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mirrorqta@gmail.com

Chief editor Syed Mumtaz Shah

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Qureshi, Gandapur among 14 more PTI leaders indicted in GHQ gate crash case

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Shehryar Afridi were among 14 PTI members and leaders indicted on Thursday in a case concerning the attack on the army's General Head-quarters in Rawalpindi during violent protests, prompted by the arrest of the PTI founder in a corruption case, on May 9, 2023. On Monday, former PTI leader Shireen Mazari was indicted along with eight others in the case. During that hearing, three of the accused — Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Colonel Ajmal Sabir Raja, and Sikandar Zeb — refused to sign the charge sheet, saying the evidence against them was insufficient. They said their 26SD application should be heard first, stating they would sign the charge sheet after the applications are ruled on.

Earlier this month, PTI founder and ex-premier Imran Khan was indicted in the same case by anti-terrorism court (ATC) judge Amjad Ali Shah alongside several PTI leaders and supporters.

Balochistan Assembly Speaker stresses unity, self-reliant at Speakers' Conference

APP

ISLAMABAD: Captain (Retd) Abdul Khaliq Achakzai, Speaker of the Balochistan Assembly, on Thursday underscored the importance of unity and self-reliance during his address at the 18th Speakers' Conference.

Welcoming all speakers and delegates to the event, Achakzai expressed gratitude to the National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and his team for successfully organising the conference. "This is an opportunity to strengthen dialogue among legislative leaders," he remarked.

Addressing the challenges faced by Balochistan, Achakzai highlighted that both the political leadership and the people of the

province are committed to establishing sustainable peace in the region. "The time is not far when Pakistan will play a pivotal role in global peace efforts," he said, reflecting an optimistic vision for the country's future.

Calling for collective responsibility, Achakzai emphasised, "We must solve our problems ourselves. It starts with self-improvement and addressing internal challenges."

He encouraged collaboration among stakeholders to achieve progress and stability. The conference kicked off today served as a platform for legislative leaders to exchange ideas on governance, peace-building, and national unity, with a focus on addressing regional and national issues.



CAIRO: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addressing on the 11th Development-Eight (D-8) Summit.

Investing in youth key to building inclusive economies: PM

APP

CAIRO: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has emphasized that investing in youth will help build inclusive and robust economies to face the global challenges of today and tomorrow.

Addressing the D-8 Summit in Cairo on Thursday, he said youth as well as the small and medium enterprises are key drivers of economic development of any society. He said youth brings energy, fresh ideas and creativity, whereas small medium enterprises create jobs, foster innovation and promote entrepreneurship.

Shehbaz Sharif urged the D-8 member states to focus on empowering youth and entrepreneurship to harness the power of young population and create environments where small business can thrive.

Talking about steps taken by Pakistan for youth empowerment, the Prime Minister said investing in youth and supporting SMEs is crucial for country's socio-economic development and progress. He said Pakistan, with over sixty percent of its population

under the age of thirty, possesses a fountain of potential for innovation and growth. However, unlocking this potential requires providing the right skills, opportunities and financial resources.

Shehbaz Sharif said today's summit offers a valuable opportunity for D-8 countries to share best practices, pool resources and create programmes that support youth and small and medium enterprises across borders.

He said Pakistan has approved the implementation of D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement and its protocols on dispute settlement mechanism.

The Prime Minister highlighted that his government is committed to providing quality education, creating jobs and offering productive opportunities through its flagship youth programme.

He said Pakistan is home to one of the largest freelance communities in the world. He added the government is focusing on IT trainings at a large scale to equip the youth with necessary tools to connect with digital world and capitalize on the opportunities with the aim to enable job seekers to become job creators.

Naval Chief highlights Navy's role in preventing piracy, smuggling

APP

OMAN: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf says Pakistan Navy is an ardent supporter of the promotion of maritime security with the collaboration of regional countries.

He expressed these remarks during separate meetings with the Minister of the Royal Office of the Sultanate of Oman, Commander Royal Navy of Oman and Commander National Defense College in Oman.

The Naval Chief further highlighted the role of Pakistan Navy in preventing piracy and smuggling. During the meetings, security situation in the Indian Ocean and matters pertaining to the joint defense cooperation came under discussion.

Later, the Naval Chief also visited key facilities, including the Said bin Sultan Naval Base, RNO Ship.

Maritime Security Centre, National Defence College, Military Technical College, and Sultan Qaboos Naval Academy.

'Biased' US sanctions on Pakistani firms endanger regional, global peace: FO

Foreign Office says such "discriminatory practices undermine credibility of non-proliferation regimes"

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Thursday said recent additional sanctions imposed by the United States on four Pakistani firms for their alleged involvement in the country's ballistic missile programme were "biased" and "endanger regional and international peace".

The statement came in response to the US announcing additional sanctions yesterday on four entities it claimed were contributing to the proliferation or delivery of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

According to the State Department, these comprised the Islamabad-based National Development Complex (NDC) and three Karachi-based companies: Affiliates International, Akhtar and Sons Private Limited, and Rockside Enterprise.

Previously, the US has also sanctioned other Pakistani firms, along with those of China and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), over alleged support of weapons and drone development programmes in Pakistan and Iran, among other issues.

"Pakistan considers the US decision to impose sanctions on NDC and three commercial entities as unfortunate and biased," the FO said in a press release today.

"Such double standards and discriminatory practices not only undermine the credibility of non-proliferation regimes but also

endanger regional and international peace and security," it added.

Asserting that Pakistan's strategic capabilities were meant to "defend its sovereignty and preserve peace and stability in South Asia", the FO said the latest instalment of sanctions "defies the objective of peace and security by aiming to accentuate military asymmetries".

