanship of Ishaq Dar



ISLAMABAD: The 15th Council Meeting of the Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) was held on Thursday under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. Chairman ERRA, Members of the ERRA Council and representatives of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) attended the meeting.

Discussions focused on the process of strategic merger of ERRA and NDMA. The Deputy Prime Minister observed that merger process would streamline operations, improve resource allocation, and strengthen the overall disaster response framework. It was decided to engage the Governments of AJK and KP in harmonizing the disaster response framework.

Naval Chief inaugurates Pakistan Maritime Science, Technology Park

KARACHI: The groundbreaking ceremony of Pakistan's first Maritime Science and Technology Park (PMSTP) was held here Thursday at EXPO Centre during IDEAS-2024.

Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, graced the event as the chief guest, said a news release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pakistan Navy).

While addressing the ceremony, the Naval Chief highlighted historic significance of the project, stating that PMSTP will pave the way for much-needed growth in maritime sciences, technologies, businesses, and industries. Naval Chief inaugurates Pakistan Maritime Science, Technology Park. He emphasized that this initiative will open new avenues for enhancing Pakistan's GDP and advancing the maritime sector. The Naval Chief further underscored that the success of PMSTP reflects strong partnerships cultivated with visionary individuals and organizations. PMSTP is the country's first dedicated maritime science park, integrating academia, industry, and government in a unique collabora-



tion to foster growth across Pakistan's maritime sectors. Naval Chief inaugurates Pakistan Maritime Science, Technology Park. The park's initiatives will target diverse fields, including Naval Technologies, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Security, Ocean Renewable Energy, Seafood Processing, Shipbuilding, and Coastal Tourism. PMSTP is envisioned as a transformative hub for innovation and advancement, focusing on maritime science and technology to bolster Pakistan's blue economy. The project represents a significant step toward addressing Pakistan's economic challenges, with plans for expansion beyond Karachi to Islamabad, Lahore, and Gwadar. PR

Increased productivity, quality, innovation 'instant solution' to economic challenges

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday mentioned increased productivity, quality and innovation (PQI) as the 'instant solution' to the economic difficulties faced by the country in the absence of the required investment volume. "These [PQI] are the basic pillars on which the national competitiveness of any country depends," he said while addressing the inauguration session of the two-day National Productivity, Quality and Innovation (PQI) Summit-2024. The summit, titled "Driving Growth Through Excellence in Productivity, Quality, and Innovation," has been organized by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, with PQI identified as key drivers for achieving sustainable economic growth and enhancing Pakistan's global competitive-

ness. Narrating success stories of developed countries that attained economic prosperity, the Planning minister said they first adopted key drivers of progress: productivity in the 1970s, quality in the 1980s and innovation in the 1990s, all triggered by the 'knowledge explosion.' "Competitiveness is not what you do with what you have inherited; competitiveness is all about what you are capable of creating," Ahsan Iqbal quoted Michael E. Porter, considered the Father of Competitive Strategy. He regretted that Pakistan was ranked 110th in the National Competitiveness Index out of 140 countries, as reported by the World Economic Forum, adding, "Unfortunately, we stand nowhere." The Planning minister stressed the need to improve capabilities and follow international trends and principles "if we want to be included in the leading economies of the world." He urged the summit participants to



explore ways for all sectors including public, private, industry, agriculture and services to move forward in line with the principles of enhanced PQI. "The key to tackling the economic challenges is export-led economic growth, which can open the door to success for Pakistan by increasing exports from the current \$30 billion to \$100 billion," he remarked. Ahsan Iqbal informed the audience that friendly countries, especially Gulf States including Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emi-

rates, Kuwait and Qatar had an overall investment portfolio of \$29 billion in diverse fields in Pakistan. He said Pakistan was turning around due to the difficult decisions taken by the current government of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), at the cost of its 'political capital.' He mentioned the decrease in inflation, increased economic growth, a record-breaking surge in the Pakistan Stock Exchange, international recognition by rating agencies and the initiation of

CPEC Phase-2. "Opportunities are knocking at the door, and now Pakistan cannot afford any political uncertainty and instability, which have hindered progress and prosperity in the past," he cautioned.

