



'Mere Humsafar' adapted for film commands popularity among viewers

Wednesday 22 May 2024

Minister meets the delegation of Minorities

SEHRISH NAZ

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law & Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar here on Tuesday met with a delegation of representatives of the minorities community which included representatives of the Christian, Hindu and Sikh communities and other notable personalities.

The discussion focused on the formation of the National Commission for Minorities Rights. Addressing the delay in the formation of the commission, the law minister assured speedy efforts and emphasized that all minorities would be included to ensure a comprehensive approach.

PTI to challenge defamation bill in court

PEAK POINT

AHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf on Tuesday announced to move the court against a controversial defamation bill passed by the Punjab Assembly. Speaking to media persons outside an anti-terrorism court, Opposition leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan said government was going to enact a black law. Ayub said, "According to the Constitution, freedom of expression cannot be curbed. We will resist this law in the national and provincial assemblies."

Nothing against agencies, only against them operating extrajudicially: IHC

SAMRA AATHAR

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) clarified on Tuesday that there was nothing against the intelligence agencies, only against them operating extrajudicially, adding that they should only play a supporting role for the investigative arm of law enforcement.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, hearing the missing Baloch students case, stated that it would be beneficial if the intelligence agencies clarified their operational methods and said a need exists to



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Kashmir Diaspora activists calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Dar reaffirms Pakistan's adherence to SCO charter, warns against bloc-based geopolitics

PEAK POINT

ASTANA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday addressed the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) where he reiterated Pakistan's firm adherence to the SCO Charter and the "Shanghai Spirit" standing for mutual trust and respect for shared prosperity. In his statement, the deputy prime minister warned against bloc-based or confrontational geopolitics and advocated for a multipolar world firmly grounded in multilateralism.

He explained Pakistan's priorities as the current Chair of SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) which included promoting connectivity, transport

links, youth empowerment, poverty alleviation, and enhanced practical cooperation among SCO member states. The deputy prime minister called for upholding international law and the UN Charter, emphasizing the people's right to self-determination and peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. He stressed the need to combat the menace of terrorism through collective and cooperative approaches including by addressing its root causes. He urged the rejection of myopic and self-serving interests to use the mantra of terrorism for political gains. Ishaq Dar strongly condemned the barbaric Israeli onslaught in Gaza, which had resulted in the



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killings of over 35,000 innocent civilians, mostly women and children. He reiterated Pakistan's firm call for an unconditional and urgent ceasefire and unhindered provision of humanitarian assistance. He also emphasized the need to realize the two-state solution for durable peace and stability. On the Afghanistan situation, he called on the international community to meaningfully engage with the Interim Afghan

Peace in South Asia linked with just settlement of Kashmir dispute: PM

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday emphasized that a durable peace in South Asia was contingent upon a just settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of Kashmiri people.

The prime minister, talking to a delegation of Kashmiri diaspora activists, led by Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Secretary General, World Kashmir Awareness Forum which called on him here, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support for Kashmiri people's struggle for realization of their inalienable right to self-determination.

He lauded the Kashmiri activists' efforts to increase global awareness about the Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the plight of people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

The prime minister recalled that he had never missed any opportunity to raise the voice in support of Kashmiri brothers and sisters, as evident from his address at the 2022 UN General Assembly, as well as at other forums including SCO and with other world leaders. The Kashmiri activists thanked the prime minister for Pakistan's consistent support to the Kashmir cause. They also appreciated him of the latest developments in the region and shared their efforts to highlight the Kashmir freedom struggle in various parts of the world.

Government (IAG) for the genuine economic and development needs of Afghanistan and urged the IAG to ensure security for the SCO region, and for terrorism against any country. The deputy prime minister said that Pakistan's geostrategic location offered an ideal trade and transit hub for the SCO region, and underlined the significance of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor for regional connectivity and economic integration. Highlighting the climate change, the deputy prime minister called for collective efforts to address the challenge as any failure in this regard would put global security at stake. He said despite contributing less than one percent of the global emissions, Pakistan suffered huge economic and life losses consequent to the climate change-induced floods which necessitated capacity building of developing countries to overcome the issue. Dar told the gathering that Pakistan fully supported the reform process in the SCO which should also feature an enhanced monitoring and implementation capacity in the security and economic field. The deputy prime minister started his remarks with condolence over the sad demise of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the Iranian foreign minister and others sympathised with the bereaved families and Iranian people. He also paid tribute to their services for the promotion of regional cooperation and reinforcement of Pak-Iran relationships.

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Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kiyani, hearing the missing Baloch students case, stated that it would be beneficial if the intelligence agencies clarified their operational methods and said a need exists to

enhance the effectiveness of the police, counter-terrorism department (CTD), and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). "These are the three main investigative bodies; other agencies can assist them," said Justice Kiyani. As the hearing commenced today, the court inquired about the number of terrorism cases lodged against Baloch students during the last ten years and asked how many were arrested, forcefully disappeared or harassed.

The attorney general for Pakistan (AGP) presented the miss-

ing persons committee report and maintained that "intelligence agencies cannot harass any individual". "No court, judge, lawyer, journalist, or parliamentarian is calling for stopping the agencies from working according to the law," Justice Kiyani said while maintaining that they only advocated against "unlawful actions".

The state counsel stated that the issue would remain unresolved unless addressed "politically". Acknowledging the same, Justice Kiyani stressed the need for dialogue to resolve the matter.