"Such policies have dangerous implications for strategic stability of our region and beyond," the statement stressed.

Regretting the imposition of sanctions on the three Karachi-based private commercial entities, the FO said: "Similar listings of commercial entities in the past were based on mere doubts and suspicion without any evidence whatsoever."

"While claiming strict adherence to non-proliferation norms, licensing requirement for advanced military technology to other countries have been waived off in the past," it noted.

The FO stated that Pakistan's strategic programme was a "sacred trust bestowed by 240 million people upon its leadership". "The sanctity of this trust, held in the highest esteem across the entire political spectrum, cannot be compromised," it asserted.

In September, the State Department imposed sanctions on a Chinese research institute and several companies it claimed were involved in supplying Pakistan's ballistic missile programme.

Pakistan, Indonesia vow to strengthen bilateral ties

APP

CAIRO: Pakistan and Indonesia have agreed to remain in close contact to maintain the momentum in bilateral relations with particular emphasis on further deepening economic and commercial ties.

The understanding to this effect came in a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on the sidelines of the D-8 Summit in Cairo.

Both the leaders exchanged views on a wide range of issues of mutual interest including bilateral ties covering political, trade and economic matters, as well as cooperation at the multilateral fora.

Speaking on the occasion, Shehbaz Sharif said Pakistan appreciates Indonesia's support in achieving sectoral partner status in ASEAN and membership of ASEAN Regional Forum.

He said that Pakistan looks forward to becoming a Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN with Indonesia's support.

The Prime Minister termed Indonesia as a reliable trade partner of Pakistan, particularly as a palm oil supplier. He said that Pakistan relies on imports to meet its vegetable oil needs.

Both the leaders also reaffirmed their unwavering support for the Palestinian cause and called for a ceasefire in Gaza urging for a comprehensive approach for resolution of the Palestinian question, with the establishment of a sovereign and independent State of Palestine, with pre-1967 borders and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

The Prime Minister congratulated Prabowo Subianto on assuming the office of the President and also extended an invitation to him to visit Pakistan at his early convenience. The Indonesian President graciously accepted the invitation.

Corps Commander terms youth as future of Balochistan

APP

KHUZDAR: Corps Commander Balochistan Lieutenant General Rahat Naseem Ahmed Khan held a meeting with faculty members and students of Lasbela University of Agriculture Water and Marine Sciences in Khuzdar.

Speaking on the occasion, the Corps Commander termed youth as a future of Balochistan and stressed the students to bring accolades to the province through education.

Students also asked questions to the Corps Commander and said that such meetings should be held frequently to help prevent rumours and misinformation.

PM Increases Supply of Laptops to Balochistan Students From 14% To 18%: Rana Mashood

APP

QUETTA: Chairman Pakistan Youth Program Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan on Thursday said that Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Shari enhanced the supply of laptops to students of public sector universities of Balochistan from 14 percent to 18 percent for interest of province students.

He expressed these views while addressing at the 20th convocation ceremony of BUITEMS as guest.

Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan said that Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif is taking special interest in the development and progress of Balochistan.

He said that on the recommendation of Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, the Prime Minister increased the supply of laptops to students of public sector universities of Balochistan from 14 percent to 18 percent.

He said that furthermore, 3,000 internships were allocated for students of the Balochistan.

The Governor Balochistan thanked the Prime Minister

Mian Shahbaz Sharif and Chairman Rana Mashood for their efforts in promoting education and development in Balochistan.

Khawaja Asif says corruption eating away Pakistan like termites

INP

SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Thursday conceded the rampant corruption plaguing Pakistan, saying that the country is suffering from a disease of corruption, which has become a major obstacle to progress.

In a scathing address to industrialists at the Sialkot Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Khawaja Asif said that even a 50 percent reduction in corruption would eliminate the need for International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance to Pakistan.

The defence minister lamented that corruption has become so entrenched that customs collectors brazenly accept bribes of 400 to 500 million rupees.

Khawaja Asif also expressed concern over

the lack of distinction between halal and haram. Quoting former Punjab Chief Minister Pervaiz Elahi, the defence minister cited a happening where a bureaucrat earned Rs 4 billion from 'Salami' of a wedding reception. "Corruption is eating away our country like termites," Khawaja Asif said.

Speaking on the recent reduction in the policy rate, he said that Pakistan slashed the rate by nine percent in few month. The defence minister also stressed the need for stability within the country, highlighting the success of private sector partnerships in establishing airports and airlines.

Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Pakistan with a score of 29, indicating a high level of corruption.



Governor Balochistan, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail and Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan, Chairman PM Youth Program presenting certificates to the students who obtained degrees and positions among the graduating students during the 20th convocation ceremony of the Balochistan University of Information Technology Engineering and Management Sciences (BUIITEMS), in Quetta.

Dialogue are only way to steer the country out of crisis: Speakers provincial assemblies

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Speakers of all the four Provincial Assemblies (PAs) have welcomed the offer of dialogue by speaker National Assembly (NA) Sardar Ayyaz Sadiq to end political instability and bitterness in the country making it clear that talks are the only way to steer the country out of crisis. "No party should attach condition. Speaker should sit on driving seat. All will have to work together for fortification of parliament and democracy, they added.

This consensus of opinion was witnessed on the occasion of 18th speakers conference which began on Thursday in parliament house under speaker NA Sardar Ayyaz Sadiq.

Addressing the conference speaker NA said if more time is given to government then opposition gets angry and if more time is given to opposition then government

resents.

An association of secretaries of NA, all PAs and Senate be framed, he proposed.

