

Pak entrepreneurs must develop brands for introducing in global markets

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani entrepreneurs were urged on Monday to develop international standard brands for introducing in global markets by fully exploiting indigenous potentials, expertise and resources.

Talking to a delegation of brand experts led by Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain here Monday Meher Kashif Younis former Senior Vice President Lahore chamber highlighted the significance of brands and said global marketing gives business a new lease of life laced with ample opportunities to create new streams of income besides raising brand familiarity and reputation in addition to giving business a chance to gain afresh knowledge about their products to adjust for better quality

service, he added. He said it was high time for Pakistani entrepreneurs, corporate sector, especially younger business magnates, to focus on developing brands. He said global branding creates a stronger competitive advantage and once a company is able to successfully compete locally or even within country, it makes sense to expand globally. Unfolding the distinctive features, he said global branding is an ingredient to build a competitive advantage over years local competitors. He said global brands are stronger and more valuable, generating greater awareness thus its stays ahead of the competition.

He said vertical integration and institutional network were to be strengthened on

modern scientific lines to meet the future challenges of global marketing. "By the grace of Allah, Pak entrepreneurs have full potential to compete the international markets but unfortunately they do not develop their own brand like KFC, McDonald's, Guard, Bata, Model Steel, Chenone etc.

He said that private sector had to come forward to develop their own brands on war footings for their survival otherwise the neighbouring countries would continue to dominate and sweep international markets. He said Pakistan was producing some of the best products in the world in sports, textile, fruits, vegetables, handicrafts and in several other sectors but not exporting them under its own brands.

Meher Kashif Younis said we must not only develop but promote brands through manufacturing the best quality products which is the need of the hour.

Leader of the delegation Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain urged the private sector to restore consumer faith and trust by manufacturing best quality products on competitive prices for the promotion of brands. We need a national and sub-national policy framework and develop institutions to assist young entrepreneurs to grow." He said that youth accounts for over 60 per cent of Pakistan's population and it is essential to encourage them in entrepreneurship so that they could become more productive and contribute positively

to the growth of the national economy Mian Faiz Bukhsh Arain concluded. Special plan had also been formulated for Murree under which 860 personnel including 500 cops and 360 CTP officials to perform their duties to facilitate the visitors. Rawalpindi district police had launched Murree Tourism Police for the convenience and protection of the tourists. Patriata and Pahgauri Police Stations had also been made functional for the safety and service of citizens and tourists. A specially trained force had been deployed for Murree Tourism Police. Murree Tourism Police initially have 150 police officers and personnel, a special tourist van, 03 specially prepared vehicles, 25 motorcycles and horse riding

Jill to meet Ukrainian refugees in Slovakia, Romania



WASHINGTON: US First Lady Jill Biden will visit Romania and Slovakia this week to meet with displaced Ukrainian parents and children, aid workers, US service members and embassy personnel, her office said.

Romania and Slovakia have taken in hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian invasion of their country.

In Slovakia on Sunday, celebrated as Mother's Day in the United States, Biden will travel to the city of Kosice and village of Vysne Nemecke to meet with refugees, aid workers and the Slovaks who are supporting them.

"On Mother's Day, she will meet with Ukrainian mothers and children who have been forced to flee their home country because of Putin's war," Biden's office said.

The first lady's visit is the latest show of US support for Ukraine and the countries assisting it.

Her trip follows a trip to Kyiv by US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who met with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Saturday.

During her May 5 to 9 travels, Biden will visit US service members in Romania on Friday before heading to Bucharest.

In the Romanian capital on Saturday, she will meet with members of the government, US embassy staff and teachers working with displaced Ukrainian children, the statement from her office said. —AFP

EU leans towards Russian oil ban by year-end, say diplomats

BRUSSELS: The European Union is leaning towards a ban on imports of Russian oil by the end of the year, two EU diplomats said, after talks between the European Commission and EU member states this weekend.

The European Union is preparing a sixth package of sanctions against Russia over the invasion just over two months ago of Ukraine that Moscow calls a special military operation. The package is expected to target Russian oil, Russian and Belarusian banks, as well as more individuals and companies. The Commission, which is coordinating the EU response, held talks dubbed "confessionals" with small groups of EU countries and will aim to firm up its sanctions plan in time for a meeting of EU ambassadors in Brussels.

EU energy ministers are also due to meet in the Belgian capital on Monday to discuss the issue.

The EU diplomats said some EU countries were able to end their use of oil before the end of 2022, but others, particularly more southerly members, were concerned about the impact on prices. —Reuters

Visitors urged to follow traffic rules to avoid congestion, road mishaps in Murree

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi district administration has finalized all the arrangements to ensure security of the visitors and facilitate the tourists in Murree particularly during Eid ul Fitr holidays while the visitors have been urged to strictly follow traffic rules to avoid traffic congestion and road mishaps.

According to a district administration spokesman, the DC had urged the tourists to observe traffic rules on the roads of Murree to avoid traffic mess and any untoward incident during Eid-ul-Fitr holidays.