Pakistan observes day of mourning for Iranian crash victims

SABA SHAFIQ

ISLAMABAD: The country is observing a day of mourning on Tuesday as a show of solidarity with the government and people of Iran after a helicopter crash claimed the lives of Iranian President Sayed Ebrahim Raisi and other senior officials. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif declared today as a day of mourning on Monday. As a mark of respect, the national flag is at half-mast across the country. President Ebrahim Raisi and seven others, including Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian, died in a helicopter crash in the country's northwest on May 19. The deaths were confirmed by the Iranian government on the morning of May 20. President Zardari and PM Ishaq Dar expressed profound shock and sorrow over the tragic death of the Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in a helicopter crash, as the government announced a day of mourning in the country. While extending his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the Iranian president, the foreign minister, and others who lost their lives in the accident, Zardari described the tragic incident as a great loss, not only for Iran but also for the entire Muslim Ummah.

347 more students touch down at Islamabad Airport from Bishkek

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Return of more students from Kyrgyzstan continues at Islamabad Airport as more than 347 students reached Islamabad from Bishkek on two flights on Tuesday morning. So far, a total of 877 students have reached Islamabad on five flights.

According to media reports, more 180 Pakistani students arrived today morning on flight ANK 4575. This flight was landed at Islamabad International Airport at 5:26 in the morning. The first flight PK 829 of the national airline PIA also reached Islamabad International Airport at 7:56 with 167 Pakistani students. Yesterday, a special plane, carry 170 Pakistani students, reached Lahore from

Bishkek. Federal Minister for Information Aftabullah Tarar welcomed the students at the Allama Iqbal International Airport. He said, "We will not leave our students at the mercy of rioters." The minister said that the government would try to send these students back to Kyrgyzstan once the situation returned to normalcy in the country. The minister went on to say that these students would make their parents and countrymen feel proud after getting degrees in their fields. "Thanks to the Almighty Allah that no unpleasant incident happened to Pakistani students," he said. On Sunday last, two flights from Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan arrived in Pakistan, fulfilling 360 students with their eagerly awaiting families.

Flight KA 4575 landed at Islamabad Airport, while Flight KA 6571, operated by Aero Nomad Airlines, touched down at Lahore Airport, each carrying 180 students. The arrivals were met with emotional scenes as parents and relatives gathered at both airports to welcome their loved ones back home. Minister Tarar welcomed the students at the airport and assured that the situation in Kyrgyzstan was stable,

with only six to seven students sustained injuries. The minister announced that special flights from Kyrgyzstan, supported by the government are underway to bring students back home. Contrasting the government's statement, students at the airport voiced their concerns, claiming a lack of assistance from the Pakistani embassy in Bishkek amidst worsening conditions.

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani on Tuesday paid a condolatory visit to the Iranian embassy here wherein he said that with the death of Iranian President Dr Ebrahim Raisi, the Islamic Ummah had lost a great leader. The acting president expressed deep grief on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan on the sad demise of Raisi. Dr Raisi, the Iranian foreign minister and others in the helicopter accident, saying that the whole nation shared the grief of the Iranian brothers and sisters. Talking to the Iranian Ambassador Reza Amir Moghadam, Acting President Gilani said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations based

on historical, cultural, and literary linkages.

He remarked that both countries needed to promote people-to-people contacts and parliamentary exchanges to bring the two brotherly countries further closer. He highlighted that President Raisi was a noble soul, a scholar and a great friend of Pakistan. The Iranian ambassador said that Pakistan and Iran enjoyed excellent relations and promotion of ties with Pakistan was a cornerstone of Iran's foreign policy. He informed that the Supreme Leader of Iran placed special emphasis on promoting relations with Pakistan, adding that the recent visit of the late President Raisi took place in this context.

The ambassador expressed gratitude to the people and government of Pakistan for their messages and sentiments sharing the grief of the Iranian people. The acting president also penned condolatory remarks in the visitor's book at the Iranian embassy. Later, talking to the media persons, Gilani said that the whole Muslim world shared the grief of the Iranian people. Gilani recalled his representation of Pakistan in the funeral prayer of Imam Khomeini, his frequent travels to Iran, and his interaction with the country's leadership. Referring to his ancestors also coming from Iran, he said Pakistan and Iran shared many cultural and historical commonalities. Even our old Faraman Namah in Multan - the 5,000-year-old living city - is also in Persian, he added.

Acting President Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani visits Iranian embassy for condolence

KOMAL BUTT

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Imad looking forward to improved show against England

RIZWAN HAIDER

LEEDS: Pakistan are in a phase of promptly identifying and reflecting on their shortcomings in order to overcome them in time with the T20 World Cup just round the corner, all-rounder Imad Wasim has said.

The national team's preparations for the tournament — set to be held in the United States and the West Indies next month — effectively started only in April, with the five-match Twenty20 International series against New Zealand.

In the build-up to the series, Pakistan reappointed Babar Azam as captain, brought back Imad and pacer Mohammad Amir from their respective international retirements and included a number of less

experienced players into the camp to test them for different roles.

While Pakistan drew the series against a depleted BlackCaps side 2-2, they also went on to be stunned by Ireland in the opening fixture of following three-match series in Dublin.

However, led by Babar, the team bounced back with a renewed attacking intent with the bat and enhanced lethality with the ball to win the series 2-1.