He also proposed to constitute Chief Whips association. Public Accounts Committee (PAC) is of paramount significance and it should stay functional at every cost. It has been learnt that provincial public accounts committee is not taken seriously.

Speaker Punjab Assembly (PA) Malik Ahmad Khan said we are heading fast to regional politics and dialogue is needed to keep the country united.

Speaker Sindh Assembly (SA) Owais Qadir Shah said every thing has a solution and its solution lies in parliament. If we sit together, make policy and make it act then nothing is impossible.

Misinformation and disinformation are big problems. There is need to focus attention on it. Water is major issue

from Kashmir to Karachi. River Indus is called mother Indus. A few days back it was told some new canals are being carved out. There is restlessness in all over Sindh on this issue. Consideration should be given to this issue. Balochistan and KP too will be affected along with Sindh on water issue. Speaker NA office can get solve this issue.

Speaker KP Assembly Babar Salim Swati said we will have to realize our responsibilities for survival of country.

Speaker Balochistan Assembly (BA) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai said the time is not far off when Pakistan has to play vital role in peace in the entire world.

Speaker Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly Nazir Ahmad said it is corporate responsibility of all of us to take forward the country.

Speaker AJK legislative assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar said durable peace cannot be established in the region without resolution of Kashmir issue.

8 reports of various standing committees presented in Senate

APP

ISLAMABAD: As many as eight reports of various standing committees including Science and Technology, Finance and Revenue, Communication, National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination and Planning, Development and Special Initiatives in Senate on Thursday.

The reports were presented by Kamil Ali Agha, Mohsin Aziz, Pervaiz Rashid, Amir Waliuddin Chishti and Qurat ul Ain Marri in the House respectively.

Chairman, Standing Committee on Science and Technology Kamil Ali Agha presented the report on a bill further to amend the Pakistan Halal Authority Act, 2016 [The Pakistan Halal Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2023] in the House while on behalf of Chairman, Standing Committee on Finance and Revenue Saleem Mandviwalla, Mohsin Aziz presented three reports including transportation charges being charged by Iran on Pakistani transporters and businessmen, authenticity of Islamic Banking in

Pakistan and the details of amount collected by the FBR up to July, 2024 in the House. Similarly, Chairman, Standing Committee on Communications Pervaiz Rashid presented the reports regarding alarming statistics revealed by the Balochistan Medical Emergency Response Center about accidents on Highways of Balochistan and the problems being faced by the commuters travelling from Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Islamabad International Airport due to non-availability of dedicated access from M-1 section to the Airport in Senate. Meanwhile, Chairman, Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Amir Waliuddin Chishti presented the report about disparities in charges for the lab tests being charged by various private laboratories operating in Islamabad while Chairperson, Standing Committee on Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Qurat ul Ain Marri presented report on a bill further to amend the China Pakistan Economic Corridor Authority Act, 2021 [The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (Amendment) Bill, 2022].



QUETTA: Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel in a meeting with MNA Jamal Shah Kakar.

Nawab Shahzain Bugti Advocates for Enhanced Punjab-Balochistan Cooperation in Livestock Development

APP

ATTOCK: Nawab Shahzain Bugti, former Federal Minister on Thursday emphasized the need for improved cooperation between Punjab and Balochistan in the realm of livestock development.

Bugti expressed these views during his visit to the Barani Livestock Production Research Institute in Khairi Murat, Attock. The former minister was welcomed by Dr. Murtaza Ali Tipu, Director of the institute, who briefed him on the institute's objectives and research activities. Discussions centered around local livestock breeds, highlighting the significance of livestock in the Potohar region, where farming is challenging due to natural vegetation. Bugti showed particular interest in the Dhanni cattle breed and expressed his desire to establish a Dhanni cattle farm, aiming to enhance local livestock breeds.



Construction works of pedestrian bridge is underway, at Airport road in Quetta.

Speaker Sindh urges collaborative action at national forum

APP

ISLAMABAD: Speaker Sindh Assembly Awaiz Qadir Shah on Thursday called for renewed commitment to unity, legislative reforms, and technology-driven empowerment of lawmakers.

Addressing the 18th Speakers' Conference after a decade-long hiatus, Speaker Shah, emphasized the importance of parliamentary collaboration and legislative empowerment.

He lauded Sardar Ayaz Sadiq for organizing the forum, calling it a significant step toward strengthening democracy in Pakistan. "This conference is a testament to how we can fortify the parliament. It is not merely a building but a symbol of empowerment for lawmakers through technology and knowledge," Shah remarked. Highlighting the critical role of the parliament in addressing national challenges, he stated, "Every problem .

Speakers urge global action on Kashmir, a matter of life and death for millions

INP

ISLAMABAD: A conference titled "Kashmir Conflict Human Rights Challenges" was organized by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference-AJK (APHC-AJK) chapter at Quaid-i-Azam University in Islamabad, under the chairmanship of Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi.

The guest of honour at the event was Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry, Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting of the Government of Pakistan.

The conference commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by speeches from notable figures, including Dr. Hafiz Ur Rehman, Abdul Majid Khan, Finance Minister of Azad Kashmir, Professor Dr. Shabana Fayaz, Professor Dr. Salma Malik, and Secretary General Pervez Ahmed. The speakers emphasized that the Kashmir dispute, with its deep historical roots, remains a matter of life and death for millions. They pointed out the severe human rights violations faced by the Kashmiri people, particularly at the hands of Indian forces. They described India's illegal and unconstitutional occupation of the territory since the partition of India in 1947, which led to the subjugation of Kashmiris, depriving them of their fundamental rights. Speakers high-

lighted the ongoing atrocities, including killings, torture, disappearances, and the violation of women's dignity, which have continued for decades.

