



Islamabad POST

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Ismail Hania assassination

Israel has to pay heavy price: Iran

Pakistan, Moscow, Beijing condemn assassination; Hamas vows to strike back; US says it has nothing to do with the assassination

AGENCIES

TEHRAN: Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in the early hours of Wednesday morning in Iran, Palestinian group Hamas said, drawing fears of a wider escalation in a region shaken by Israel's offensive in Gaza and a worsening conflict in Lebanon. Iran's Revolutionary Guards confirmed the death of Haniyeh, hours after he attended a swearing-in ceremony for the country's new president, and said it was investigating. They added that one of Haniyeh's bodyguards was also killed in their residence in Tehran early on Wednesday. Iran's state-owned news agency IRNA reported. Haniyeh's bodyguard also killed in their residence, say Iran's Revolutionary Guards. News comes within a day of Israel's claim of killing Hezbollah commander behind Golan strike. Pakistan "deeply shocked", views growing "Israeli adventurism" with serious concern US says "not aware of or involved" in killing while Middle East countries term it "cowardly action", "heinous crime" China, Russia warn of further regional escalation. There was no immediate comment from Israel. The Israeli military said it was conducting a situational assessment but had not issued any new security guidelines for civilians. The news, which came less than 24 hours after Israel claimed to have killed the Hezbollah commander it said was behind a deadly strike in the Israel-occupied Golan Heights, appears to set back chances of any imminent ceasefire agreement in Gaza. "This assassination by the Israeli occupation of Brother Haniyeh is a grave escalation that aims to break the will of Hamas," senior Hamas official Sami Abu Zuhri told

EU calls for 'maximum restraint'

BRUSSELS: The European Union on Wednesday urged all sides to avoid escalation after Hamas said its political leader Ismail Haniyeh had been killed by an Israeli strike on Iran's capital. "We call on all parties to exert maximum restraint and avoid any further escalation," EU spokesman Peter Stano said. "No country and no nation stand to gain from a further escalation in the Middle East." - Agencies

"Deeply shocked by timing": Pak

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday condemned the assassination of the chief of Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, expressing serious concern over the growing Israeli adventurism in the region. "We are deeply shocked by the timing of this reckless act, coinciding with the inauguration of the President of Iran, an event attended by several foreign dignitaries, including the Deputy Prime Minister

of Pakistan," according to a Foreign Office press release. Extending condolences to his family and the people of Palestine, the Foreign Office spokesperson reiterated that Pakistan condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings, irrespective of the motives. "Pakistan views with serious concern the growing Israeli adventurism in the region. Its latest acts constitute a dangerous escalation in an already volatile region and undermine efforts for peace," the spokesperson added.

Reuters. "We confirm that this escalation will fail to achieve its objectives. Hamas is a concept and an institution and not persons," he said. Zuhri vowed Hamas would continue the path it was following, adding: "We are confident of victory." Iran's top security body is expected to meet to decide Iran's strategy in reaction to the death of Haniyeh, a close ally of Tehran, said a source with knowledge of the meeting. The burial of Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh is to be held in Doha on Friday a day after a public funeral ceremony in Tehran, the Palestinian group said Wednesday. Haniyeh "will be given an official and public funeral ceremony in the Iranian capital, Tehran, tomorrow," Hamas said in a statement, explaining his body would be transported to the Qatari capital later the same day. It said funeral prayers will be held at Imam Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab Mosque, Doha's largest mosque, after Friday prayers, with the burial carried out at a cemetery in Lusail, north of the Qatari capital.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Asia Internet Coalition calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on 31 July 2024. - DNA

APPROVES CUT IN PETROL PRICES Govt determined to promote AI platform: PM

Under the Digital Pakistan Initiative, the whole system was being digitised

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the government was taking all-out measures to provide fast and uninterrupted Internet connectivity to the people. The prime minister, in a meeting with a three-member delegation of Asia Internet Coalition, headed by Managing Director Jeff Paine, said that the government was implementing a strategy to attract foreign investment in the information technology infrastructure. The meeting featured the discussion on data security, code of ethics for Internet content, and prevention of electronic crimes. Prime Minister Shehbaz told the delegation that the government was working to promote a basic infrastructure based on artificial intelligence. He said the government was resolved to make Pakistan achieve a distinction in AI infrastructure in the region. He said under the Digital Pakistan

JI vows to continue sit-in

FAISAL SHEIKH

RAWALPINDI: As the Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) sit-in against inflation including a massive hike in power tariffs entered the sixth day, the party's Vice Emir Liaqat Baloch said Wednesday that the federal government's technical committee "seeks more time to make progress on the protesters' demands". "The government's technical team agreed with our demands," Baloch said while speaking to journalists after holding the second round of talks with the government's negotiation committee members at Rawalpindi's commissioner's office earlier today.

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Briefs

BD police lob grenades to disperse mob

The unrest is the biggest test facing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 76, since she won a fourth term

DNA

DHAKA: Police in Bangladesh fired tear gas and stun grenades to disperse people who were demonstrating on Wednesday against the excessive use of force by authorities during protests earlier in July that left at least 150 dead. The unrest is the biggest test facing Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, 76, since she won a fourth term in January elections boycotted by the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, which were also marred by deadly protests. Police said they used force when people in the northeastern district of Sylhet broke through barricades to march towards the courts. "We requested the protesters to move from the road, but they didn't listen and instead attacked the police, forcing us to disperse them with tear gas and stun grenades," said regional deputy commissioner Azbahar Ali Sheikh.

Khadija to give up US citizenship

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Khadija Shah has said that she will relinquish her United States citizenship as she announced accepting the party's nomination for reserved seats. "Making the decision to relinquish my US citizenship, which guarantees freedom, safety, and opportunity, was not easy. However, Pakistan is my motherland, the place I call home, and the country where I've built my life. I cannot give up on it and my people," said Shah in an Instagram post on Tuesday.

Despite PTI protest

Bill to 'circumvent' reserved seats ruling passed

Some political observers are seeing controversial bill as a move to frustrate the SC judgement

KHAYYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD The PTI registered its protest as a National Assembly committee on Wednesday approved a bill proposing amendments to the election law, suggesting that a political party should not be allocated seats reserved for women and non-Muslim candidates if it failed to submit its list for the reserved seats within the prescribed time. The PML-N had tabled the Election Act (Amendment) Bill, 2024, in the National Assembly on Tuesday. Immediately after the bill was tabled, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar suggested it would be appropriate if the bill was referred to a committee for input from all political parties. Another amendment proposed to the Elections Act 2017 in the bill said that a candidate should be considered an independent lawmaker if they had not

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CTD takes Rauf Hasan in custody in terror case

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Already facing a judicial remand for masterminding a digital anti-state campaign, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Information Secretary, Raouf Hasan, is now embroiled in a "terrorism" case, adding to the party's whopping legal woes. An anti-terrorism court (ATC) in Islamabad on Tuesday handed Hasan over to the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) of police on a two-day physical remand.