The Planning minister expressed the desire to fulfill the dream of the Founders of Pakistan Quid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Muhammad Iqbal to make the country a developed and prosperous state by 2047, when it would mark 100 years of independence.

The two-day summit gathered renowned scholars from academia and industry, CEOs of leading brands, leaders from chambers of commerce and industry, and corporate leaders from across the country. The participants engaged in comprehensive discussions and collaborative efforts to enhance productivity, elevate quality standards, and foster innovation in various sectors of the economy.

During the summit, breakout sessions were held on Productivity, Quality, and Innovation, attended by research scholars, think tanks, academia, and industry representatives. These sessions focused on improving productivity for sustainable growth, raising quality standards to meet international benchmarks, and promoting innovation to build a competitive economy.

The summit is set to serve as a milestone in achieving the goal of increasing exports, ensuring economic stability, and ultimately maintaining Pakistan as a trillion-dollar economy by 2035 and a three-trillion-dollar economy by 2047, under the Ministry's development framework based on the 5Es: Exports, Energy, E-Pakistan, Environment and Climate Change, Food Security, and Equity. The framework emphasizes providing equal opportunities for all, with a special focus on empowering youth, women, and minorities, as well as developing the less developed areas of the country.

Editor-in-Chief: Amna Munawwar Awan
 Editor: Muhammad Hasam
 Office # 408, 4th Floor, Evacuee Trust,
 Agha Khan Road, F-5/1 Islamabad
 Phone: + 92 51 8354964

Blurred boundaries

DR ERIC SHAHZAR

As I sat on a live talk show recently, discussing the high-stakes COP29 summit in Baku and the mounting climate crisis, my call for Pakistan and India to one day join forces on climate action was met with a chuckle from a defence analyst on the panel. His light-hearted dismissal of the idea was all too familiar – a knee-jerk reaction to any suggestion that these two nuclear neighbours, with decades of animosity, might one day set aside their differences to tackle a shared existential threat.

But if history has shown us anything, it's that even entrenched rivals can eventually unite when the stakes are high enough. In a world where climate devastation respects no borders, our nations can't afford to let grudges hold back solutions that might save millions of lives and preserve our shared environment. If we can't imagine cooperation now, as we choke on the same smog and face floods that wash away homes across borders, then when?

Recently, the EU's climate pact ambassador spoke powerfully about regional self-reliance, stating that Europe will no longer wait for the US to take the lead on climate action. Instead, the EU intends to shape its own climate narrative and set its own course, emphasising the strength of regional alliances. So, why can't South Asia do the same? Pakistan, through Saarc, has the potential to spearhead a strong regional coalition on climate. And if Saarc doesn't fulfill that role, then let the focus fall on the G77, including China, to create actionable momentum on climate.

It's no fantasy to imagine Pakistan and India on the same side of the table, working together on climate issues. If not immediately, it's a partnership that's inevitable in the long run. History shows us that bitter rivalries can give way to cooperation. Why, then, can't Pakistan and India – locked in a mutual crisis with smog, flooding, and extreme weather – unite for the survival of South Asia? The smog-choked cities in both Pakistan and India aren't bound by borders. Pakistani Punjab's chief minister recently suggested reaching out to India for cooperation on air pollution – a call that deserves respect and, ideally, a positive response. Climate catastrophe is a regional crisis, one that demands coordinated action beyond the political gridlock of the past.

COP29 has come to be nicknamed 'Money29' as finance issues dominate the agenda, especially for developing countries like Pakistan, which successfully lobbied the United Nations to establish the Loss and Damage Fund. However, the fund has yet to yield results and the financial help our countries need remains mostly symbolic.

Globally, we see faltering commitments – such as the US backpedalling on its climate goals and the potential withdrawal from the Paris Agreement as Trump returns to office. These policy reversals send a demoralising message, and the whole world takes note. But instead of depending solely on the superpowers, South Asian nations should follow the EU's example of self-reliance. Recently, the EU's climate ambassador underscored that Europe will no longer look to the US to dictate climate policy; it will steer its own course. South Asia must seize the same initiative. If Pakistan can't find momentum through Saarc, we should focus on leveraging the G77, alongside China, to drive meaningful change. The world has seen reconciliations before. As it stands, relying on world leaders for climate funding is proving futile. For developed nations, COPs have devolved from opportunities for action into uncomfortable reminders of broken promises. In 2023, Oxfam reported that wealthy, high-emission countries are three years overdue on their pledge to mobilise \$100 billion annually in climate finance for lower-income countries. We need to change the narrative around climate finance; it is not charity or a loan – it is a matter of climate justice.