Ghulam Muhammad Safi, in his address, drew a parallel between the oppression faced by Kashmiris and Palestinians, stating that both India and Israel practice state terrorism. He stressed that Kashmiris have consistently demanded their right to self-determination, a right recognized by the United Nations. He also reaffirmed the APHC's stance on seeking a comprehensive solution to the Kashmir issue through tripartite talks, rejecting any form of bilateral negotiations with India.

By regulating social media and preventing its misuse, the PML-N aims to create a safer and more respectful online environment, where freedom of expression can thrive without compromising national interests or individual rights, he added. Responding to a question, Talal Chaudhry emphasized that the government makes all major decisions in consultation with its allies, upholding the principles of democratic governance. "We believe in democratic practices and negotiation to resolve issues, ensuring that all stakeholders are on board and their concerns are addressed," he added.

Pakistani-American Dr. Minhali Ali Tops MBA Program, Pioneers Progress in Healthcare

By Khawaja Farooq

NEW YORK: Pakistani-American Dr. Minhali Ali has achieved first position after completing a Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Healthcare Management from the University of North America. Dr. Minhali Ali, who is the daughter of Pakistani-American community leader Dr. Salma Kausar, has made her community proud with this remarkable accomplishment. Her success is being seen as a significant step towards innovation and progress in the healthcare industry.



Dr. Minhali credited her achievement to her hard work, the guidance of her teachers, and the prayers of her parents. She stated that she intends to use her education and experience to provide exceptional services in the healthcare sector. The Pakistani-American community has congratulated Dr. Minhali Ali and her mother, Dr. Salma Kausar, and has offered prayers for their continued success and a bright future.



Warm clothes are being selling at a roadside stall as the demand of warm clothes increased in city during the cold waves of winter season, in Quetta



Pakistan, India agree to hybrid model for Champions Trophy, ICC events from 2024-27

SPORTS DESK

Pakistan and India on Thursday reached a breakthrough in the impasse between the neighbours on the venue for the upcoming ICC Champions Trophy "with a hybrid model", ESPNcricinfo reported on Thursday.

The tournament, scheduled to take place in Pakistan from February 19 to March 9, has become embroiled in a dispute, with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) refusing to send its team to Pakistan, citing political and security concerns, despite assurances from all member boards regarding the security arrangements and the tentative match schedule.

Earlier in the month, BCCI representatives turned down the PCB's proposal of adopting a "partnership formula" for the next three years as part of efforts to break the ongoing deadlock between the two parties.



Pakistan opener Saim Ayub plays a shot during the first One-day International against South Africa at the Boland Oval.

Match-winner Salman credits Saim for Pakistan's thrilling victory over South Africa

SPORTS DESK

PAARL: Despite dragging Pakistan out of trouble and taking them across the line in the three-wicket win over South Africa at Boland Park middle-order batter Sal-man Ali Agha gave opener Saim Ayub the credit for setting it up for the visitors.

Coming into bat in the 17th over with Pakistan reeling at 4-60 while chasing 240, Salman constructed a 141-run partnership with Saim and went on to smash an unbeaten 82 off 90 to add up to his bowling exploits of 4-32.

Aided by Salman's calming presence, Saim gave a vivid display of his prodigious talent with a classy century, his second ton in his seventh ODI.

In the post-match presentation, Salman said he wanted to give his player-of-the-match away to Saim. "His knock set up the game, if he didn't play we wouldn't have won," said the right-hander. "We were behind but he scored 100 and it was an amazing feat, he-n-cc he deserves the award."

Saim, meanwhile, appreciated Salman's "experience and company" during the match-winning partnership.

The 22-year-old Saim hit his second ton in his seventh ODI with an elegant 109 off 119 balls to lay the foundation for the win as Pakistan scored 242-7 with three balls to spare in reply to South Africa's 239-9 in their 50 overs.

Third Australia-India Test ends in draw after bad weather strikes

SPORTS DESK

BRISBANE: The third Test between Australia and India in Brisbane ended in a draw after storms halted the hosts' bid for an unlikely win to leave the series locked 1-1.

Early tea was taken on the final day at the Gabba because of bad light with India 8-0 having been set a target of 275 for victory, after Australia declared on 89-7.

But a big storm swept over the ground during the break and play was abandoned, with the five-Test series now heading to Melbourne and then Sydney.

The draw badly hurts India's chances of making the final of the World Test Championship at Lord's next year, with Australia now likely to defend their title against South Africa.

"Unfortunately a lot of rain, which you can't do anything about, but really happy with how the guys played," said Australia skipper Pat Cummins. "To put 450 (first innings) on is a huge total and then felt like we're right ahead of the game for all of it."

With rain causing regular disruptions throughout the Test, the chance of a result other than a draw looked to have disappeared when India avoided the follow-on late on Tuesday.

"I mean, we'll take that obviously, to have interruptions like that wasn't great," said India skipper Rohit Sharma.

"But going to Melbourne with one-all pretty much gives us that confidence that we can go out there and try and pull things towards us."

After losing most of the morning session, Australia began their second innings after lunch showing no signs of an attacking approach.

But under-pressure openers Usman Khawaja and Nathan McSweeney fell, along with the equally out-of-form Marnus Labuschagne, the Australian approach seemed to change as the batsmen started to attack every ball.



Australia opener Usman Khawaja is clean bowled by Indian pacer Jasprit Bumrah during their third Test at Gabba.