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PTCL internet Services disrupted

PTA confirmed disruption in service across Pakistan

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The internet services of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Ltd (PTCL) have faced disruption in various cities in the country, the telecommunication company said in a statement. "Currently, the PTCL network is facing data outage in various cities due to which connectivity has been affected," a PTCL spokesperson said in statement. "Our teams are actively working to resolve and rectify the issue at the earliest," the spokesperson added. In a statement on X, Netblocks that tracks internet outages, digital governance and connectivity, confirmed the widespread internet disruption in Pakistan.

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UNSC detailed report spotlights TTP-Afghan Taliban collaboration

"With Taliban acquiescence, and at times support, TTP has intensified attacks inside Pakistan primarily targeting military installations," said the report from the Council's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaeda and associate groups, pointing out that Pakistan suffered more than 800 attacks in the past several months

AGENCIES

UNITED NATIONS: A new United Nations Security Council report has underscored the grave threat to Pakistan's security posed by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), saying there is an increased collaboration between the TTP and Afghan Taliban in the cross-border terrorist attacks mainly against Pakistani military posts. "With Taliban acquiescence, and at times support, TTP has intensified attacks inside Pakistan primarily targeting military installations," said the report from the Council's Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaeda and associate groups, pointing out that Pakistan suffered more than 800 attacks in the past several months. "TTP camps with Al-Qaeda and Taliban involvement focus on training local Afghan fighters and TTP operatives," it said, noting that TTP has 6,000 and 6,500 fighters who continue to use NATO weapons obtained in Afghanistan, while also emphasizing the role of night vision capability. "Al-Qaeda is funding purchases of weapons and suicide vests for TTP," the report added.

"The terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan is causing heightened concern in many (UN) member states," according to the report. Pakistan has consistently drawn the attention of the international community to the security threat it faces from the TTP terrorists who it says also have external support. The report said, "There is heightened concern among member states about the terrorist threat emanating regionally from Afghanistan from ISIL-Khorasan and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in particular; new inward travel to Afghanistan of some Al-Qaeda personnel and training, recruitment and reorganization activities." It cites several UN member states as saying that the Al-Qaeda figure Abu Ikhlas-al Masri was actively collaborating with Jamaat-ul-Ahrar in providing suicide bomber training to TTP in Kunar Province, with two states holding TTP responsible for the March 26 attack against Chinese nationals working on a hydropower dam project near Besham in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. "There is increased support and collaboration between TTP and the Taliban, sharing manpower and training camps in Afghanistan and

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US-Funded program enhances opportunities for Multan youth

The English Access Scholarship Program is one of the highlights of the longstanding cooperation between the United States and Pakistan. Since 2004, more than 27,000 Pakistani students have graduated from the Access program, including more than 6,000 in Punjab Province

DNA

MULTAN – U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM) Andrew Schofer and Consul General Lahore Kristin Hawkins welcomed 300 new students in Multan to the U.S. government-funded English Access Scholarship Program – an opportunity for youth ages 13-20 from

disadvantaged communities to improve their English skills, learn about American culture and develop leadership abilities. “The Access program is about far more than just gaining English-language proficiency. It develops future leaders by teaching leadership skills that extends beyond the classroom and into practical life,” said DCM Schofer. The English Access Scholarship Pro-

gram is one of the highlights of the longstanding cooperation between the United States and Pakistan. Since 2004, more than 27,000 Pakistani students have graduated from the Access program, including more than 6,000 in Punjab Province. The U.S. Mission is currently sponsoring English programs in three cities across Punjab – Faisalabad, Multan, and DG Khan – and looks forward to continuing its educational partnerships across Pakistan. While in South Punjab, DCM Schofer also visited the Lincoln Corner at the University of Education in Vehari. The U.S. Mission in Pakistan’s network of 20 Lincoln Corners at universities across the country offer a welcoming space for open dialogue, where students can use technology and learn employable skills for the future. Lincoln Corners also provide access to vital resources on exchange programs, studying in the United States, scholarships, and English language learning. DCM Schofer also attended the Pakistan-U.S. Alumni Network’s South Punjab Chapter reunion, which included alumni from Multan, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalpur, DG Khan, and other districts. Since 1950 the U.S. government has fostered mutual understanding through educational exchanges, benefiting thousands of individuals. More than 44,000 Pakistanis are alumni of these opportunities. Pakistani alumni of U.S. exchange programs play a significant role in the U.S.-Pakistan relationship, and many are leaders in business, education, government, and the non-profit sector, contributing positively to their communities.



Public problems to be redressed on priority basis

FAISALABAD : Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haidar Khan has said the government has chalked out a comprehensive strategy to redress public problems on top priority basis. He was addressing a workers’ convention at the Dera of Chaudhry Arshad Jatt, Vice President PPP Central Punjab, during his maiden visit to Faisalabad on Wednesday. He said that Pakistan was passing through a crucial stage. However, the coalition government would strive to steer the country out of crises in addition to resuming the pace of national progress and prosperity. He asked workers to identify public problems and he would issue necessary instructions to the district administration for redressing the same on urgent basis. He also paid tributes to services of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Muhtarma Benazir Bhutto and said that the PPP had presented unprecedented sacrifices for the cause of democracy. Chaudhry Arshad Jatt and others also addressed the convention while a large number of people were present. Earlier, the governor was accorded a rousing reception on his arrival at Kamalpur Interchange where he was received warmly and taken to the residence of Chaudhry Arshad Jatt in a motorcade. —APP

Nutshell group expands strategically into ME

KARACHI : Nutshell Group, a leading communications and public advocacy firm, is excited to unveil its strategic expansion into the Middle East. This significant development underscores Nutshell’s commitment to broadening its regional presence and strengthening economic and cultural ties within the region. With over two decades of industry experience, Nutshell Group has been a pioneer in fostering impactful dialogue and collaboration across various sectors. Expanding into the Middle East marks a pivotal step in the firm’s journey towards establishing itself as a global leader in communications and strategic engagement. The Middle East, with its

vibrant economic landscape and strategic significance, offers a wealth of opportunities for Nutshell Group to extend its expertise in corporate communications and strategic advisory services. This expansion will enable the firm to support businesses and governments in the region by facilitating meaningful dialogue, embracing innovation, and forging strategic partnerships. In a joint statement, Muhammad Azfar Ahsan, Chairman of Nutshell Group; Usman Yousuf, Director; and Rabia Ahmad, Director and CEO of Nutshell Group, expressed their enthusiasm about the expansion, saying: “Our entry into the Middle East market reflects our vision of connecting vi-

sionary minds and driving transformative change. We are eager to introduce our distinctive approach to communications in this dynamic region and look forward to building enduring relationships with our partners.” As part of this strategic growth, Uniaizah Saeed Ali has been appointed Chief Operating Officer for the Middle East, while Mehrunisa Azhar has been promoted to Chief Operating Officer for Pakistan. As part of its commitment to excellence, Nutshell Group will work closely with local partners to deliver innovative solutions that drive growth, foster collaboration, and contribute to the region’s economic and social development.—APP