But while we need support from the Global North, Pakistan cannot rely on international funding alone. To survive and thrive, we must adopt the mentality of the survival of the fittest. Yes, the climate crisis was forged in the factories of Manchester and New York during the Industrial Revolution, and yes, the global North bears significant responsibility. But to become resilient, we must look inward, strengthen our economy, and create robust, self-sustaining climate initiatives.

Pakistan should consider implementing 'green fines', holding corporations accountable when their profits come at the cost of our environment. While switching to electric vehicles is a start, it's not enough. We need foundational reforms to address climate change effectively. Climate action in Pakistan must encompass issues that intersect with climate change, including water, food, and energy security. To tackle these, all provinces must come together, united in purpose rather than divided by politics.

We have policies in place – the National Adaptation Plan 2023, the Living Indus Initiative, and the National Climate Change Policy – but they are only as good as their implementation. Without significant progress on these fronts, policies remain words on paper, not solutions on the ground. Sadly, as Pakistan grapples with extreme poverty, institutional mismanagement, and an exodus of young talent seeking better opportunities abroad, the climate crisis often takes a backseat. But make no mistake, this is not a distant, abstract issue – it is one of the gravest internal security threats we face today. Environmentalists may not hold priority in our current political landscape, or they may even become targets of mockery. But as we continue advocating for climate action, we hope the doubters and deniers are proven wrong before it is too late. History shows us that the most resilient nations overcome adversity by building strength from within. They stop pointing fingers and start fixing what they can at home. For Pakistan, resilience means committing to climate action with or without international support because our survival depends on it.

The writer is an environmentalist and a professor of environmental law.



Syed Asad Ali Shah

Reimagining education

what if we transformed education into an experience that not only imparts knowledge but also cultivates curiosity, critical thinking, and the courage to rethink?

At the heart of meaningful education lies curiosity – the desire to learn, to know, and to understand. Encouraging students to ask questions and seek answers empowers them to take ownership of their learning. Critical thinking complements curiosity by enabling students to analyse information, evaluate arguments, and make informed decisions. By fostering an environment where students feel safe to question and challenge ideas, we prepare them for a world where adaptability and innovation are crucial.

Embracing the 'scientist' mindset, as suggested by Adam Grant in his book 'Think Again', is essential in this transformative educational model. Instead of clinging to beliefs like a preacher, attacking others' ideas like a prosecutor, or seeking approval like a politician, students should be encouraged to think like scientists – always curious, open to new evidence, and willing to revise their understanding. This means being comfortable with saying, 'I don't know... yet', and seeing uncertainty as an opportunity for discovery.

Mastering the skill of rethinking is not just for the 'old folks' – it's a life skill for anyone who wants to grow. Students should be taught to question what they know, and dare to consider new data and fresh perspectives. This isn't about discarding all prior knowledge but about building a growth mindset that values continuous learning and adaptability. Confidence coupled with flexibility is vital. Students should believe in their abilities but remain open to pivoting when presented with new information. The strongest individuals are those who can adapt, shift, and evolve – traits that are essential in today's fast-paced world.

Celebrating being wrong is perhaps one of the most liberating practices we can instill in students. Mistakes are not character flaws; they are data points indicating that we are pushing boundaries and learning. If students are never wrong, they are not stretching themselves enough. By reframing failure as a step forward, we encourage resilience and a love for learning.

Incorporating insights from Adam Grant's 'Hidden Potential', we can further enhance this approach. Grant explores how cultivating certain

character traits can unlock hidden capabilities, empowering individuals to achieve greater things. Developing key attributes such as proactivity, prosocial behaviour, discipline, and determination is vital.