HEADQUARTERS FRONTIER CORPS BALOCHISTAN (NORTH) RE-TENDER NOTICE FOR PROCUREMENT OF HALF MOUNTING (CLOTHING) & GOVT STORES FINANCIAL YEAR 2024-25. Includes details of bidding process, dates, and contact information for Lt Colonel Jawad Akbar.

Advertisement for 'Saiman' featuring a cricket player and text in Urdu/Hindi. Includes contact details for 'Saiman' and 'Saiman'.

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Chief editor Syed Mumtaz Shah

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Madressah oversight

THE stand-off over the Societies Registration (Amendment) Act, 2024 — a draft law dealing with registration of madressahs — between the state and religious forces remains unresolved, with an influential section of clerics hardening their position over the matter. The law has been championed by the JUI-F and was passed by parliament earlier this year, but President Asif Zardari has refused to give his assent.

On Tuesday, the Ittehad Tanzeemat-i-Madaris Pakistan, a platform that brings together five madressah boards, endorsed the JUI-F's stance on the bill and refused to cede their 'autonomy' to the state. Mufti Taqi Usmani, speaking for the Ittehad, said they had backed the 2019 madressah reforms — bringing seminaries under the education ministry — "under pressure", and that religious schools in Pakistan would not become "subservient" to the state as was the case in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, etc.

In this case both sides — the clerical old guard and the ruling parties — are responsible for creating unnecessary controversy. The clerics should avoid using the dispute over the bill to mobilise their students and supporters, and show restraint as the country cannot afford more upheaval. The state, meanwhile, should admit that it used the bill in question as a political tool to secure the JUI-F's support for the 26th Amendment and that the madressah reforms of 2019 cannot be reversed, though any genuine concerns of the ulema can be addressed. Fortunately, both sides have kept the door for dialogue open, and a negotiated settlement is required for this sensitive issue, rather than deciding the matter on the streets.

This paper has argued that as madressahs are educational institutions, they should come under the purview of the provincial education departments. Therefore, the bill should be reconsidered, and the Directorate General of Religious Education, which was formed to oversee seminaries, should not be rolled back.

The importance of madressah registration is highlighted by the fact that no one has exact figures for the number of religious schools in Pakistan. There are only educated guesses. Primarily, the state must know exactly how many madressahs exist, what they teach, and where they get their funds from. These are not unfair demands. Moreover, if the state can maintain control over religious education in 'brother' Muslim countries, what makes us exceptional? It is also true that vocational training and life skills should be taught in seminaries, as not all of the thousands of madressah students that graduate every year can take up religious vocations.

If left to their own devices, madressahs can become breeding grounds for extremism. The Lal Masjid/ Jamia Hafsa fiasco is a prime example of why the state needs to know what is going on within religious institutions. Hence, the clerics should dial down the rhetoric, and resolve this issue amicably.

By Khurram Husain

You and your tech

IF you are fond of technology but not all that savvy about understanding its technical specifications then we have something in common. Do you get confused when deciding what your next mobile device will be? What factors influence your decision at the right time to replace your car, and what factors do you keep in mind when deciding which car to buy next? Do you have a solar generation system at home? If so, did you go for a hybrid system with a battery or a standard grid tied inverter? How did you make your decision on which system is best for you, and how did you settle on the size of the system to get?

We are surrounded by consumer choices involving technology, but I am surprised at how people often make these decisions without even looking at the most important factors. Take, for instance, the individual who must have the latest iPhone in his or her hand yet uses it for little more than doomscrolling WhatsApp groups or basic social media feeds. One of the worst ways to view technology is as a marker of social status.

When faced with a decision to bring technology into your life, always start with the most basic thought. Technology is a tool. It is there to serve your requirements. It is not a badge of honour or a medal or a trophy. And as a tool it needs to fulfil the most basic requirement first: to do the job at the least cost.

This means you must know the job it is going to do, and to cost it out. If you are like me, neither a finance buff nor a technology nerd, there are simple ways to decide things. Consider your car, for example, and do a small exercise. Add up the total cost of purchasing and operating your current automobile. This means the total price you paid for it, along with fuel expenditure so far and any and all maintenance expenditures incurred since you purchased it. Add on insurance costs. Use estimates where you don't have actual figures. Now take the total and divide it by the number of kilometres you have driven the car, as per the odometer.

Technology needs to fulfil the most basic requirement first: to do the job at the least cost.

This gives you the cost of consuming one kilometre in this particular automobile. When considering your next purchase or replacement, use estimated costs of owning and operating the vehicle you have in mind and divide it by the same number of kilometres you have consumed in your current car. And compare the per kilometre cost between the various replacements you have your eye on

and take a decision.

It is somewhat similar when deciding on a mobile device or a laptop or tablet. First determine your requirements. Basic browsing? Microsoft Office applications like Word, Excel and PowerPoint? If you won't be using them for serious gaming applications, coding, editing video or any other specialised purpose, then you don't need anything too top-of-the-line. Few things are sillier than grown men or women carrying state-of-the-art tech in the palm of their hands yet using them for the most mundane and elementary tasks.

This is a particularly important lesson to teach children. Does your child have peers in school who compete on the basis of who has the best mobile device or who gets picked and dropped in the fanciest car? If so, this is a good time to teach your child how to stand up to peer pressure.

The costs are relatively easier to tally up when deciding on a solar system for your home. As a simple exercise, try this. Divide the total cost of the system by the number of units the system is projected to generate in two years. If the figure you get is close to Rs20 then your system is likely to pay itself off in two years. If the figure is higher than that, then it will take longer. But be careful with this calculation because it is a very rough idea. It assumes, for example, that all your units generated will be sold into the grid and none will be consumed in your home. It also assumes that your supplier is giving a more or less trustworthy projection of how many units the system will generate over a year. Suppliers of solar equipment frequently give incorrect estimates of how much generation to expect, or what your payback period will be for the investment. Be wary of relying exclusively on their numbers. Your best bet is to find someone you know who has a system, and find out how many units their system generated last year. I have a 10KVA system for example, and it is on track to generate around 10,000 kilowatt hours of electricity by the end of this year (generation at my house is less because there is shading during a few hours of peak production during the day).