Minister chairs meeting of body for drug pricing

ISLAMABAD : Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of the committee formed to give recommendations for independent drug pricing in the country. Under the directions of the prime minister, a committee has been constituted to address drug pricing in Pakistan, said a press release. The meeting was attended by relevant stakeholders who presented an overview of the operations of independent price authorities and their functions worldwide, highlighting best practices. The committee deliberated on the best model for Pakistan, considering various viewpoints from all stakeholders. It was decided that a detailed working paper will be prepared for the next meeting. This paper will identify the current issues related to the pharmaceutical industry, with a focus on pricing in the market. Key areas to be addressed include, issues related to pricing in the market, medicine imports and the market distortions they cause and categories of drugs that fall outside the domain of government pricing. Additionally, efforts and plans will be made to create a favorable environment to attract back international pharmaceutical companies that previously operated in Pakistan. The committee emphasized that the functions of pricing and regulation are distinct. The regulator’s role is to ensure the standards of medicine, whereas pricing should be driven by market mechanisms without state control. Further updates will be shared as the committee progresses in its efforts to improve the pharmaceutical industry’s framework in Pakistan.—DNA

Wildlife protection champions honored for conservation efforts

Romina Khurshid Alam highlighted the indispensable role of wildlife guards, watchers, and rangers in safeguarding the country’s natural heritage

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The key stakeholders reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to wildlife conservation at a grand event organized to mark the World Ranger Day here on Wednesday at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA). The speakers underscored the collective resolve to protect and preserve Pakistan’s rich biodiversity and wildlife habitats for future generations. This event showcased momentous wildlife photos by an internationally known Pakistani wildlife photographer Jamal Leghari, launching of a book by the late Zahid Baig Mirza, screening of a documentary on snow leopard “The Silent King”. The most important segment of the ceremony was the inaugural Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards, where the efforts of dedicated wildlife protection

champions were celebrated and honored. The event was jointly organized by the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Snow Leopard Foundation, and Devcom-Pakistan with the support of Snow Leopard Trust, Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), and the provincial wildlife and forest departments of Gilgit-Baltistan, AJK, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Prime Minister’s Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam, was the chief guest. The guests of honour included Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Head of Climate Change at the British High Commission in Pakistan Anna Balance, Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan Per Albert Ilsaas, and Senator and Wildlife Ambassador Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari. The Pakistan Wildlife Protection

Awards honored six exceptional wildlife guards, watchers, and rangers. Sarmad Shafa, Range Forest Officer of the Gilgit-Baltistan Parks and Wildlife Department won the Snow Leopard Award in the national category. Faizan Dukhi, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, and Kamal Ud Din, Wildlife Inspector, of the Gilgit-Baltistan Parks and Wildlife Department, win the Ixob Award and the Blue Sheep award for their conservation and protection efforts in Gilgit-Baltistan. Two efficient officers of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Wildlife Department, the Wildlife Ranger Syed Mussadiq Ali Shah, and the Deputy Ranger Wildlife Zaid Ahmad declared winners of the Markhor Award and the Wolf Award respectively. The Musk Deer Award is earned by Jan Muhammad Nasir, Game Watcher, AJK Wildlife Department. All the awardees were also presented with a souvenir, an appreciation certificate, a field kit

and cash prices of PKR 150,000 for the National Award Winner and PKR 100,000 for the rest of five the Regional Award Winners, respectively. Romina Khurshid Alam while speaking on the occasion highlighted the indispensable role of wildlife guards, watchers, and rangers in safeguarding the country’s natural heritage. She emphasized the importance of their dedication and bravery in combating wildlife poaching and preserving ecosystems. She said: “Today, we recognize six exemplary wildlife protectors from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan. These individuals have shown extraordinary courage and dedication in protecting our precious wildlife and natural habitats. Their efforts remind us of the crucial role that each of us plays in preserving the biodiversity that sustains our ecosystems.



ISLAMABAD: Ali Hassan Zahri, Advisor to Chief Minister Balochistan on Trade and Industry met with Senator Rubina Khalid Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme at BISP Headquarters in Federal Capital.—DNA

Govt to conduct verification of govt employees arms licenses

PESHAWAR :Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Interior and Home Department has decided to conduct departmental verification of government employees regarding the issue of arms licenses. Officers of various government departments will be given training related to verification, the notification issued said on Wednesday. “Dastak App” was launched in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Information Technology some six months back and now is facilitating the general public in attaining arms licenses. Several government employees applying on the Arms License App must verify their credentials from the relevant departments, the notification said. For this purpose, a dashboard has been designed for each department by the Information Technology Board of the Department of Home Affairs and Tribal Affairs. Access to this will be subject to providing adequate training on the above module, the notification said.

It is, therefore, requested to nominate the appropriate Focal Person from their respective Departments positively within three (03) days as IT literate. To organize an orientation training session for the nominated focal persons in consultation with the KPIT Board, the notification further added.

Huge stock of fake medicines seized

FAISALABAD: A drug squad of the Health Department seized a huge stock of fake medicines and sealed a three-story building in Kaleem Shaheed Colony area, here on Wednesday. According to official sources, Drug Inspector Khalid Mustafa, along with his team comprising Dr Zeeshan Tahir Ahmad and Saqib Javed, conducted a raid at a house in street No 1, Kaleem Shaheed Colony, Narrwala Road and recovered labels, plastic bottles, raw material, machinery and therapeutic chemical and stock of medicine.—APP

Speakers urge green practices for textile industry

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on Wednesday urged that the textile sector required green measures to ensure sustainability and circularity as refurbishment of these goods burdened local water and energy resources. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute in collaboration with the European Union (EU) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organised the hybrid Seminar on “Circularity and Used Textiles Trade in Pakistan: Policy and Practice for Sustainable Development”, said a news release. The Speakers said Pakistan was among the top importers of second-hand textiles mostly exported by the European Union (EU). Head Economic and Trade Policy Unit UNEP Asad Naqvi said “59% of exports of Pakistan are textile-based and 40% workforce is associated with this sector. The second-hand textile is important for

poor masses and the small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and value chains that are around it.” It is a perfect osmosis in which three pillars of sustainable development interact creating harmony among resource efficiency and environment, social economic side, and poverty. The textile sector will grow globally, and Pakistan can grab a significant share which can be possible through public finance or private financing in the textile sector,” he added Executive Director, SDPI Dr Abid Suleri said that the SDPI is effectively working on a circular economy and contributing greatly to the formation of effective policies. “Importing, sorting and resale of imported textiles is promoting a local industry and employing many people at home. Second-hand textiles are being refurbished and sold in the posh markets of Islamabad, and this program will contribute greatly

towards the green economy,” he added. He said the textile import sector is an oligopolistic (few large producers having control over an entire market) market structure, with outdated technology and a lack of access to finance. However, the government, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and SDPI are effectively working to document such informal sectors into the economy, he added. Since second-hand clothes are being imported, it is contributing significantly towards the circularity with an added expense to it in the form of energy and the water that is being used to refurbish such textiles, he added. Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Pakistan Jeroen Willems said that the used textiles are effectively being exported to Pakistan, Ghana, and Tunisia by Europe and the demand of second-hand textiles will double globally.—APP

AIOU announces exam schedule for Matric, FA, ICom

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University has announced the schedule of Matric, FA, and I. Com exams for the Spring 2024 semester. According to the AIOU, the exams will commence on September 02 at exam centers across the country. The

date sheet is available on the university’s website, (www.aiou.edu.pk), while roll number slips are being uploaded to students’ portals. Vice Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, has issued directives to ensure basic facilities for students at exam centers. Meanwhile, admissions for the first phase of the Fall 2024 se-

mester are also underway. Students can submit forms for Matric, FA, and ICom programs until September 5, 2024, while online applications for BS, MS, MPhil, and PhD programs can be submitted until August 20, 2024. For more information, please visit the university’s website or contact the admissions office.