Special teams had been formed to facilitate the tourists and resolve their problems if any in Murree, the DC said adding, parking of the vehicles would not be allowed outside the parking areas.

There would be a complete ban on illegal parking on the roads in Murree particularly at exit and entry points besides restriction on cooking at the roadside.

The spokesman informed that single, double parking would not be allowed on roads except designated parking places. The motorcycleists without safety helmets would not be allowed to enter Murree, he added.

Several roads including Bank road, GPO Chowk to Kashmir Point, Hall road, Lalazar to Kashmir Point, View Fourth road, View Fourth road to GPO Chowk, Guldana road, GPO Chowk to Guldana Chowk, Dilkusha road, Imtiaz Shaheed road to

Lari Adda via Dilkusha hotel, Cecil Road, Imtiaz Shaheed Road to Cart road via Cecil Apartments, and Pindi Point would be one-way roads.

He said main control room had been set up at Jinnah Hall in Unit office Murree, District Council, Municipal Committee Murree which could be contacted at 051-9269015-16-18 besides Highway control room 051-9269189 and Traffic Police control room 051-9269200.

He urged the tourists to cooperate with traffic police so that the traffic mess could be avoided. The motorists should avoid wrong parking on roads which would help ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

"The beautiful climate of Murree during summer attracts a large number of tourists so motorists face severe traffic congestion," he said adding that traffic moves even slower due to heavy traffic load. He said, the DC had advised the tourists to avoid wrong parking, double lines, speeding and taking selfies in the middle of the roads. The spokesman informed that foolproof security would be provided to the tourists in Murree particularly during Eid ul Fitr holidays.

He said, all the security and traffic arrangements had been finalized to facilitate the tourists. The holidays of all the departments concerned including Murree administration had been canceled to make the arrangements foolproof. —APP



RAWALPINDI: Women buy artificial jewellery from a shop at Moti Bazar ahead of Eid-ul-Fitr.

EU to propose phasing out Russian oil in new sanctions wave

BRUSSELS: The EU will propose a phased out ban on Russian oil imports as part of a fresh round of sanctions against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, sources said.

The European Commission, which draws up sanctions for the bloc, is currently preparing a text that could be put to the 27 member states as early as Wednesday, diplomats said.

Several diplomats said the ban on oil was made possible after a U-turn by Germany, which had said the measure would do too much harm to its economy. EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said Russia was intensifying its attacks in Ukraine, making new sanctions "absolutely essential". "We must use our economic and financial abilities to make Russia pay the price for what it's doing," he said.

The commission will propose introducing the ban over six to eight months to give countries time to diversify their supply, the sources said. The ban requires unanimous backing and could yet be derailed, with Hungary expected to mount strong opposition as it is dependent on Russian oil and close to the Kremlin. Other countries are worried that a ban on oil would increase prices at the pump when consumer



prices are already sharply on the rise because of the war.

"We must be very attentive to market reactions," one official told AFP on condition of anonymity. "There are solutions and we will get there in the end, but we must act with great care."

Even though Russia exports two-thirds of its oil to the EU, the United States has expressed doubts about an outright ban. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen warned that it might have little impact on Russia because it would push up prices for its remaining exports. EU energy ministers will discuss the ban at talks on Monday in Brussels, though they will not sign off on the decision.

This sixth package of anti-Russian measures will also target the country's largest bank, Sberbank, which will be excluded from the international Swift messaging system, the diplomats said. The EU had already banned imports of Russian coal, but Poland and the Baltic states called for an oil embargo as well. Gas imports from Russia will remain untouched, with hugely dependent Germany promising to wean itself off Russian gas by mid-2024. The reliance of Europe's biggest economy on Russian energy has been exposed as an Achilles' heel as Western allies scramble to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin for his attack on Ukraine. —AFP

'Operating normally': Russia shows seized Ukraine nuclear plant

ENERGODAR: Nearly two months after it was seized by Russian forces, there are few signs of the fighting for the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine that sparked global fears of a potential atomic disaster.

Other than a scorched administrative building, the vast complex in southern Ukraine - Europe's largest nuclear power plant - appeared largely untouched by the clashes during a visit by AFP this weekend, part of a press tour organised by the Russian military.

There has been deep international concern over the situation at the plant, which has six of Ukraine's 15 reactors and can create enough energy for four million homes.

Russian forces seized the site amid fighting in early March that caused a large fire at a training facility at the plant, which sits along the Dnipro river south of the Ukrainian-held city of Zaporizhzhia.

There was no spike in radiation, but the clashes nonetheless caused deep worries, especially in the country that was the site of the world's worst nuclear accident at Chernobyl in 1986.

Rafael Grossi, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, said last week that it was "extremely important" for IAEA monitors to be able to access the site, which was built in the early 1980s but modernised in recent years.

Russia insists it is taking all necessary precautions at the plant, where its troops now patrol in the shadows of its enormous and heavily reinforced red-domed reactors.