Pakistan's last warm-up ahead of the T20 World Cup is the four-match series against England, which starts on May 22.

"I think we should focus on improving ourselves rather than looking at others," Imad said during a press conference on Monday when asked about England's potential



threat. "We are rapidly fixing our issues. With the kind of meetings we're having, and the discussions with our coaches, chairman, and cap-

tain, I think we're seeing different changes. You'll notice these changes in this series and the World Cup."

Admitting Pakistan

were poor against New Zealand and in the first match against Ireland, Imad said the team has learnt complacency was not an option.

"Yes, we didn't play well against New Zealand and in the match against Ireland, but those are facts," noted the 33-year-old. "We need to take the

positives from that because it's better it happened now rather than in the World Cup.

"If we get a setback early, we know we can't relax. Usually, we used to relax, so we decided after the first Ireland match that we won't relax anymore. Especially against England, we can't afford to relax. We've planned to play every match with the same intensity as we do after a loss."

While Pakistan were getting reality checks against New Zealand, Gary Kirsten was brought in as Pakistan's white-ball head coach, with the South African having only four matches against England to implement his ideas before the World Cup.

The former India and Protas coach joined the Pakistan camp only on

Sunday and Imad shared his experience of meeting him on Monday morning.

"We had a chat in the morning when he arrived yesterday," said the left arm spinner. "He seems to be a good coach. We'll work with him and see how it goes. "We had a very good meeting with him and the entire team management. He kept it quite simple on day one because I guess he didn't want to overload us with too many new ideas right before a game. It's the first day, so I can tell you more after the series." Meanwhile, England are eager to unleash Jofra Archer's "fear factor" against Pakistan as the paceman prepares to return from a long injury lay-off ahead of the T20 World Cup, team-mate Sam Curran said on Monday.

Qalandars' CEO highlights youth development and Shaheen's leadership

ARIF MEHMOOD KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Lahore Qalandars CEO Atif Rana has highlighted the franchise's commitment to enhancing Pakistan cricket and their strategic decisions, including the appointment of Shaheen Afridi as captain. In an exclusive interview, Atif revealed that Imran Khan, Pakistan's World Cup-winning captain, endorsed the decision to appoint Shaheen as captain. "Our strategy in the PSL is driven by our desire to contribute to Pakistan cricket," Atif stated. "No one knows the art of losing better than us."



Discussing the franchise's dedication to youth development, Atif said, "We built a state-of-the-art high-performance center with the latest facilities. Our talent hunt program across major cities in Pakistan saw an overwhelming response. We created the youth engaged, so we created the Player Development Program to sustain this engagement.

Initially, we didn't achieve success and finished at the bottom of the table, but we remained committed."

The Player Development Program began in Bahawalpur, Layyah, DG Khan, Gilgit, FATA, and AJK. "Around 600,000 kids participated in the trials. Our talent hunt discovered players like Haris Rauf, Shaheen Afridi, and Fakhr Zaman. We also established a top-class high-performance center in Lahore." Atif discussed global collaborations with countries like Zimbabwe, Namibia, Australia, and England to showcase Pakistani talent. "We brought young players from these countries to Pakistan, and they returned with positive stories. We have invested significantly from our own resources, and today, we proudly say we are trendsetters." Defending the team's decisions in PSL 9, Atif said, "Rashid Khan is a world-

class spinner and a crucial part of the Qalandars, but cricket is a team sport. We missed Rashid, but we also gave opportunities to players like Salman Irshad, Chulham Muddasar, and M Irfan Jr, who are now representing other PSL franchises.

On Shaheen's captaincy, Atif explained, "When we met former PM Imran Khan, he praised our decision. Shaheen has proven to be an excellent choice, winning matches with all-round performance. If Imran Khan supports this decision, no one can question our intentions. Our goal is to provide Pakistan cricket with quality players and restore its glory." Atif concluded by reiterating the franchise's dedication to developing cricket in Pakistan. "We aim to produce several quality players for Pakistan cricket in the years to come and help return Pakistan cricket to its golden days."

Rain threatens Pakistan vs England first T20I

JAVED KHAN

ISLAMABAD: Rain is likely to hamper the first game of the four-match T20I series between Pakistan and England at Leeds on May 22 (Wednesday).

The Britain's Met Office has forecast 60% chances of rain in Leeds, stating that the rain will continue till 12 midnight.

Reports said the players could face trouble during fielding due to higher commodity ratio in the air.

The men's national selection committee has recalled fast bowler Haris Rauf, along with all-rounders Hasan Ali and Salman Ali Agha, in the



18-player squad for the England series. The two cricketers who did not make the cut from the original 17-player squad that faced New Zealand were wrist spinner Usama Mir and fast bowler Zaman Khan.

Pakistan squad for England: Babar Azam (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Fakhr Zaman, Haris Rauf, Hasan Ali, Iftikhar Ahmed, Imad Wasim, Mohammad Abbas Afridi, Mohammad Amir, Mohammad Rizwan, Muhammad Irfan Khan, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Usman Khan.