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National Days and Armed Forces Days

AUGUST

Aug 01/China
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01/Switzerland
National Day

Aug 01/Lebanon
Armed Forces Day

Aug 01 /Syria
Armed Forces Day

Aug 4/Bukino Faso
National Day

Aug 09 /Singapore

Aug 15/DPR Korea
Independence Day

Aug 15/India
Independence Day

Aug 15/Poland
Armed Forces Day

Aug 17 /Indonesia
Independence Day

Aug 24/Ukraine
Independence Day

Aug 25/Uruguay
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Armed Forces Day

Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic
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National Day

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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
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Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Chinese Embassy donates 20,000 health kits to students

Prominent among the participants were Mr. Jiang Zaidong, Chinese Ambassador, senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Ms. Raheela Durrani, Minister of Education Baluchistan, besides representatives of teaching community from Baluchistan and Chinese companies

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of China in Pakistan donated 20,000 health kits for girls in schools of Balochistan with the theme of "She Power". This was aimed at improving the girls' health conditions, promoting the use of hygiene products and developing the health awareness in Balochistan. In this connection, the initiation Ceremony of the project was held here on Wednesday in the Chinese Embassy. Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq was the chief guest on the occasion. Prominent among the participants were Mr. Jiang Zaidong,

Chinese Ambassador, senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Finance, Ms. Raheela Durrani, Minister of Education Baluchistan, besides representatives of teaching community from Baluchistan and Chinese companies. Speaker NA, in his address eulogized the initiatives taken by the Chinese Embassy, as per the vision of President Xi Jinping. Lauding the Sino-Pak friendship, he said the two countries are enjoying exceptional cooperative partnership in all sectors of economic development and human-welfare.

He recalled the historical address of President Xi Jinping before the Parliament of Pa-

kistan in 2015, which he said had laid solid foundation of the socio-economic partnership and CPEC was tantamount of that, he added. Ayaz Sadiq also mentioned of the regular and extensive interaction between the National Assembly of Pakistan and the National People's Congress of China. Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong while reiterating the firm commitment of the Chinese government giving further boost to the bilateral relations particularly in the human welfare sector mentioned the work report presented by President Xi before the 20th National Congress of the CPC. The report he said focused more on human-well-being and peoples'

happiness. It contains President Xi's vision of further reforms in human relation-sector. He attached high priority not only to the happiness of the Chinese people but the entire world as whole. Elaborating the human welfare's projects undertaken in Baluchistan, he said it aimed improving the living-condition of the people, providing them better health and educational facilities. He assured that Baluchistan's development will remain top priority. The present initiative besides others, he hoped will improve the living conditions of women in Baluchistan.

Various steps are underway for Baluchistan's repaid development including New Gwadar

International Airport, which is expected to be functional this year. The CPEJavedC-related projects, he assured will pass on socio-economic benefits to all regions of the country. China, he added is working on the promotion of health and education sectors, in Pakistan with focus on building schools infrastructure, health facilities, providing more and more scholarships to the Pakistani students and providing skill development trainings. Senator Saleem Mandviwalla also spoke on the occasion and said that there is no two opinion about friendship with China. In this connection, all segment of the society in Pakistan are on the same page, he added.



ISLAMABAD: Editor Daily Islamabad POST, Centreline and DNA News Agency signs the condolence book at the Ethiopian embassy to express grief over the loss of precious lives during mudslide incident. Ambassador of Ethiopia Jemal Beker is also present on the occasion. —DNA

Senator Sherry Rehman criticizes MoCCE

DNA

ISLAMABAD24: Chairing a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change, Senator Sherry Rehman along with the Committee members expressed serious concerns about the Ministry of Climate Change's planning, priorities and preparedness in addressing Pakistan's climate and environmental policies. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders, including Coordinator for Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, the Secretary of the Ministry of Climate Change, and officials from relevant departments. Senator Rehman expressed her profound disappointment with the Ministry's presentation on climate change. "I am appalled at

the lack of clarity, coordination, and capacity displayed in the presentation. As the Chair of the Standing Senate Committee, I expected to see a clear strategic plan, priorities, and initiatives to address this pressing issue." Marking the urgency and scale of the challenges Pakistan faces, Senator Rehman said that climate change is a national crisis requiring a coordinated, yet technically proficient response. "I am shocked to see an outdated last century presentation with no clear priorities, no flagship initiatives, and no strategic NDC agenda or updates." The Senator also voiced grave concerns over the Ministry's lack of ownership of key initiatives and policies, with a routinised approach that had little hope of impacting policy outcomes or meeting national

commitments. She called for a redesign of priorities as well as the development of a tailored climate finance strategy by the Ministry to meet the country's specific needs and sensibilities. "What is also worrying is the profound level of disconnect within the ministry with its own institutional mandate. It is the ministry's job to forge strategic partnerships and communication with other ministries, but the institutions within the Ministry of Climate Change are not even coordinating among themselves. The Committee was appalled at the egregious lack of coordination amongst the Ministry's own departments," Senator Rehman pointed out. Senator Rehman stressed the need for a comprehensive communication strategy to raise public awareness about cli-

mate change. She also criticized the Ministry for its lack of awareness about plastic regulation and its failure to track Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). "It is astonishing that the Ministry is unaware of the plastics regulation while it was on the agenda, and there is no tracking of our NDCs," she asserted. Furthermore, she drilled down the significant oversight of omitting any mention of energy transition, a key aspect of climate strategy, in the presentation. "Energy transition is a crucial part of our climate action plan, and its absence in the presentation is deeply concerning," she added. Additionally, the Senate Committee deliberated on the fire incident in the H-9 Sunday Bazaar.