Encouraging students to take initiative by asking questions and seeking information beyond the classroom fosters a proactive attitude. Promoting collaboration among peers builds social skills and creates a supportive learning community. Teaching the importance of focus and resisting distractions enhances their ability to absorb information. Inspiring students to tackle challenging problems and persist in the face of obstacles builds resilience.

The core skills of learning are a critical eye and an open mind. Critical thinking involves refusing to accept ideas at face value and not believing information until it's verified. Openness means refusing to reject ideas at face value and not disbelieving information until it's falsified. If knowledge is power, knowing what you don't know is wisdom. Encouraging students to acknowledge the limits of their understanding fosters humility and a continuous desire to learn.

To bring this vision to life, we need to transform how education is delivered. Making learning fun and interactive ignites students' natural curiosity. Incorporating storytelling, games, and hands-on activities makes lessons more engaging and memorable. For example, in science classes, conducting experiments allows students to discover principles firsthand. In literature, exploring characters' motivations through role-play deepens understanding.

This approach not only makes learning enjoyable but also encourages students to delve deeper into topics out of genuine interest. Teachers play a pivotal role as facilitators of learning rather than mere transmitters of information. By guiding students on their educational journey and encouraging exploration, teachers help students become independent thinkers. Personalising instruction to meet diverse needs recognises that each learner is unique. Building strong relationships with students helps identify individual strengths and areas for improvement, motivating them to take ownership of their learning.

Leveraging technology, especially artificial intelligence, offers innovative ways to personalise education. AI can serve as a one-on-one tutor,

adapting lessons to each student's pace and style. It provides instant feedback, helping students understand mistakes and learn more effectively. By integrating technology thoughtfully, we can enhance traditional teaching methods and provide a more customised educational experience.

Creating a supportive learning environment is essential. When students feel safe to express themselves and take risks, they are more likely to engage fully. Establishing norms that promote respect and collaboration fosters a positive atmosphere where learning thrives. Celebrating achievements, no matter how small, boosts confidence and encourages continued effort. Providing opportunities for students to lead projects or mentor peers reinforces the value of contributing to the community.

Moving away from traditional exams toward assessments that reflect understanding and growth reduces the pressure of high-stakes testing. Projects, presentations, and portfolios allow students to demonstrate knowledge creatively and comprehensively. Feedback focused on progress guides students in their development, reinforcing that learning is a journey, not a destination.

Reimagining education to prioritise curiosity, critical thinking, and embracing the joy of being wrong is not just an idealistic vision but a necessary evolution to prepare future leaders in the 21st century. By cultivating these attributes and drawing inspiration from thought leaders like Adam Grant, we equip students with the tools to navigate a complex and dynamic world.

This transformation requires the collective effort of educators, students, parents, and policymakers. By adopting this new approach to learning, integrating technology, and fostering essential skills, we can create an educational system that not only imparts knowledge but also ignites a lifelong passion for learning. Let us commit to building this future together – a future where education empowers students to think freely, explore boldly, and achieve greater things. By investing in our students' potential today, we pave the way for a brighter, more dynamic tomorrow.

The writer is a former managing partner of a leading professional services firm and has done extensive work on governance in the public and private sectors. He tweets/posts @Asad_Ashah

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



Nevertheless, a great many have remained in refugee camps in the border areas as well as in Pakistan's cities. After several experiments in economic restructuring, Pakistan currently operates a mixed economy in which state-

owned enterprises account for a large portion of gross domestic product (GDP). The country has experimented with several economic models during its existence. At first, Pakistan's economy was largely based on private enterprise, but significant sectors of it

were nationalized beginning in the early 1970s, including financial services, manufacturing, and transportation. Further changes were made in the 1980s, under the military government of Zia ul-Haq. Specifically, an "Islamic" economy was introduced,

which outlawed practices forbidden by Shar'ah (Muslim law)—e.g., charging interest on loans (rib)—and mandated such traditional religious practices as the payment of zakat (tithe) and ushr (land tax).

To be continued....