But the rate at which they buy the electricity that I generate is far lower than the rate at which they sell me theirs. In November alone, for example, I drew 539 units of electricity from K-Electric and in return my solar system fed 655 units into their grid. Still, I ended up having to pay more than Rs20,000 in the bill! That's because all considered, I paid Rs73 for each unit that K-Electric gave me while they paid me Rs33 for each unit they bought.

By F.S. Aijazuddin

Germinating seeds

EVERY country is a continuum — even one as comparatively young as Pakistan. In 1947, Pandit Nehru cannily chose India, leaving the Quaid to grapple with an acronym. Seventy-seven years have passed. Our country's seeds, buried beneath the tundra of history, are breaking through the surface.

One seed has germinated in a new museum The Haveli in Karachi, privately funded by Dr Nasreen and Mr Hasan Askari. On display is their collection of ethnic textiles, particularly from rural communities in Sindh and Balochistan. Such textiles, Nehru said in 1949 when inaugurating the Calico Museum of Textiles in Ahmedabad, form the leitmotif of every nation. Founded by the Sarabhai family in their old family home The Retreat, textiles of different kinds — woven, embroidered, or manufactured — cover every wall. A huge Mughal tent serves as a ceiling over the family's disused swimming pool.

The Hasans' Haveli is comparatively modest but no less significant. Objects that once adorned rustic women, short-frocked children, rural bridegrooms, even colourful trappings hung on camels have been displayed with ineffable taste. Dr Nasreen Askari has made a career curating such exhibitions here and abroad. In the Haveli, her extensive collection of textiles has found a home, in their home.

Such philanthropy is rare in Pakistan. Abroad, it is taken for granted. Museums in Britain, America, and Europe survive on donations and bequests.

Examples of private endowments are the Wallace Collection in London, the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, the Guggenheim Museum in New York, and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles.

One seed has germinated in a new

museum.

The Hasan Haveli therefore is more than an inspiration. Hopefully, it will be an incentive for others who possess examples of our rich heritage to convert that wealth into philanthropy, to share private possessions with the public.

The cupboards of our elite, for example, are stuffed with wedding dresses which in their overpriced opulence would have shamed the Romanovs. These objects need to be displayed, not as reminders of one night's extravagance, but as a tribute to the crafts-persons whose diligence, design and dedication created these miniature masterpieces. Their talent deserves more permanent recognition.

The seeds of our future germinate in our educational institutions. Once, Lahore held a monopoly on art and museology.

Now, other cities are challenging that supremacy. Noticeable among them,

Karachi, where the Mohatta Palace Museum, the new Haveli Museum of textiles, and the Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture (IVS) command attention.

The IVS was established 34 years ago by a group whose vision and ambition exceeded their resources. Luck came to their rescue.

They were offered the old stone Nusserwan-je building in Kharadar for free, provided they could dismantle and remove it.

The challenge proved irresistible. An IVS team emulated the precedent of the relocation of the Ancient Egyptian temple of Abu Simbel in the 1960s, when block by block the temple was raised and re-erected 200 metres above its original site.

The Nusserwanjee building was similarly disassembled, its 26,000 stones carefully removed and then

transported across Karachi to the IVS site in Clifton for reassembly. History had been repurposed to inspire future generations of artists, architects and designers.

The IVS's first batch of graduates in 1994 numbered 18; this year, 184. (Interestingly, 80 per cent of them were women.) Their theses reflected individual endeavour as each strove to give form to their distinctive ideas.

One presentation raised its head above the crowd. Titled 'A Country without a Post Office', it dared to cover 'Missing Persons'. Bravely, it sought to be "a spatial protest using Baloch poetry to understand the province's cultural predicament". A collage contained young, once hopeful faces and also poignant messages of despair. At its end, two arresting images: 'Undelivered Letters' and 'Left Luggage'.

'Undelivered Letters' showed a floor strewn with envelopes addressed to missing persons but lying unopened, waiting for their return. Left Luggage — titled Bemanzil safr (a journey without destination) — consisted of the image of an airport conveyor belt, loaded with suitcases and boxes, waiting to be claimed by their owners, if and when they are released. Their absence is marked by stark black silhouettes.

This graduate, forced to mature prematurely, decided to use poetry and design to make a statement of conscience in support of her compatriots. The American poet Maya Angelou used poetry similarly to express her ethical indignation:

"But a caged bird stands on the grave of dreams/ his shadow shouts on a nightmare scream/ his wings are clipped and his feet are tied/ so he opens his throat to sing." Angelou and that single graduate give voice to every silent Missing Person.

DAILY MIRROR

President for greater parliamentary cooperation, exchanges with Saudi Arabia

APP

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has emphasized the need for enhancing parliamentary cooperation and high-level exchanges with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) to further deepen the fraternal relationship between Pakistan and KSA.

The President reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening economic, political, and cultural ties with KSA for the mutual benefit of both nations while talking to the Chairman of the Shura Council of KSA, Dr Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, who along with members of the Shura Council called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a President Office's press

release said.

Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, members of Parliament and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the delegation, the President said that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia enjoyed historic and brotherly ties, rooted in shared faith, history, and culture. He highlighted the immense potential for expanding economic and investment cooperation and called for making efforts to fully realize this potential.