PMD advises precautions

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has advised the authorities concerned to remain on alert in wake of torrential monsoon rains forecast in the country from August 01 to 06 with occasional gaps that may cause flash and urban flooding in the vulnerable areas. According to an advisory issued by the PMD, strong monsoon currents penetrating from Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal in upper parts will approach central and southern parts from August 02. Under the influence of this weather system, rain-wind/thundershower with scattered heavy with isolated very heavyfalls are expected in Islamabad/Rawalpindi, Murree, Galliat, Attock, Chakwal, Tala Gang, Jhelum, Mandi Bahaudin, Gujrat, Gujranwala, Hafizabad, Wazirabad, Sahiwal, Jhang, Toba Tek Singh, Nankana Sahib, Chinot, Faisalabad, Lahore, Sheikhu-

pura, Sialkot, Narowal, Okara, Pakpattan, Kasur, Khushab, Sargodha, Bhakkar and Mianwali from August 01-06 with occasional gaps. Rain-wind/thundershower with heavyfalls is expected in Bahawalpur, Bahawalnagar, Khanpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Multan, Khanewal, Lodhran, Muzaffargarh, Kot Addu, Rajanpur, Rahimyar Khan and Layyah from August 02-06 with occasional gaps. In Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, rain-wind/thundershower with scattered heavy with isolated very heavyfalls are expected in Chitral, Dir, Swat, Kohistan, Malakand, Shangla, Battagram, Buner, Kohat, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Peshawar, Swabi, Nowshera, Mardan, Charsadda, Hangu, Kurram, Orakzai, Waziristan, Bannu, Lakki Marwat and Dera Ismail Khan from August 01(evening/night) to August 06 with occasional

gaps. In Balochistan, rain-wind/thundershower with few heavyfalls is expected in Khuzdar, Lasbella, Awaran, Panjgur, Ketch, Kalat, Quetta, Ziarat, Zhob, Qila Abdullah, Qila Saifullah, Barkhan, Musa Khel, Mastung, Sibbi, Shirani, Kohlu, Bolan, Harnai, Naseerabad, Jaffarabad and Makran coast from August 02nd (evening/night) to August 06 with occasional gaps. In Sindh, rain-wind/thundershower (scattered heavy with isolated very heavyfalls) is expected in Mithi, Sanghar, Mitayari, Nausheroferoz, Jamshoro, Umakot, Tharparkar, Mirpur Khas, Khairpur, Thatta, Badin, Chhor, Padidan, Sajawal, Karachi, Hyderabad, Tando Allayar, Tando Muhammad Khan, Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, Larkana, Jacobabad and Dadu from August 02 (night) to August 06 with occasional gaps. Rain-wind/thundershower with scattered heavyfalls are expected in

Kashmir (Neelum valley, Muzaffarabad, Rawalakot, Poonch, Hattian, Bagh, Haveli, Sudhanoti, Kotli, Bhimber, Mirpur) from August 01-06 with occasional gaps. In Gilgit-Baltistan, mainly partly cloudy to cloudy weather conditions at times are expected in Gilgit-Baltistan. However, rainfall activity is also expected in Diamir, Astore, Skardu, Gilgit, Ghanche, Shigar from August 03 (evening/night) to August 06 with occasional gaps. About the possible impacts, the PMD said that torrential rains may generate flash flooding in local nullahs/streams of Murree, Galliat, Mansehra, Kohistan, Chitral, Dir, Swat, Shangla, Bunner, Bannu, Kurram, Waziristan, Dera Ismail Khan, Orakzai, Khyber, Mohmand, Nowshera, Swabi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Northeast Punjab, hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan and Kashmir from August 02-05. —APP

PM for all-out resources for polio eradication

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressing concern over Pakistan being one of the two countries in the world facing the challenge of polio, directed the authorities concerned to utilise all-out resources to rid the country of the crippling disease. The prime minister, in a meeting with a polio eradication team, said every child should be administered polio vaccine in the areas facing security challenge. He said Pakistan made a significant headway in polio eradication consequent to the dedication of the front line workers, determination of the government and cooperation by the partners. In a briefing to the prime minister about the polio eradication, he was apprised of two, four and six-month plans. It was told that nine polio cases had been reported in 2024 and that countrywide polio vaccination drives would be launched in September, October and December this year. The prime minister was told that the data of the children missed from polio vaccination had been digitised to ensure their vaccination through digital tracking. Coordinator to Prime Minister on National Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed, PM's Focal Person on Polio Eradication Dr Ayesha Raza Farooq, Secretary National Health Dr Nadeem Mehbob and National Coordinator on Polio Eradication Muhammad Anwarul Haq attended the meeting.—APP

The UK-funded A2D Facility launched

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The UK-funded Accelerate-to-Demonstrate (A2D) Facility, launched by the UN Industrial Development Organization, has launched its first funding call for proposal. The UK's funding of £65.5m is part of its commitment to delivering pragmatic and tangible action to tackle climate change. A2D aims to accelerate the commercialization of innovative clean energy technologies in developing countries, including Pakistan, through funding pilot projects that have the potential to have transformational impacts.

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Briefs

Attaullah Tarar grieved over death of senior actor

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the death of senior actor and comedian Sardar Kamal. In a condolence message, the minister expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family of the deceased.

Terming Sardar Kamal a great artist, Tarar said he was deeply saddened to hear the news of his demise. "With the death of Sardar Kamal, the Pakistani showbiz industry has lost a great artist," he maintained. Sardar Kamal was an artist who always brought smiles to the faces of others, he said adding the services Sardar Kamal to the showbiz industry will always be remembered.

He said shared the grief of the bereaved family in this hour of sorrow. He prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

ANF recovers 242 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country recovered 242 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 2.5 kg ice was recovered from a parcel booked for New Zealand at a courier office in Rawalpindi. 96 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused rounded up near a restaurant in Quetta.

64 intoxicated tablets were recovered from an accused arrested near GCP Chaman. Over 40 kg hashish and 30 kg opium were recovered from 2 suspects netted in Sheikhupura. 40.8 kg hashish and 15.6 kg opium were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Ravi Toll Plaza Lahore and 3 accused were arrested. The spokesman said that 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from two accused in Sadder in Rawalpindi. 300 grams ice and 200 grams heroin were recovered from the possession of an accused near Chowk Sambaryal. Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.—APP

PM lauds Fatima Jinnah's contributions

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid tribute to Madre-Millat Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah on her birth anniversary, lauding her significant contributions during the Pakistan Movement and for promoting democracy in the country. "While celebrating Madre-Millat Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah's birth anniversary, we reflect on her significant contributions alongside our esteemed founder, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, during the struggle for independence," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.—APP

Sindh governor expresses solidarity with Ethiopian people

Ambassador Jemal Beker briefed the Governor about relief and rescue efforts of the Government of the Ethiopia being carried out for permanent relocation of the affected persons in sustainable manner

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh, on Wednesday visited the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad to express condolence over demise of over 230 people in the incidents of landslide that took place in Gofa Zone of the Southern part of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

Upon arrival at the Embassy, Jemal Beker Abdula Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, accorded warm welcome to the Governor Sindh. The Governor Sindh expressed solidarity with the Government and people of the FDR Ethiopia over the tragic incident and sympathized with the bereaved families. He expressed his support and commitment to jointly work with the Government of Ethiopia in addressing the climate related issues. On the occasion, Ambassador Jemal Beker briefed the



Governor about relief and rescue efforts of the Government of the Ethiopia being carried out for permanent relocation of the affected persons in sustainable manner. The Ambassador also highlighted the Green Legacy Initiative of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, which was aimed at combating climate challenges and ensuring food security in the country and region as well. He informed the Governor that Ethiopia had planted more than 40 billion seedlings of indigenous plants of fruits, vegetable and animal feed in the last four years through massive mobilization of the masses. H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker expressed his commitment to work with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for addressing the climate issues through joint initiatives under the Green Legacy Initiative. The matters of mutual interests including bilateral and multilateral cooperation also came under discussion during the meeting.