Showbiz

Tech

Selena Gomez gives reassuring update on her music hiatus

Selena Gomez has released two singles in the past year after her 2020 chart-topping album 'Rare'



Selena Gomez isn't walking away from music — she's simply hitting pause. In a new cover story for The Hollywood Reporter, the Only Murders in the Building star shared insights into her career, revealing she's "almost done" with music but hasn't ruled it out entirely. "Music isn't going away. I just set it down for a second," Gomez, 32, clarified, as she focuses on expanding her work in film and TV.

"I think I've done just as much as I wanted to do in music, but it's exciting because I feel like I haven't even started in film and TV" she said, adding, "I like that I have to earn my position, and I love storytelling. So,

I'm excited to do more of that."

While fans continue to wait for a follow-up to her 2020 chart-topping album Rare, Gomez has released singles like Single Soon and Love On. However, she teased earlier this year that these tracks might not appear on her next album. "I feel like I'm brewing," she told Billboard, adding she's in the process of crafting new music.

In addition to her music hiatus, Gomez has been making waves with her beauty line Rare and mental health company Wondermind. She also stars in Jacques Audiard's film Emilia Pérez, which has found immense success.

Is catching culprits using registered VPNs possible? Expert weighs in



A top IT industry official stated on Thursday that even if an individual was registered for using a Virtual Private Network (VPN), it would be difficult to detect the user's engagement in illegal activity. "A secure transaction occurs when one gets connected to a VPN, therefore, it is difficult to catch someone using VPN because no one knows what data is passing over it," said Sajjad Mustafa Syed, Pakistan IT Industry Association (P@sha) Chairman insisted, during the Geo News show "Geo Pakistan". He revealed this while replying to a question on whether it was possible to apprehend someone engaged in terrorist or criminal activities using a VPN, an encrypted internet

network, even after getting oneself registered. The P@sha chairman rued that the restriction could, however, cause a great deal of economic damage to the country's 2.3 million IT workers. To another query about whether perpetrators using VPNs could not be caught and what the use of the registration process was, he said the country would only end up creating classes of digital haves and have-nots. "Some people would be able to access the digital world, and the rest will not be able to do that." The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) on November 13 introduced a streamlined process for legitimate users to register their VPNs. The development came days after the regulatory body began blocking unregistered VPNs in Pakistan to "regulate internet security and ensure the safety of users." Sources within the PTA said unregistered VPNs posed a significant security risk, as they might allow unauthorised access to sensitive data. Furthermore, they could potentially provide access to illegal content.

Malaria ravages Nigerian city infamous for vaccine doubts

Zuwaira Muhammad sat beside her emaciated 10-month-old twins on a clinic bed in northern Nigeria, caring for them as they battled malnutrition and malaria. She will have her babies vaccinated if they regain their strength, but for many in Kano—a hotbed of anti-vaccine sentiment—the choice is not an obvious one.

The infants have been admitted to the 75-bed clinic in the Uguwa Uku neighborhood, one of only two in the city of 4.5 million run by French aid agency Doctors Without Borders (known by its French acronym MSF).

Kano has the highest malaria burden in Nigeria, but the city has long been known for a deep-seated suspicion of vaccinations against several diseases. People in the conservative north of the country tend to look to the guidance of their own religious leaders, given in their native Hausa lan-

guage, over international campaigns associated with federal authorities.

Last month, Nigeria secured 846,000 doses of malaria vaccine in its campaign to fight the parasitic scourge, long a major concern in Africa's most populous nation.

The malaria vaccine, which requires four doses, should be administered to children under one year as part of Nigeria's routine immunization schedule, according to United Nations children's fund UNICEF. It remains to be seen if Kano can put aside its doubts.

"I will allow them to receive the malaria vaccine when the immunization starts because I know how bad malaria is," Zuwaira Muhammad, 26, told AFP. "I almost lost them to malaria but for the intervention I received here," she said.

Malaria is caused by a plasmodium parasite

which is transmitted by the bite of infected mosquitoes. It is characterized by chills, fever and sweating and can be fatal if not treated quickly.

Nigeria accounts for 27 percent of the global malaria burden, the highest in the world, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in its 2022 World Malaria Report.

It also accounts for 31 percent of global malaria mortality: In 2021, Nigeria recorded 68 million malaria cases and 194,000 deaths, with 80 percent of the mortality among under-fives, according to WHO data.