The President expressed concern over the grave situation in the Middle East, arising out of the Israeli aggression targeting innocent civilians in Palestine,

Lebanon and Syria. He said that Pakistan stood in complete solidarity with their brothers and sisters from Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.

The President conveyed his greetings and good wishes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed bin Salman. He said that the people of Pakistan prayed for the good health, well-being and long life of His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz. During the meeting, both sides emphasized the need to transform the longstanding bilateral relationship into a more robust and strategic partnership. Dr Al-Sheikh described his visit to Pakistan as highly productive, noting that he had fruitful discussions with Pakistan's leadership and parliamentarians.



CAIRO: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Professor Dr. Muhammad Yunis on the sidelines of the D-8 Summit.

DPM Ishaq Dar, Azerbaijan DPM discuss progress on bilateral cooperation

APP

CAIRO: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan Jeyhun Bayramov on the sidelines of 11th Summit of Developing Eight Countries, being held in Cairo.

During the meeting, they discussed bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and projects for regional connectivity.

52 killed in two bus accidents in central Afghanistan

INP

KABUL: Two bus accidents involving a fuel tanker and a truck on a highway through central Afghanistan killed 52 people and injured 65, the Taliban government spokesman said Thursday.

The accidents happened in Ghazni province on the same highway between the capital Kabul and southern Kandahar city late Wednesday, provincial head of information and culture Hamidullah Nisar said on X, without specifying how many people were killed and injured in each accident.

"We learned with great regret that two fatal traffic accidents occurred on the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, in which 52 of our compatriots were killed and 65 others were injured," said chief government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

One bus collided with a fuel tanker near Shahbaz village in central Ghazni while the other hit a truck in the eastern district of Andar, Nisar said.

Rescue teams rushed to the site and transported the injured to hospital, with some in "serious condition", he added.

Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, due in part to

poor roads after decades of conflict, dangerous driving on highways, and a lack of regulation.

Reports of cut in education budget incorrect: NA told

By Zahid Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed on Thursday that the reports of substantial decrease in the education budget for the current fiscal year are incorrect.

Responding to a question during Question Hour today, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Farah Naz Akbar said the non-developmental budget has been increased by 13 percent and development budget by 69.79 percent.

She said the allocation for Islamabad Model Education Institutions has been increased by 27.56 percent.

Responding to another question, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Azam Nazeer Tarar said the bidding process for the privatization of the Pakistan International Airlines will be launched afresh and better bids are expected.

He said an earlier bidding process was conducted wherein Blue World Consortium submitted a bid of ten billion rupees against minimum expectation price of 85 billion rupees. The highest bid offered by the Blue World Consortium was considered by the Privatization Commission Board which was rejected.

The government is trying to achieve a hundred percent literacy rate in the Islamabad Capital Territory.

Responding to a question during Question Hour, Parliamentary Secretary for Federal Education and Professional Training Farah Naz Akbar said around 80,000 out of school children have been enrolled under Zero Out-of-School children campaign launched last year.

She said evening shift classes were started in 23 schools across different sectors of Islamabad. Additionally, a school meal programme was implemented to incentivize increased enrollment.

17,738 Seminaries, 2,249,520 Students Registered in Madaris: Azam Tarrar

APP

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar informed the Senate on Thursday that the number of registered Madaris (Religious seminaries) was 17,738 while the total number of registered students was 2,249,520 across the country.

Replying to a question of Senator Mumtaz Zehri during the Question Hour of the 344th session of the Upper House of the Parliament, he said that 10,012 seminaries were registered in Punjab and the number of students was 664,065.

Similarly, the number of registered Madaris in Sindh was 2,416 with 188,182 students; in Balochistan 575 seminaries were registered with 71,815 students.

The number of registered madaris in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was 4,005 and the

total number of students was 1,283,024, in Azad Jammu and Kashmir 445 madaris and 26,787 students, Islamabad 199 seminaries had 11,301 students while the number of registered madaris in Gilgit-Baltistan was 86 with 4,346 students.

He added that the Directorate General Religious Education (DGRE) at the Federal level was authorized to register religious seminaries across the country.

Azam informed that DGRE had provided financial assistance to 598 registered Madaris by providing 1196 teachers, while DGRE appointed teachers on the recommendations of the concerned Madrasa and Wafaq who fulfil the laid down criteria which include a minimum bachelor's Degree in English, Mathematics and General Science subjects, however, religious education if required in addition to the above qualifications was given preference.

CJP visits remotest districts of Punjab

APP

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi on Thursday visited the Sadiqabad Tehsil of District Rahim Yar Khan, the remotest district in Punjab Province in line with his initiative for judicial reforms.

He was accompanied by Justice Miss Aalia Neelum, Chief Justice, Lahore High Court, Mr Justice Syed Shahbaz Ali Rizvi, Judge, Lahore High Court, and the Registrars of the Supreme Court and Lahore High Court.

As part of his judicial reforms to improve service delivery and promote equitable access to justice, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, Chief Justice of Pakistan and Chairman of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan has initiated an extraordinary initiative to visit the most remote districts in each province personally.

During his visit, the Chief Justice engaged in extensive interactive sessions with District and Sessions Judges, as well as representatives of bar associations from Rahim Yar Khan and adjoining districts, including, Rajanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Lodhran, who attended in person. From Attock, Mianwali, Khushab, Jhang, Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Multan, and Bhakkar districts, joined online.

He emphasized that the apex judiciary's focus extends to remote and underprivileged areas where judicial officers are diligently dispensing justice to litigants. He encouraged the judges to identify systemic bottlenecks encountered daily, that hinder judicial efficiency, assuring them that these challenges would be addressed through the LJCP to enhance justice delivery at the grassroots level.