Pak climber Sirbaz conquers Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen

SAMRA ATHAR

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani climber Sirbaz Khan has achieved another landmark by successfully summiting Mount Everest, the world's highest peak, without the use of supplemental oxygen. This achievement marks a historic milestone for Pakistan in the world of mountaineering. According to Karrar Haider, Secretary of the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP), Sirbaz was part of the 'Imagine Nepal 2024 Everest Expedition' team, comprising 14 international climbers and 18 experienced Sherpas. The team reached the summit on the morning of May 21, at 5:15 am and 10 am. Sirbaz



Khan's remarkable feat shows his exceptional physical and mental strength, as well as his expertise in

climbing. The expedition team included climbers from China, Poland, Australia, and the UK, as well as seasoned Sherpas from Nepal, who played a crucial role in the successful ascent. The climbers in

the expedition include Dongfei, Liu Yongzhong, Chen Cheng, Shen Hallang, Ms Liu Qiucheng, Pang Xiang, Zhou Shuangliu, Xu Jin, Liu Yingan, Yu Fei (China); Mateusz Henryk Waligora (Poland); Ms Alison Mary Bowen (Australia);

James Bradbury Mansell (UK) and Sirbaz Khan (Pakistan). The Climbing Guides/Sherpas from Nepal comprise Dawa Tenzing, Jangbu, Pema Chhiri, Fur Gyeljo, Phinjo Dorjee, Sherpa Gyajen, Lakpa Tamang, Lakpa Tendri, Kami, Mingma Dorjee Tamang, Mingma Gyajen, Ngima Dorjee, Mingma, Nima Nuru, Suman Chhang, Dawaing Bhote and Dipan Gurung.

Pak team secures 2nd consecutive win in ATF 12 & under Team Competition

SABA SHAFIQ

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani team achieved its second consecutive victory by downing Nepal in the ATF 12 & under Team Competition Regional Qualifying event of South Asia Kathmandu, Nepal.

According to details, on the second day of the tournament, Pakistani team showcased remarkable skill and determination, securing a commanding 3-0 victory over hosts Nepal. This win highlights the team's consistent excellence and competitive spirit. In the



first singles, Rashid Ali Shayan Afridi defeated Dallakoti Bishwo Bishesh 6-3, 6-0 while M. Shayan Afridi beat Gnanwali Nischal by 6-1, 6-1 in the 2nd singles.

In the doubles M. Shayan Afridi, M. Junaid Khan defeated Dallakoti Bishwo Bishesh, Aalam Shahnawaz by 6-1, 6-0. Pakistan would face Sri Lanka on Wednesday.

Peshawar's Taiba Saleem Jan best player of Pakistan Hockey Team

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Peshawar's Taiba Saleem Jan nick name as Tanush Khan has a name in the world of hockey as she is performing as a goalkeeper in the national hockey team of Pakistan. From school level I started hockey from Shah Alam Government School. And since I was an orphan and had no brother, and my seven sisters looked after me and guided me towards sports and encouraged me a lot. First I got recognition by playing best in district and national level. After school I played hockey in college. After inter college I was selected for national hockey championship and I played national hockey championship for the first time in Islamabad. Then I represented Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the national hockey championship played in Karachi. And in that



championship I did very good goalkeeping and stopped many goals, due to which I came to the attention of the national selectors and I was selected for the Pakistan team. Happened to visit Oman and thus I went out of Pakistan for the first time and

showed good performance on the soil of Oman. After this successful tour, I secured a place in the national team and soon my name came in the national hockey team for Malaysia as well. Malaysia has been cancelled. Now my name has come to the camp for the U-23 games and hopefully I will represent Peshawar. The Pakistan women's hockey team for Turkey has also been announced for which I have also been selected and inshallah on June 12. I will go to Turkey with Pakistan team. In response to a question, Tanush Khan said that every girl should come to the sports field and make the name of the country shine. Made a name for herself in hockey due to his motivation. Although my relatives and local residents opposed me a lot, but I did not lose heart and made a commitment that I would make a place for myself in hockey.

All KP Mayor Peshawar Cup Full Contact Karate Tournament concluded

SYED MUHAMMAD HARIS

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Full Contact Karate Association (Shin Kyukton Kahi) organized the All KP Full Contact Karate Championship at its headquarters Gulbahar Peshawar. Male and females players from various districts of the province including Wah, Taxila, Huriapur, Abbottabad, Peshawar and Islamabad participated in karate fight competition. On this occasion a delegate form sports department KP Shah Faisal along with other honored guests including Altaf Rumi Nadeem, Hidayatullah and President Chamber of Commerce Nazim Farid



Gul and other important personalities participated in the championship. The competitions held under the rules of the World Karate Organization Japan, Ayan Zada won the first place in the men's 30 weight category. Saed got second position, Kamran first in 50. Aman second, Atiqur Rehman first in 50 and Aamir second, Qalam Khan first in 60 and Ishaq second, Aman Shah first in 70 and Qasim second. In the Maywayweight category Sajjad Zaki of Haurpur placed first and Mubej ur Rehman of Islamabad Secure second position, while in the women's competition, Shaza Qamar of Islamabad became 1st position and became a champion and Safora of Wah cant took the second position in the 40 weight category.