Kano State has the highest number of cases in Nigeria, recording 6.8 million or 10 percent of all infections in 2021, the Malaria Consortium, a UK-based medical charity working to eradicate malaria in Kano says on its website.

Health



Air Chief Zaheer Ahmed visits 12th edition of IDEAS-2024



ISLAMABAD: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force on Thursday made a comprehensive visit to the 12th edition of the International Defence Exhibition IDEAS-2024 at Karachi Expo Centre.

This event showcases latest advancements in defence and aerospace technology, attracting both diverse array National and International audience, said an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release. The visit of Air Chief underscores the importance of technological collaboration and innovation in enhancing national defence capabilities.

During the visit, the Air Chief visited various stalls within the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park pavilion, which is prominently showcasing cutting-edge technologies in Space, Cyber, Artificial Intelligence, Electronic Warfare, Aerospace Designing, Sensors and Simulators domains, engaging in detailed discussions with national partners on the crucial role of technological collaboration.

Emphasizing the transformation of promising startups into Small & Medium Enterprises (SMEs), he underscored the need for fostering a robust ecosystem that encourages venture capitalism to drive innovation and growth in the aerospace sector. The Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the importance of exploring opportunities for nurturing emerging talent and enhancing the capabilities of local industries through National Incubation Center for Aerospace Technology (NICAT).

The Air Chief also interacted with foreign delegates, where discussions were focused on exploring avenues for the sale and purchase of indigenously developed aerospace equipment, promoting a self-reliant defence industry. Speaking on the occasion, Chief of the Air Staff encouraged the establishment of the defence industry framework aimed at identifying and bridging existing gaps in the Aerospace sector. He emphasized on fostering both national and international collaboration to synergize the technological roadmap, ensuring that Pakistan remains at the forefront of Aerospace innovation.

The participation of the Pakistan Air Force at IDEAS-2024 to exhibit state of the art niche technologies underscores the commitment of PAF leadership to technological achievements through National Aerospace Science & Technology Park which has transformed into an icon of indigenisation efforts in defence technologies and national development fostering partnerships that ensure the security and sovereignty of Pakistan. PR



KARACHI: A view of Counter-terrorism exercise during ongoing International Defence Exhibition and Seminar (IDEAS)2024. INP

38 killed, several injured in attack on passenger vehicles in Kurram

VOM Report

LOWER KURRAM: At least 38 people were killed and several others injured when gunmen on Thursday opened fire on a number of passenger vehicles in Ucheat area of Lower Kurram.

Talking to media in Islamabad, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi confirmed that 38 people were killed in the Kurram attack.

According to Kurram DPO, a convoy of vehicles coming from Peshawar to Parachinar came under fire in the Ucheat area. Automatic weapons were used by the gunmen, he added.

He said 38 people, including three women, died on the spot. Several injured were rushed to nearby hospital where condition of many had been described as serious.

Police and rescue teams reached the spot and sealed the area and launched search for the attackers.

No group has so far claimed responsibility of attack.

President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday strongly condemned the incident of firing took place in Kurram district targeting the passenger vehicles.

The president, in a statement, expressed grief over the loss of precious lives in the incident and called it a coward and inhumane act. He instructed the authorities concerned to



take perpetrators of the attack on innocent citizens to the task.

President Zardari prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to bear the loss.

He also prayed for early recovery of the injured and emphasised the best possible medical treatment to them.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also condemned the firing incident in Kurram district, killing at least 33 people.

In his statement, the prime minister expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives, labeling the attack as a cowardly act. He urged the authorities to ensure swift action against those responsible for this heinous crime.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi condemned the incident and expressed grief over the loss of innocent lives.

He prayed for the early recovery of the injured people.

'Regional climate coalitions to forward diplomacy, inclusive collaborations must for climate resilience'



BAKU: The global experts at a critical discussion on the sidelines of the global climate conference COP29 highlighting linkages among water security, peace and biodiversity advocated for multilateral coalitions among regional states of the global south amid emerging tech revolution transforming climate vulnerable sectors.

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in collaboration with the Commission on Science and Technology for Sustainable Development in the South (COMSATS) organised the sideline event titled "Fostering Water Security, Biodiversity and Peace Through Innovation and Earth Observations" here at the COP29 venue.