Monsoon rainfall to intensify until August 5 : PMD DG

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) Director General Mahr Sahibzad Khan Wednesday predicted that the country will experience continued rainfall until 4 to 5 August, with a focus on the Chenab river, which is expected to face an alarming situation. Talking to PTV news channel, he said the Chenab river will be under significant pressure due to the heavy downpour, posing a risk of flooding in nearby areas, adding, while other rivers are also expected to swell, the Chenab river is of particular concern. The PMD has advised authorities and residents to take necessary precautions and remain vigilant in the face of this impending situation, he added. The continued rainfall is expected to bring relief from the heat, but also poses a threat to infrastructure and human settlements, making it es-

sentential for timely action to mitigate potential disasters, he mentioned. In response to a question, Director General of Meteorology, Mahr Sahibzad Khan, emphasized the importance of staying informed about the latest weather updates, particularly regarding lightning and other severe weather conditions. He advised all concerned departments and citizens to regularly check the Pakistan Meteorological Department's (PMD) website for the latest forecasts, warnings, and updates. By doing so, individuals can stay ahead of potentially hazardous weather situations and take necessary precautions to ensure their safety, he added. The DG Met stressed that staying informed is crucial in minimizing the risks associated with severe weather events, and encouraged everyone to make it a habit to regularly check the PMD web-

site for updates, especially during the monsoon season when weather conditions can change rapidly. In response to another question, DG expressed gratitude to the Chinese government for providing Pakistan with advanced technology for lightning prediction tools, adding, through this collaboration, Pakistan has acquired 26 lightning prediction tools, enabling the Meteorological Department to accurately predict lightning strikes in various cities across the country. This cutting-edge technology has significantly enhanced Pakistan's weather forecasting capabilities, allowing for timely warnings and updates to be issued to the public, he added. The DG Met acknowledged the importance of this technology in saving lives and minimizing damage caused by lightning strikes, and appreciated

the Chinese government's support in strengthening Pakistan's meteorological infrastructure. With this new technology, Pakistan is now better equipped to predict and prepare for severe weather events, including lightning storms, he mentioned. Mahr Sahibzad Khan also warned that monsoon rains are expected to intensify in various cities across Pakistan, bringing heavy downpours that will surpass the previous spell's rainfall totals. Notably, the previous spell of monsoon rains did not reach the 100 mm mark, but the upcoming spell is predicted to exceed this threshold, indicating a significant increase in rainfall intensity, he added. This intensification of monsoon rains will lead to a higher risk of urban flooding, landslides, and other weather-related hazards, he added.—APP

Baz takes oath as CEC of GB

ISLAMABAD: Chief Judge of Gilgit Baltistan Supreme Appellate Court Hon. Justice Sardar Muhammad Shamim Khan administered the oath of newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner Gilgit Baltistan Judge (R) Raja Shah Baz Khan (T.st) here at Gilgit Baltistan Council on Wednesday. The oath taking ceremony took place here at Gilgit-Baltistan Council Secretariat was attended by distinguished guests, including Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam, Coordinator Prime Minister Shabir Ahmad Usmani, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan, Secretary Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Waseem Ajmal Chaudhry, Joint Secretary Gilgit Baltistan Council Sudheer Khan Khattak, Chief Justice (R) Syed Arshad Hussain Shah Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit-Baltistan, Chairman PAC Gilgit Baltistan Iqbal Naseer, Chairman Standing Committee Gilgit Baltistan Ayub Shah, Muhammad Ali Member Gilgit Baltistan Council, Syed Shabi ul Hasnain Member Gilgit-Baltistan Council and Provincial Election Commissioner Abid Raza. Registrar of Supreme Appellate Court Gilgit Baltistan Aqil Hassan Chohan conducted the proceedings of oath taking ceremony. The Officers and Staff of the Supreme Appellate Court were also present on the occasion. After the ceremony, the Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Engr Amir Muqam, Coordinator to Prime Minister for Kashmir Affairs Shabir Ahmad Usmani, Chief Minister Gilgit Baltistan Haji Gulbar Khan felicitated the newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner of Gilgit Baltistan.—APP

WAPDA awards Rs. 21.534 bln contract

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Water and Power Development Authority (WAPDA) has awarded contract worth Rs. 21.534 billion for installation of telemetry system at 27 key points on Indus Basin Irrigation System (IBIS) for real-time discharge monitoring. The contract has been awarded to a Joint Venture (JV) comprising CDigital and HBCC along with Siemens as Sub-Contractor in the JV. As per the contract, the telemetry system, after the installation, will be commissioned in December 2026, said a press release issued on Wednesday. Chief Engineer and Project Director Indus Telemetry Project Waseem Ali and Chief Executive Officer CDigital, Muhammad Ahsan Bashir signed the agreement on behalf of WAPDA and the JV respectively. Member IRSA (Punjab), WAPDA's Member (Finance), Member (Water), Member (Power), General Manager (Hydro Resource Management) and representatives of 45 Engineering Division, the Consultants and the Contractors also attended the ceremony. It is important to note that the Ministry of Water Resources has entrusted WAPDA with the crucial task of implementing a Telemetry System on Indus Basin Irrigation System in order to address the issues of water distribution among the federating units. Approved PCI of Indus Telemetry Project amounts to Rs. 23.834 billion.—APP

IRSA releases 347,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 347,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 509,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1526.89 feet and was 128.89 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 307,500 cusecs and 180,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1202.15 feet, which was 154.15 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 44,600 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively.—APP

Silence of influential on IPPs proves involvement

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Wednesday that the silence of influential on the issue of IPPs is proof of their collusion in the conspiracy. He said the IPP project initiated in the 1990s bankrupted the country and destroyed the masses. Still, the politicians and bureaucrats never raised their voices against this plunder. He added that the attitude of politicians and top power bureaucracy reveals their priorities regarding the country and the nation. Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that now when matters

have gone out of control, a few politicians are starting to speak up. However, the major political parties are still silent spectators, indicating their lack of concern about the country and the masses. He said that some companies installing IPPs in Pakistan have installed IPPs of the same capacity in neighbouring countries and Arab countries whose tariffs are half that of Pakistan. Still, the matter was never investigated as it would expose the political elite. He said the honour of starting the IPPs belongs to the People's Party. Still, the other major parties of the country have also left no stone unturned in this regard. At this time, IPPs have become a significant threat to the country's integrity.