Mashreq Pakistan selects PTCL to expedite the bank's Digital Transformation journey

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) and Mashreq Pakistan, a private bank, have signed an agreement for the provisioning of digital services at PTCL's Tier-III Data Center facility. In the esteemed presence of Mr. Mohamed Razeq, Group Head of Technology, Transformation and Information, Mashreq, Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO, Mashreq



Restricted license from the State Bank of Pakistan to initiate pilot digital retail banking operations in Pakistan. On the occasion, Mohamed Abdel Razeq, Group Head of Technology, Transformation and Information, Mashreq, said, "We are pleased to sign this agreement with PTCL as our trusted partner for infrastructure and platform hosting as part of the Bank's digital transformation strategy. This partnership signifies a transformative step forward in the Bank's approach to infrastructure, platforms and data management. By leveraging PTCL's data center and telecommunications expertise, Mashreq aims to achieve an enhanced and reliable operating leverage, and reduced time-to-market of products and services." Muhammad Hamayun Sajjad, CEO, Mashreq Pakistan, said, "Mashreq's digital initiatives and partnerships are designed to not just meet but exceed customer and partner expectations, to drive digital transformation and foster financial inclusion across Pakistan. Our partnership with

PTCL showcases our commitment to Mashreq's agile operating model, enabling us to be ready to meet the changing demands of the market and our customers." During the signing ceremony, Zarrar Hasham Khan, Group Chief Business Solutions Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4C, said, "We are pleased to sign an agreement with Mashreq Pakistan to support their fulfilling their business needs. PTCL, being a national company, is leading the digitalization effort across the country. Through such partnerships, PTCL continues to play its key role in the development of telecom infrastructure to its corporate customers across various industries in Pakistan. This agreement is part of the growth momentum in the diverse areas of ICT and Security Solutions, which is key to a digital banking ecosystem in Pakistan."

Ahsan Kamray awarded an MPhil Degree in Communication Studies

SEHRISH NAZ

LAHORE: Ahsan Kamray, a journalist and youth activist, has been awarded an MPhil Degree in Communication Studies at the 133rd Convocation of the University of the Punjab. Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Abida Ashraf, Chairperson of the Department of Public Relations and Advertising, Kamray completed a groundbreaking thesis that delves into the relationship between YouTube political content creators and political parties from a political economy perspective. Kamray's thesis, titled "Relationship between YouTube Political Content Creators and Political Parties in Terms of Political Economy: A



parties enhance their reach and influence among the electorate. Kamray expressed his gratitude for the guidance and support of Prof. Dr. Abida Ashraf, whose expertise in academia was instrumental in shaping his research. "Working

under Dr. Ashraf's supervision was an enriching experience that significantly contributed to the depth and quality of my study," Kamray noted. Reflecting on his success, Kamray thanked Allah for His blessings and support. He also expressed profound gratitude to his parents, siblings, teachers, friends, and colleagues who stood by him throughout his academic journey. "I owe this achievement to the unwavering support and prayers of my family and friends. Their encouragement kept me motivated through every challenge," Kamray shared. Kamray's achievement is a testament to his dedication and intellectual rigor. As a journalist and youth

activist, his work extends beyond academia into the realms of practical activism and media practice, positioning him as a thought leader in the field of political communication. "The intersection of digital media and politics is an area of growing importance," Kamray remarked. Understanding the economic relationships behind the content we consume is crucial for comprehending the broader political landscape. "Kamray's work has received commendations from academic peers and media professionals alike, highlighting the relevance and timeliness of his research. As he continues his career, Kamray aims to further explore the implications of digital media on political processes and to advocate for transparency and accountability in political communications. The University of the Punjab, one of Pakistan's most prestigious educational institutions, recognized Kamray's academic excellence during its convocation ceremony, celebrating the achievements of its graduates and their contributions to various fields of study. Kamray's academic journey and professional endeavors exemplify the intersection of scholarship and activism, underscoring the pivotal role of informed and engaged youth in shaping the future of political discourse in Pakistan and beyond."

Consumers' down-trading to illegal cigarette brands; NUST

REPORT/AHID YAQOUB KHAWAJA

ISLAMABAD: Current excise duty structure on tobacco products has pushed the consumers to down-trade from legally compliant cigarette brands to illegal tax-evaded brands easily available all across Pakistan, because of which the national exchequer was expected to face a revenue loss of around PKR100 annually with illicit cigarette brands having more than 60% of the total market. This was highlighted in a report titled, "Illicit Cigarette Trade in Pakistan - Current Situation and Way Forward", produced by the National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST). The report was formally launched in a ceremony held at a local hotel. Federal Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif and the Pro-Rector of Research Innovation and Commercialization, NUST, Dr. Rizwan Riaz graced the event. They were briefed on the complex challenges in administration, revenue collection, policy coordination, and market dynamics, of the cigarette industry which are causing significant tax revenue losses for the national exchequer.

Opinion Editorial

Empowering Pakistan's Youth to Lead the Climate Change Movement: A Call for Social Justice and Sustainable Development

By Qaiser Nawab

In a world grappling with the escalating consequences of climate change, the voices of youth are increasingly being recognized as not just valuable, but indispensable. This was vividly illustrated during the Pakistan Climate Youth Leaders Roundtable held in Islamabad on May 11, 2024. The gathering united youth leaders from across the nation, providing them with a platform to discuss and devise strategies for combating the pressing environmental crisis that threatens their future.

The urgency for action is clear. Young people, as the most impacted by climate change, have a unique stake in the outcomes of current environmental policies. Their future, quite literally, hangs in the balance. This recognition fueled the passionate discussions at the roundtable, where youth leaders affirmed their commitment to leading climate change diplomacy and pushing for transformative policies at the highest levels.