In her special remark, Prime Minister of Pakistan's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam said the climate crisis has been accelerating at an unmanageable pace that pushes the world to spearhead out of the box solutions like regional cooperation as the lead forum for all the experts and intelligentsia.

She added that in Pakistan the rising impacts of climate change and policy challenges have augmented the need of holistic and inclusive policy solutions that cater for all the regional partners and not merely a single community or nation.

Romina Khurshid Alam pointed out that the scale of climate catastrophe is gigantic with its risks and hazards permeating into every aspect of life which was evident during the 2022 devastating floods that totally dismantle life, livelihoods, development and social fabric in the affected areas. Pakistan, she said had a clear agenda at the COP29 demanding sincere pledges for climate finance, debt neutral just energy transition, loss and damage fund mobilization, and attention of the developed towards adaptation related finance for the developing countries as they also needed adaptation along with mitigation.

Dr Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director, SDPI said water, biodiversity and peace were directly linked to climate change whereas the use of cutting edge technology was crucial in transforming the global approach towards enhancing resilience of the vulnerable sectors. Dr Suleri cited the example of landmine detecting technology usage in detecting water and soil quality in the arable land to ascertain the resources required to reap desired yield in a particular amid climate change impacts. He added that the new emerging technologies like unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) usage in agriculture and other such new emerging technologies were providing an opportunity to address climate-induced challenges of the impacted sectors.

Kazakh Deputy Foreign Minister meets Rana Tanveer Hussain



ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Bek Bakayev on Thursday met with Federal Minister for Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain. During the meeting, they discussed potential cooperation

in industrial and agricultural sectors, said a news release.

Rana Tanveer reaffirmed the friendly ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, highlighting the importance of collaborative efforts in these sectors.

Additionally, Kazakhstan Minister expressed Kazakhstan's keen interest in learning from Pakistan's agricultural expertise.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining the momentum in bilateral cooperation, and to collaborate closely in agriculture and industrial sector. DNA

Ethiopian embassy, TDAP agree to join hands for Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa



ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Ethiopia and the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) on Thursday agreed to forge collaboration for holding the Single Country Exhibition in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during the next year in a successful manner.

The crucial collaboration came under discussion during a meeting between Dr. Jemal Beker, Special Envoy and Ambassador Extraordinary of Ethiopia to Pakistan, and Zubair Motiwala, Chief Executive of the TDAP. The meeting was also attended by Sheryar Taj, Secretary TDAP, Abdul Karim Memon DG TDAP, and Ibrahim Tawab, Honorary Consul to Ethiopia in Karachi.

During the meeting, both sides discussed strategies to sensitize the traders of both the countries about the business and trade opportunities in each other countries' major economic sectors including agriculture and agro processing, pharmaceutical, surgical items, automotive, Information Technology, leather and leather products, construction material, steel and aluminum.

community for their maximum participation in the Single Country Exhibition.

Ambassador Dr. Jemal said the Government of Ethiopia has undertaken the Home Grown Economic Reforms which had shown promising results, addressing macro-economic imbalances, increasing productivity, creating ease of doing business and providing a conducive environment for attracting the foreign direct investment. He said the capital city of Ethiopia — Addis Ababa — is a third diplomatic hub hosting a number of international conferences every year including the African Union Summit. "This shows the strategic importance of Ethiopia and safe and secure environment for the global citizens."

He said Ethiopia offered a comparative advantage to the Pakistani investors in terms of strategic location, cheap, clean and green energy, skilled labour, and on top of that full-fledged support from the Government.

The TDAP Chief Executive highlighted the business and trade potential of Pakistan in different economic sectors including pharmaceutical, surgical, steel, aluminum, automotive, construction material, leather and leather products, and others.

Chairman Senate condemns attack on passenger vehicles in Parachinar

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday strongly condemned the firing on passenger vehicles travelling from Parachinar to Peshawar, expressing profound grief over the tragic loss of lives.

"We share the sorrow of the bereaved families in this difficult time," said Gilani, offering prayers for the forgiveness and elevated ranks of the deceased.