Pakistan has to make a capacity payment of 2091 billion rupees to IPPs for the current financial year. The estimated capacity payment for state-run nuclear plants is 465.7 billion rupees, the payment for hydropower plants is 446.4 billion rupees, and for imported coal power plants is 395.4 billion rupees, and 256 billion rupees will be paid to Thar coal power plants as capacity payment. Power plants run on furnace oil, wind, LNG, gas, bagasse, and solar power plants and pay billions of rupees. Shahid Rashid Butt said that despite not generating electricity, one power plant was paid one and a quarter billion rupees in three months despite not producing a unit of electricity. Similarly, another company received Rs

33 billion. In comparison, another company was paid around Rs 30 billion, generating only electricity for a short time. Additionally, another Punjab-based company received around Rs 10 billion from January to March, and a Sindh-based company received around Rs 930 million without generating any electricity. Another company was paid Rs 670 million, while another received Rs 590 million during these three months without electricity. Four power plants get 10 billion rupees monthly while the electricity supply is zero. The contracts of IPPs bind the government, but 80% of Pakistani IPP owners should understand that they have earned trillions of rupees with the help of these questionable contracts.

PIDE organized memorial of Prof. Nawab Haider Naqvi

Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi (July 11, 1935 – July 7, 2024) was a renowned Pakistani economist and scholar, known for his extensive contributions to economic theory and policy. Born in Meerut, British India, he migrated to Karachi, Pakistan in 1950

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: A heartfelt memorial service was held today at the Islamabad Club to honor the life and legacy of Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi, a distinguished economist, prolific author, and revered academician. The event, organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE), brought together family, friends, colleagues, and former students to pay tribute to his immense contributions to the field of economics and his dedication to education.

Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi (July 11, 1935 – July 7, 2024) was a renowned Pakistani economist and scholar,

known for his extensive contributions to economic theory and policy. Born in Meerut, British India, he migrated to Karachi, Pakistan in 1950. Dr. Naqvi earned his master's degree from Yale University in 1961 and his doctorate from Princeton University in 1966, followed by post-doctoral research at Harvard University. Dr. Naqvi served as the director of PIDE from 1979 to 1995. His career also included roles as a senior economic advisor for the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and as a Distinguished National Professor and Director General at the Federal Urdu University, Islamabad. He held various prestigious positions throughout his career, including stints at international

organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. His scholarly work has left an indelible mark on economic theory and policy in Pakistan and beyond. During his tenure at PIDE, Prof. Naqvi revitalized the institute's research activities, elevating its profile both nationally and internationally. He succeeded Mr. M. L. Qureshi in 1979 and led the institute until 1995, making his tenure the longest in PIDE's history. Under his leadership, the Pakistan Development Review (PDR) gained a new face and enriched content with contributions from institute staff and reputed scholars globally. Prof. Naqvi also founded the Pakistan Society of Development Economists (PSDE) in 1981 and served as the Na-

tional Professor of Economics from 1996 to 2004. Prof. Naqvi's accolades include the Sitara-e-Intiaz in Economics (1991), ECO Award (1992), Lifetime Academic Achievement Award (2009), and the title of Distinguished Professor (2005). His work on trade, investment, and economic policy has been widely recognized and respected, earning him accolades and respect from peers around the world. The memorial service commenced with a recitation from the Holy Quran and Fateha for the departed soul, followed by a series of speeches that highlighted Dr. Naqvi's remarkable achievements and the profound impact he had on the lives of those who knew

him. Dr. Mahmood Khalid, Senior Research Economist at PIDE, opened the event by highlighting key achievements of Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi. Eminent speakers included Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Principal and Dean at NUST School of Social Sciences & Humanities, Prof. Asghar Qadir H.S.I, Fellow Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Distinguished National Professor, Dr. Nadeem Burney, Economic Public Policy Program of the Techno-Economics Division at KISR, Ex-Chief of research PIDE, Dr. Athar Maqsood, Professor NUST, Dr. Eatzaz Ahmed, Ex-Professor QAU and Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE.



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The view on Venezuela's elections

EVEN before Venezuelans went to the polls on Sunday, it was entirely predictable that Nicolás Maduro would declare victory and that the opposition would call the election a sham, as before. So it came to pass. With most of the vote counted, the government-controlled electoral authority said that the incumbent president had taken 51% of votes while his rival, the former diplomat Edmundo González Urrutia, had won 44%. The opposition say that they have voting tallies proving otherwise, and that Mr González is president-elect. "The Venezuelans and the entire world know what happened," he said. Two things have changed. The first is that there has been a widespread rejection of Mr Maduro's disastrous reign, even in impoverished areas that were previously strongholds of the Chavismo movement he inherited. Their residents have had enough of the economic and humanitarian catastrophe that has left an estimated 19 million people without adequate healthcare and nutrition, and no longer buy his explanation that it's all the fault of others. US sanctions have exacerbated the crisis, but his government is corrupt and incompetent as well as brutal. Mr Maduro may blame the extreme right for the protests and clashes now seen on the streets, but he knows that he's lost supporters on whom he once counted. The second striking shift is that while Russia, Cuba, China and other old friends were quick to congratulate Mr Maduro, several leftist governments in the region have struck a different note. Though Brazil has been cautious in public remarks, it is reportedly negotiating a joint statement with Mexico and Colombia, demanding detailed voting records from each area. The gulf between polls during the race and the declared result is too implausibly vast to ignore. Many voters appeared motivated less by an enthusiastic embrace of the opposition than an uncompromising rejection of Mr Maduro. The driving force in the opposition bloc, María Corina Machado – who backed Mr González after she was banned from running – calls herself a centrist liberal, but is a conservative who has backed privatisation of state-owned companies, promised to "bury socialism forever" and supported foreign intervention to overthrow Mr Maduro. She called the landslide that she claims her side won "irreversible". Yet mass protests and international sympathy were not enough to bring the opposition to victory in the past. Juan Guaidó declared himself president in 2019, and was swiftly recognised by the US and around 50 other countries – but failed to unseat Mr Maduro, despite the efforts of the Trump administration. Many in Latin America have good reason to be cautious about foreign intervention. Almost 8 million Venezuelans have voted with their feet since Mr Maduro was narrowly elected in 2013, and one poll suggested that as many as a third of Venezuelans might consider leaving if he remained in power. That is worrying others in the region and the US, facing its own election. But it is the interests and rights of Venezuelans that must be the priority. Mr Maduro warned of "a bloodbath ... a fratricidal civil war" if his party did not triumph. For now at least, he appears to have locked in the support of security forces. His human rights record is grim. The fear is that he will double down on his authoritarian repression.