At the heart of today's discussions lies the acknowledgment that youth are not just the leaders of tomorrow, but the leaders of today. As remarked by Mr. Zarkar Nawab, a prominent global climate youth leader who shared his insights at the roundtable. His words underscore a crucial truth: the need for immediate and decisive action cannot be overstated, and the youth must be at the forefront of this movement.

The roundtable served as more than just a forum for dialogue; it was a catalyst for action. The young leaders who convened in Islamabad did so with a shared aspiration to engage directly with the COP-29 presidency. These individuals represent the vanguard of a new era of climate activism, characterized by knowledge, resilience, and a steadfast dedication to creating real change for themselves and future generations. They are informed, smart, and, above all, united in their commitment to safeguarding the planet.

Youth have historically been manipulated by various stakeholders for their own interests, but today youth are different, emphasizing a participant at the roundtable. We are informed, we are smart, and above all, we are united in our commitment to safeguarding our planet for generations to come. Mr. Nawab reiterated. This sentiment captures the spirit of a generation determined to overcome past exploitations and drive forward with a clear, independent vision for a sustainable future.

Yet, amid these discussions, a crucial dimension emerged: the intersection of climate change and social justice. Ms. Zarka, President of THE Society International (Together for Health and Education), highlighted the disproportionate impact of climate-induced disasters on marginalized communities, particularly women and children. We cannot ignore the stark reality that women and children bear a disproportionate burden of the climate crisis, she stated. From the heightened risks during childbirth to the exacerbation of malnutrition among children due to floods, the toll is devastating. This call to action emphasizes that climate policy cannot be viewed in isolation. It must incorporate a robust social justice framework that ensures the voices of all affected groups are heard and considered.

The roundtable participants echoed Ms. Zarka's sentiment, advocating for an inclusive approach that amplifies the voices of women, children, transgender individuals, and all other marginalized groups. The message is clear: decisions about our future should not be made behind closed doors. We must reflect. Instead, they should reflect the diverse perspectives and experiences of all segments of society.

Ms. Fizza Hameed, a climate researcher and policy analyst, added another layer to this discussion by emphasizing the need for youth to advocate for the capacity building of local and Provincial governments. Youth need to engage with their respective local and Provincial governments to drive sustainable climate action and strive for sustainable development in Pakistan, she urged. This is particularly pertinent given the 18th Amendment, which devolved the subject of Youth and Climate Change to Provincial governments. Strengthening these local institutions is essential for effective and localized climate action.

The presence of these youth leaders in Islamabad marks a pivotal moment in the fight against climate change. Their collective voice, imbued with hope and determination, advocates for bold and transformative action on the global stage. As they prepare to engage with the COP-29 presidency, their message is one of solidarity and a call for urgent action.

But what does this mean in practical terms? For one, it requires a paradigm shift in how we approach climate policy. Youth leaders are calling for a move away from top-down decision-making to a more inclusive and participatory approach that values the insights and expertise of young people and other marginalized groups.

This shift also necessitates substantial investments in education and capacity building. Young people need the tools and knowledge to understand the complexities of climate science and policy. They also need platforms and opportunities to engage with policymakers at all levels. This includes not just national and international forums, but also municipal and provincial government structures, where many of the most impactful decisions are made.

Moreover, the integration of social justice into climate policy is not just a moral imperative; it is a practical necessity. Climate change does not affect everyone equally. Marginalized communities, particularly women and children, are often the hardest hit. Any effective climate policy must address these disparities and work towards equitable solutions that uplift all members of society.

The Pakistan Climate Youth Leaders Roundtable has set a powerful precedent. It has shown that young people are not only ready to lead the fight against climate change, but they are also equipped with the knowledge, passion, and resilience needed to drive meaningful change. As the world looks ahead to COP-29, the voices of these youth leaders will serve as a beacon of hope and determination, advocating for a more sustainable and equitable future.

The youth of Pakistan, and indeed the world, are stepping up to claim their rightful place in the fight against climate change. They are calling for inclusive, just, and sustainable policies that reflect the realities of all affected communities. Their message is clear: Say no to decisions made behind closed doors by a select few. Say yes to the voices of youth, women, children, and all marginalized groups.

Together, we can build a future that is not only sustainable but also just and equitable for all.

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Raisi's death

The shocking news of Iranian President Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi's death in a helicopter crash, along with Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and other high officials in the Varzaqan region of the country's East Azerbaijan province on Sunday afternoon will no doubt hold meaning and consequence for both Iran as well as the larger region. A total of nine people in a three-day official visit just last month. It was the first visit by any head of state to Pakistan after the general elections and quite an important one given the regional and global issues. As condolences pour in, questions loom not only over who will succeed Raisi but also over the nature of the chopper accident. Raisi was in Pakistan on a three-day official visit just last month. It was the first visit by any head of state to Pakistan after the general elections and quite an important one given the regional and global issues. 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Chairman of PMYP addresses D-8 youth ministers' meeting in Dhaka

ARSHAD MALIK

ISLAMABAD: In a momentous address at the D-8 Youth Ministers' meeting in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP), Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan representing the Government of Pakistan, highlighted the importance of youth empowerment and collaboration among D-8 countries.

With a focus on youth development, the Chairman underscored Pakistan's commitment to nurturing its vibrant and dynamic youth population.

Recognizing the commendable efforts of the D-8 Secretariat and Secretary-General, the Chairman emphasized the significance of integrating youth empowerment into the D-8 agenda.