The Chief Justice assured judicial officers serving in remote districts that comprehensive measures would be taken to ensure a supportive work environment, with a focus on enhancing their safety, dignity, and access to essential resources.

He urged the High Courts to prioritize the placement of skilled officers in remote districts, ensuring consistent tenures and robust institutional support. He proposed several key initiatives, including prioritizing foreign training programs and professional development opportunities through the LJCP. These initiatives aim to provide judicial officers with international exposure, enabling them to stay abreast of global developments in the field of law and improve their capacity to serve effectively.

The Chief Justice directed judicial officers to focus on the litigants who come to courts seeking redressal for their grievances. He underscored the importance of treating litigants with patience, respect, and dignity while adjudicating their cases expeditiously under the law.

Pakistan, Bangladesh agree to expand bilateral ties

ONLINE

CAIRO: Pakistan and Bangladesh have agreed to expand and deepen bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest.

This understanding was reached at a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Professor Dr Muhammad Yunus, on the sidelines of the D-8 Summit, in Cairo today.

They also emphasized the need to align efforts to achieve mutually-beneficial development objectives.

The two leaders acknowledged importance of people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges including enhanced exchange of artists, sportspersons, academics, and students. They noted with satisfaction the recent visit by the Bangladesh Cricket Team to Pakistan and concert of a Pakistani artist in Dhaka. Both sides agreed to forge greater cooperation at various multilateral fora, including D-8. The meeting took place in a cordial environment, truly reflecting the existing goodwill and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Prime Minister highlighted the historical, religious and cultural linkages between the two countries. He expressed Pakistan's keen desire to enhance bilateral cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, people-to-people contacts and cultural exchanges. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the need to explore new avenues of economic cooperation and boost trade in sectors such as chemicals, cement clinkers, surgical goods, leather goods and IT sector.

He expressed his gratitude to Bangladesh for the recent steps taken for facilitation of trade and travel between Pakistan and Bangladesh. This includes waiving off the condition of 100% physical inspection of the consignments from Pakistan and abolishment of special security desk at the Dhaka airport earlier established to scrutinize Pakistani passengers. Shehbaz Sharif also thanked Bangladesh for doing away with additional clearance requirement for Pakistani visa applicants.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over recent positive developments in bilateral relations and noted with satisfaction the increasing frequency of high level contacts.



President Asif Ali Zardari he expressed these views while talking to Chairman Shura Council of Saudi Arabia Dr Abdullah bin Mohammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh.

Current political system won't bring stability: Shahid Khaqan

INP

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi Thursday said that existing political system could not bring stability in country. "In our system leaders want to rule like kings".

"This country could not be governed without democracy," Shahid Khaqan said. He said Pakistan has only made progress during democratic rule.

"Money came to Pakistan in Ziaul Haq and Ayub Khan's rule but the country didn't progress," he said.

"Why the government has been failed to privatize the DISCOs having Rs 800 billion annual losses," he asked. "PIA's privatization is a government hobby,

they to decide what they want to sell in the airlines," Abbasi said. "Our bureaucracy has utterly failed," he said.

He said, since last 15 years, we have started to sell the Senate's seats. The country won't move forward until and unless the government will talk to the opposition, former PM said.

"The economic development has been impossible in presence of political anarchy and instability," he added.

Addressing a gathering on Wednesday, former prime minister said that the election theft has been the only cause of Pakistan's debacle.

"I have held the prime minister's office, I knew about the election theft before the polls held," Abbasi said. "I

'Kashmiris facing worst human rights abuses in IIOJK': Barrister Daniyal

ONLINE

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Daniyal Chaudhry on Thursday emphasised Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the people of Kashmir and reaffirmed the nation's commitment to a just and lasting solution.

He was addressing a seminar titled 'Kashmir Conflict: Human Rights Challenges' as a Chief Guest, organized by Directorate of External Linkages & All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) at Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad under the chairmanship of Convener Ghulam Mohammad Safi.

Barrister Daniyal said, "We stand by our Kashmiri brethren," adding no effort will be spared to expose the atrocities of Indian forces against the Kashmiri people.

Parliamentary Secretary said that displacement of Kashmiri population from Kashmir was a major issue, and highlighted that more than 50,000 Kashmiris had been displaced, citing a report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

"Kashmiris facing worst human rights abuses in IIOJK": Barrister Daniyal He criticized the Modi-led fascist Indian government for abrogating

Articles 370 and 35A and said it was a move to alter the region's demography by settling non-Kashmiris in the territory. After this move, the Government of India began to erode the Muslim identity of the state by illegally and unconstitutionally granting domicile of Kashmir to non-state residents.

"Over 25,000 domiciles have been issued to non-Kashmiris, violating Article 49 of the Geneva Convention," Barrister Daniyal added.

The Modi government committing widespread human rights abuses in IIOJK, including extrajudicial killings, mass detentions, forced resettlements, torturing and rape. The human rights watchdogs and international community are playing the role of a mute spectators even after seeing all this, he added.

Paying tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, he said, that the Kashmiris have rendered matchless sacrifices for their freedom struggle and their sacrifices will never go in vain.

He also condemned the media blackouts, restrictions on freedom of expression, and repeated curfews, noting that IIOJK had experienced over 418 complete media blackouts in recent years.

Barrister Daniyal said that Kashmir issue was raised on every international forum including UK Parliament and European Union.



OMAN: Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on Minister of Royal Office, General Sultan Mohammad Al Nu'amani during his visit to Oman.