"The Zaporizhzhia NPP is operating normally, in compliance with all nuclear, radiation and environmental safety standards," Valery Vasilyev, a major general



with Russia's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troops, told journalists at the site.

The facade of the training centre that caught fire remains blackened and its windows were blown out, but no other signs of damage at the plant were visible.

Soldiers on patrol or positioned behind sandbags showed no sign of concern and wore no protective equipment against radiation.

"Everything here is good!" Andrey Shevchik, the new pro-Russian mayor of Energodar, the city of around 50,000 people built in the 1970s to serve local power plants, told journalists at the site.

"Residents and workers of the nuclear power plant are completely safe," he said. "All comfortable conditions are being created for them to work, to generate energy, and to keep the nuclear power plant

safe." Shevchik said the plant was "ready to sell electricity to Europe", before driving off in a gleaming SUV painted with Russian flags.

He also said residents who had fled were returning to the city, though there was no way to verify the claim.

It is unclear how exactly the plant is now operating, though Ukrainian workers continue to work on site under Russian supervision.

AFP was unable to meet any of the Ukrainian staff at the plant or to speak to residents in Energodar.

Russia's Bolshoi drops shows by two directors who spoke out against Ukraine war
Russia's Bolshoi Theatre has upset opera and ballet fans by abruptly cancelling a series of shows this week by di-

rectors who have spoken out against the war in Ukraine.

The theatre gave no reason for dropping Timofey Kuliabin's production of the opera "Don Pasquale" and Kirill Serebrennikov's ballet "Nureyev".

Kuliabin has used his Instagram account to express solidarity with Ukraine and ridicule Russia's description of its actions there. In one post, he showed a mocked-up version of the cover of Leo Tolstoy's "War and Peace", replacing the first word of the title with "Special Operation" - the term used by the Kremlin to describe the invasion.

Serebrennikov told France 24 in an interview last month that "it's quite obvious that Russia started the war", and that it was breaking his heart.

"It's war, it's killing people, it's the worst thing (that) ever might happen with civilisation, with mankind... It's a humanitarian catastrophe, it's rivers of blood," he said.

Both directors are currently outside Russia.

The replacement of the two shows with "The Barber of Seville" and "Spartacus", two longstanding staples of the Bolshoi's repertoire, drew hundreds of mostly critical online comments from ticketholders. Many demanded in vain to know the reason.

"What disrespect to the spectators and artists!" one woman, Valeria, wrote on the Bolshoi's Telegram channel.

There was particular outrage at the cancellation of Serebrennikov's "Nureyev", a controversial production that premiered at the Bolshoi in 2017. The story of dancer Rudolf Nureyev, who defected to the West in 1961, included a tender scene with his gay lover that tested the Kremlin's tolerance for what it calls "homosexual propaganda".

'Lungs of the Mediterranean' at risk



MONASTIR: Under the Mediterranean waters off Tunisia, gently waving green seagrass meadows provide vital marine habitats for the fishing fleets and an erosion buffer for the beaches the tourism industry depends on.

Even more importantly, seagrass is such a key store of carbon and producer of oxygen - critical to slowing the devastating impacts of climate change - that the Mediterranean Wetlands Initiative (Med-Wet) calls it "the lungs" of the sea.

But, just as human actions elsewhere are devastating forests of trees on land, scientists warn that human activity is driving the grass under the sea to destruction at speed - with dire environmental and economic impacts.

Named Posidonia oceanica after the Greek god of the sea Poseidon, seagrass spans the Mediterranean seabed from Cyprus to Spain, sucking in carbon and curbing water acidity.

"Posidonia oceanica... is one of the most important sources of oxygen provided to coastal waters," MedWet, a 27-member regional intergovernmental network, says.

Tunisia, on the North African coastline, "has the largest meadows" of all - spreading over 10,000 sq km, marine ecologist Rym Zakhama-Sraieb said, pointing to its key carbon-capture role.

The underwater flowering plants absorb three times more blue carbon - the term used to describe the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by the ocean and coastal ecosystems - than a forest, and they can store it for thousands of years, she said.

"We need Posidonia to capture a maximum of carbon," Zakhama-Sraieb said.

But a dangerous cocktail of rampant pollution, illegal fishing using bottom trawling nets that rip up the seagrass, and a failure by people to appreciate its life-giving importance is spelling its demise.

Growing at a depth of up to 50m, seagrass provides shelter for fish and slows the erosion of coastlines by breaking wave swells that would otherwise damage the sandy beaches that tourists like.

Tunisian marine biologist Yassine Ramzi Sghaier said the grass is crucial for a country already gripped by a grinding economic crisis.

"All of Tunisia's economic activity depends on Posidonia," Sghaier said.

"It is the largest provider of jobs," he claimed, noting that at least 150,000 people are directly employed in fishing and tens of thousands in the tourism industry. Destruction has been swift, and replacement slow. The aquatic plant, also known as Neptune grass, grows less than 5cm a year. —Reuters