Acknowledging the exceptional leadership of Mr. Nazmul Hassan MP, Minister of Youth and Sports of Bangladesh, the Chairman expressed gratitude for the successful hosting of the meeting, which showcased Bangladesh's dedication to youth development.

The Chairman elaborated on Pakistan's comprehensive approach to youth empowerment through the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, highlighting initiatives such as skills development, education, entrepreneurship, and environmental sustainability. Pakistan demonstrated its commitment to providing opportunities for its youth.

Furthermore, he emphasized the importance of networking and collaboration among youth leaders.

Cultural exchanges and tourism initiatives were also highlighted as crucial avenues for fostering understanding and cooperation among D-8 nations while by showcasing diverse cultural traditions and historical landmarks. Pakistan advocated for building bridges of friendship and cooperation.

In conclusion, the Chairman PMYP reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to work collaboratively with D-8 countries to ensure a brighter future for the younger generation.

With a vision of youth as leaders in sustainable development, Pakistan remains committed to driving prosperity across the D-8 community, he added.



Chairman, Prime Minister of Pakistan's Youth Programme, Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, exchanging views with Bangladesh's Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr Nazmul Hassan during meeting on the sidelines of 1st D-8 Youth Ministerial meeting in Dhaka.

PTI spokesperson Raouf Hasan injured in Islamabad attack

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: PTI Central Information Secretary Raouf Hasan was injured in an attack in Islamabad on Tuesday.

"Very shameful and reprehensible!" the party said in a video footage shared by the party showed Hasan bleeding from the face with anchor Shahid Masood with him.

"Such reprehensible act of violence is an assault on free speech, democracy, and the rule of law."

"Such shameful tactics will not deter Raouf Hasan or the PTI from our cause. Attempts to intimidate or silence us will only strengthen our resolve to fight for a just and equitable society," he said, adding that he was attacked outside the office of a private media channel.

A statement from the Islamabad police spokesperson said Hasan was attacked with a blade outside the office of a private TV channel. "Hasan was attacked on the face with a blade by transgen-



ders according to eyewitnesses," the statement said. It added that the police were present on the spot and collecting evidence. "Strict action will be taken against the transgressors who have done this," it said.

Senior Superintendent of Police Hassan Jahangir Wattoo said the footage of the incident was being analysed and further details will be shared in due time with the media.

CTV footage posted by the PTI seemed to corroborate the police account, showing Hasan being attacked by four individuals who appeared to be from the transgender community.

The party questioned who was the "ring-leader" for the assaults.

A message posted on the X account of PTI

founder Imran Khan, which is managed by his social media team, said: "The entire nation knows who is orchestrating these attacks on our leadership. It's the same powers that lurk in the shadows and use proxies to harass & threaten judges and make a mockery of elections by brazenly tampering results."

"Let us make it very clear that PTI will not be deterred by such dirty tactics & violence which only serve to expose the perpetrators before the nation." Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly Omar Ayub said the attack was "proof that he is being silenced for speaking the truth", alleging that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was behind the assault.

Probe body holds four officers responsible for wheat import scandal

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The inquiry committee, established to investigate the wheat import scandal, has recommended action against four officers of the Federal Ministry of National Food Security & Research in its findings presented to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

According to sources, the premier has approved the recommendations of the committee which had been ordered to hold a thorough and transparent investigation into the wheat import scandal. Not surprisingly, the inquiry committee did not recommend action against any of the important officers/officials of the caretaker set-up, nor did it find anyone responsible for the fatal mistake. The PM had appointed Cabinet Secretary Kamran Ali Agha to lead the inquiry committee, amidst a great hue and cry over the government's failure to initiate its wheat procurement drive. Earlier this year, the caretakers had imported 3.62 million tonnes of wheat

Imran Khan's shooter, two other accused indicted in Wazirabad firing case

PEAK POINT

from Ukraine in anticipation of shortages. The action had led to a full-blown crisis in the country as the wheat crop harvesting season began, with farmers compelled to sell their crops well below the government-set price of Rs3,900/40kg.

Former caretaker prime minister Anwarul Haq Kakar had stated that the matter of import of Rs40 billion worth of grain had been blown out of proportion. He had expressed willingness to cooperate with the investigation committee if summoned, asserting that there had been no corruption involved.

As the wheat procurement drive did not kick off, farmers were compelled to take to the streets to protest against what they perceived as government indifference to their plight. The four officers of the Federal Ministry of National Food Security & Research which the inquiry committee has held responsible for the crisis are ministers' former secretary Muhammad Asif.

GUJRANWALA: An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Gujranwala on Tuesday indicted three accused including the shooter Naveed in the case of gun attack on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in Wazirabad during long march. According to the details, the ATC

indicted three accused including the shooter Naveed in the case of gun attack on Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former prime minister Imran Khan in Wazirabad during long march. According to the details, the ATC Gujranwala heard the Wazirabad case on Tuesday and indicted accused Waqas and Tayyab Butt along with main accused Naveed in the case. The charge sheet was read out to the accused in the court. The accused denied the charges fixed on them in the charge sheet. The court adjourned the hearing till May 25 after the indictment. Yesterday, an Anti-Terrorism Court in Wazirabad acquitted



brothers Ashan Nazir and Mudassar Nazir in the case concerning the attack on former prime minister Imran Khan. The court found that the allegations against the accused could not be substantiated, leading to their incarceration after months of incarceration.