He also prayed for the swift recovery of the injured passengers and emphasized that the perpetrators of such heinous acts deserve no leniency.

"Terrorists have no affiliation with any religion; they are enemies of humanity," he asserted, calling for stringent action against those involved in the attack.

Gilani stressed the need for all possible measures to eliminate terrorism, ensuring that citizens can live their lives without fear.

He also instructed authorities to provide the best medical care to the injured victims.

"No religion in the world permits terrorism," he reiterated, urging decisive actions to root out such elements.

TAPI project crucial for meeting country's energy needs: Dr. Musadik

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Dr Musadik Malik, emphasized Pakistan's determination to complete the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) gas pipeline project, calling it crucial for meeting the country's energy needs.

In a meeting on Thursday with Turkmenistan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Atadjan Movlamov, the Minister expressed gratitude for Turkmenistan's unwavering commitment to the TAPI initiative.

The ambassador invited Dr. Musadik Malik to visit Turkmenistan, which the Minister warmly appreciated.

During the meeting, Ambassador Movlamov commended Pakistan's recent economic



progress and highlighted an improvement in the country's financial situation.

He noted growing international investor interest in Pakistan, attributing the credit to Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and his team's efforts. Both sides reaffirmed their dedication to strengthening bilateral ties and agreed to explore opportunities for collaboration in energy, trade, and investment.

Shaza Fatima calls for collaborative efforts for Child Online Protection

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Thursday emphasized the need for strong collaboration at national and international levels to address the growing challenge of child online protection.

"We must unite our efforts to combat online threats and safeguard our children's future. Every child deserves a safe and secure digital world where they can learn, grow, and thrive," the minister said while addressing the Youth Safety Summit Pakistan, hosted by TikTok in collaboration with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA). The event aimed to foster a safer digital environment for the youth.

She said that Australia has enacted legislation to regulate children's use of social media, while the United States has approved laws focused on online child protection.

The minister highlighted the importance of raising awareness about responsible social media content creation and reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring the digital safety of Pakistan's youth.



"In today's digital world, online threats are rapidly increasing, putting internet users—especially children and young people—at greater risk. Due to their curiosity and innocence, children are particularly vulnerable to online dangers. As we advance technologically, it is imperative to address these concerns to protect our youth," Shaza Fatima said. She highlighted the government's efforts to enhance cybersecurity and improve Pakistan's digital ecosystem. "Our country is proud of its growing cybersecurity infrastructure, increasing tele-density, expanding broadband penetration, and flourishing IT freelancing sector, all of which are largely driven by our youth," she added.

The minister stressed that ensuring a safer cyberspace for children requires collective efforts from the public and private sectors, academia, research institutions, and civic innovators.

She pointed out that broadband penetration in Pakistan has surged to around 57%, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic, which accelerated the shift of education and business activities online. To counter the accompanying rise in online threats, the government has implemented strong policy, regulatory, and technical measures.

"I commend PTA and TikTok for organizing this crucial summit and their remarkable efforts in promoting digital literacy. The ongoing Digital Literacy Program is reaching 100 government schools across Pakistan, including 40 schools in Sindh and Gilgit-Baltistan, benefiting 150,000 individuals," she said.

Shaza Fatima also highlighted PTA and TikTok's development of guidebooks and short awareness videos aimed at educating the public about online safety.

The minister said that PTA has estab-

lished a dedicated committee on Child Online Protection (COP), working on national and international collaborations.

She lauded PTA's efforts, which were recognized globally with the prestigious SAMENA Awards 2023-2024 in the Child Online Protection category and acknowledged at the ITU's 21st Council Working Group on COP meeting. She further highlighted Pakistan's improved ranking in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI), attributing the success to initiatives led by the Ministry of IT, PTA, FIA, and other stakeholders, particularly in child online protection.

The minister emphasized the country's strong IT talent pool, which includes over 600,000 professionals and 75,000 new graduates annually. She highlighted comprehensive government training initiatives targeting 200,000 youth in emerging technologies to build a future-ready workforce.

The Ministry of IT and Telecommunication is also advancing digital literacy, promoting STEM education, and providing training in e-learning, AI, cybersecurity, and data science.