The food point, which was alleged to be the site of the attack's planning, had been closed since November 22. Affidavits from the owner and chief of the establishment, alongside statements from a trial wit-

ness, indicated that the accusations were unfounded. The witness's affidavit stated that their previous statement was given without solicitation, and they denied visiting the implicated location on the day in question.

Considering all pre-emptive evidence and the lack of concrete proof, the court decided to acquit the brothers under section 265 D, with Ashan Nazir having served five months and Mudassar Nazir four months in detention.

PM's Coordinator Romina visits Iranian Embassy to condole demise of President Raisi

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental

Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam visited the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran here on Tuesday to convey her profound condolences to the government and people of Iran on the tragic demise of President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign

Minister Amir Hossain Abdollahian, and other senior Iranian officials, who died in a helicopter crash on Monday.

While speaking to the Ambassador of Iran, Reza Amir Moghaddam, Romina Khurshid Alam paid rich tribute to the late Iranian President and recalled his recent remarkable and memorable visit to Pakistan.

During her meeting with the Iranian ambassador to Pakistan, she also remembered the

late Iranian president's unparalleled and unprecedented role for the betterment of global Muslim community at all levels and deepening of relations between the people of Pakistan and Iran.

The PM's coordinator also fondly recalled her interactions with President Raisi during his recent visit to Pakistan and lauded his pledges for Iran's unflinching support to Pakistan and people of

the country at all levels for socio-economic development.

"President Dr. Ebrahim Raisi was unquestionably a great leader, a visionary person and a scholar of great credibility," said Romina Khurshid Alam.

The PM's Coordinator also signed the condolence book at the Iranian Embassy on this solemn occasion during her visit to the Embassy of Iran in Islamabad.

Pakistani pilgrims appreciate 'Makkah Route Initiative'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pilgrims coming to Saudi Arabia from Pakistan to perform Hajj rituals this year 1445H expressed happiness as they completed their travel procedures at Islamabad International Airport.

They cited benefiting from the "Makkah Route Initiative" designed by Saudi Hajj authorities to serve the pilgrims in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to finalize their travel procedures at home, Saudi Press Agency reported.

Saudi competent authorities have made great strides to provide the best services to the pilgrims during the Hajj season with the aim of facilitating the travel procedures for pilgrims from Pakistan and six other countries with ease and tranquility.

The initiative was welcomed and praised by the pilgrims in Pakistan, who appreciated the great work provided by the Hajj host country to serve the pilgrims so that they could enjoy comfort while performing the Hajj rituals, as well as the keenness to provide them with the finest services from their arrival to the Kingdom until their departure back home.

Former AJK PM Tanveer Ilyas remained in FIA custody for misusing diplomatic passport

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The sessions court in Islamabad has granted a three-day physical remand of former

Asad Iqbal Jammal, and Kashmiri prime minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas for possessing his diplomatic passport after stepping down from the position of premier.

The former AJK prime minister was produced before the court of civil judge Abbas Shah by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA). He was represented by advocates Sazir Malik and Naveed Raza Mughal.

During the proceedings, the FIA prosecutor argued that Sardar Tanveer Ilyas had violated the law by using his



diplomatic passport to visit Saudi Arabia after stepping down from the position of prime minister.

It was disclosed to the court that his diplomatic passport had been cancelled, yet he had failed to return it.

The prosecutor stressed the necessity of recovering the passport from Ilyas, requesting an eight-day remand for further investigation.

In defence, one of Tanveer Ilyas's lawyers

contended that his client, being a former prime minister, was entitled to utilise his diplomatic passport.

The lawyer informed the court that Ilyas had solely used the passport for his trip to Saudi Arabia, and expressed his alleged intent to present the diplomatic passport in court.

At this point, the FIA prosecutor claimed that Tanveer Ilyas had effectively confessed to the alleged crime by presenting his passport.

Despite the prosecutor's request for an eight-day physical remand, the court decided to grant only a three-day physical remand for further investigation.



ISLAMABAD: PM's Coordination on Climate Change & Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam visits Iranian Embassy to extend her heartfelt condolences over martyrdom of Iranian President Agha Ibrahim Raisi and Iranian FM Hussain Ameer.

Swat mayor vows to resist taxes in Malakand, demands economic relief

HAROON SIRAJ

Swat Mayor Shahid Ali Khan has vehemently opposed the proposed taxes in Malakand Division, pledging to resist any attempts to impose them on the already struggling population. In a press statement, Khan commended Chief Minister Ali Amin Dadpur for announcing that the province will not impose taxes, winning the hearts of the people. However, he emphasized that the government must do more to address the region's economic woes. "The people of Swat and Malakand Division

have made immense sacrifices in the war against terrorism and have faced natural disasters, devastating their economy," Khan stated. "Instead of imposing taxes, the government should provide employment opportunities and address their issues." Khan warned that any attempt to impose taxes would face strong resistance from the people. "We will not let the government impose taxes on our people without a fight," he declared. "We demand that the government take stakeholders into confidence and prepare a plan of action with their consultation." The

Mayor's statement comes amid growing resentment among the people of Malakand Division over the proposed taxes. The region has faced economic hardship for years, and the proposed taxes are seen as an additional burden on the already struggling population. Khan's bold stance against the government's policies has been welcomed by the people of Swat and Malakand Division, who see it as a beacon of hope. The issue is likely to gain momentum in the coming days, with more protests and demonstrations expected in the region.