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The view on Labour's housing proposals

THE disastrous, unjust consequences of Britain's dysfunctional housing market, which has been decades in the making, are all too familiar. Rampant house-price inflation and nimbysism have placed the property ladder beyond the reach of millions of young people. Private rents have soared, eroding living standards and fuelling homelessness. Misconceived right-to-buy schemes have driven up demand but not supply. The stock of social housing has scandalously diminished at a rate that cash-strapped local authorities cannot keep up with. Repeatedly, governments have pledged to address a shortage of homes now estimated at 4m. Repeatedly, they have miserably failed to do so. Announcing a draft new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to the Commons, Angela Rayner, the deputy prime minister and secretary of state for housing, described this dismal state of affairs as "the most acute housing crisis in living history". To address it, Labour has pledged to build 370,000 homes a year during the course of the next parliament – an exponential improvement on the record of the last one. Amid industry scepticism that this can be done so quickly, the fast-track planning consultation Ms Rayner launched on Tuesday was a spiky declaration of intent. The direction of travel she outlined has much to recommend it. The restoration of mandatory local housebuilding targets – cravenly removed by Rishi Sunak as he attempted to placate a nimby-led backbench rebellion – is the welcome centrepiece to Labour's plan. History has shown that without such intervention, necessary building does not get done. Two-thirds of local councils do not currently have an up-to-date plan addressing the need for new homes, and too many have shown themselves resistant to coming up with one. A national mission, which is how fixing the housing crisis should be viewed, requires a nationwide response. There will be trouble ahead, as areas object to what Ms Rayner acknowledged will be in some cases "surprising" targets. But the government is right to declare itself ready for the battles to come, which will be one of the political dividing lines of this parliament. In other respects, the plans also hit the right notes. The move to redesignate areas of wasteland on the edge of towns as "grey" rather than green belt, for example, is a smart way to address a perennial problem. Defending pastoral England from urban sprawl is one thing; protecting disused car parks and former petrol stations quite another. In other areas, Labour will need to invest more, and go further, if its ambitious targets are to be met. From equipping councils with a sufficient number of planners, to ensuring a supply of skilled construction workers, restoring hollowed-out capacity after the years of neglect will be a colossal challenge. Most crucially, a heavy reliance on profit-hungry private developers raises questions about how Ms Rayner's ambitions to restore decent levels of affordable and social housing will be achieved. Properly funded local government, empowered as well as obliged, will be needed if homes that the less well-off can afford to live in are to be built in sufficient quantity.



Haniyeh Killed in Iran: What Next?

Qamar Bashir



The timing of targeting Iran coincides with the inauguration of the new president, who succeeded former President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter accident – an incident that some conspiracy theories suggest was orchestrated by Israel to avenge missile and drone attacks on Israel. Analysts believe this strategic timing aims to provoke Iran into attacking Israel and the USA, thereby providing a pretext for a robust military response. The prime objectives of such an attack would be to neutralize Iran's nuclear enrichment capabilities, diminish the strength of its armed forces and the elite Revolutionary...

THE martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, along with the earlier loss of his sons, nephews, and niece, is profoundly sad, worrisome, abhorrent, and unforgivable. The entire Muslim world and all those with any sense of humanity globally have condemned this horrendous attack and are mourning the heartless killing of Ismail Haniyeh, a prominent leader of the Gaza Strip who was waging a relentless struggle against Israeli occupation on both political and military fronts. However, Iran and the rest of the Muslim world should not let their emotions drive them to impulsive decisions and actions. It is crucial to avoid giving any pretext to Israel, the USA, or the Western world to justify the devastation seen in Afghanistan. Our memories remain vivid when George Bush Jr. issued an ultimatum to the Taliban in Afghanistan to hand over Osama Bin Laden to the USA, who was accused of masterminding the 9/11 attacks and other high-profile assaults on American interests globally. The Taliban, compelled by their tradition of hospitality and their readiness to sacrifice their lives to protect a guest who had sought refuge with them, refused. This defiance enraged the USA and its allies, leading to a devastating attack on Afghanistan, the wounds of which remain fresh and painful. Now they have forced Iran to fall into a similar position expecting similar action and similar reaction. It is widely speculated that the CIA of the USA, MI-5 of the UK, and Mossad of Israel have chosen the timing, event, and place to eliminate their sworn enemy with great intelligence. For the USA, Israel, and the rest of the Western world, Iran is considered an evil country governed by an evil regime. They are extremely wary of Iran's pursuit of nuclear enrichment, believing that Iran has achieved weapons-grade uranium. Consequently, making an atomic bomb would be a relatively straightforward task for Iran. Moreover, Iran's national pride, the religious revolution that has persisted since 1979, and its support and influence over various militant factions have solidified its position as a formidable adversary to the USA, the West, and particularly Israel. Iran's leverage extends to Hezbollah in Lebanon; in Iraq, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), including groups like Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl

al-Haq, and the Badr Organization; in Syria, Liwa Fatemiyoun and Liwa Zainebiyoun; in Yemen, the Houthis movement (Ansar Allah); and in Palestine, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Additionally, in Bahrain, Iran supports various small militant groups involved in anti-government activities. This extensive network of influence and support has positioned Iran as the number one enemy to the USA, the West, and especially Israel, which views Iran's backing of these groups as a direct threat to its survival. The timing of targeting Iran coincides with the inauguration of the new president, who succeeded former President Ebrahim Raisi, who died in a helicopter accident – an incident that some conspiracy theories suggest was orchestrated by Israel to avenge missile and drone attacks on Israel. Analysts believe this strategic timing aims to provoke Iran into attacking Israel and the USA, thereby providing a pretext for a robust military response. The prime objectives of such an attack would be to neutralize Iran's nuclear enrichment capabilities, diminish the strength of its armed forces and the elite Revolutionary Guard, and cripple its economy to curtail its ability to finance and supply weapons to its proxies across the Middle East. This theory resonates well with the Israel's ruthless military onslaught on the Palestinians in Gaza which did not stop even after protests in all parts of the world against the killing of over 70,000 innocent Palestinians including children, women, elderly and vulnerable groups with the declared objectives to eliminate Hamas completely from Gaza Strip no matter what ever is the cost. This theory also resonates well with Israel's declared intention to permanently resolve the Hezbollah prowess and prowess of Houthis in Yemen and other Iranian proxies elsewhere. They also know that without reducing the military and economic might of Iran, no matter how seriously they inflict damage to these proxies they will re-emerge even stronger and better. Therefore, in all probability this attack was deliberately executed in Iran to infuriate Iran's leadership and bait them to launch an attack on Israeli and US interests. Let us build two hypothetical scenarios one in which Iran has attacked Israel and the US and second it seeks justice through diplomatic means.

If Iran decides to retaliate against Israel and the USA following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the immediate consequences would likely involve extensive military strikes by Israel and the USA targeting Iranian nuclear facilities, military bases, and infrastructure. This would lead to significant casualties and destruction within Iran, further crippling its economy and military capabilities. The conflict would escalate rapidly, potentially drawing in regional allies and causing widespread instability. The global economy would also be impacted, with oil prices soaring due to instability in the Persian Gulf. Conversely, if Iran opts for a diplomatic resolution through the United Nations, it would seek international condemnation of the attack and justice for the violation of its sovereignty. This approach would garner support from several countries, leading to a formal UN inquiry and increased international attention. Diplomatic efforts might result in the easing of some sanctions on Iran, stabilizing its economy and enhancing domestic stability. By choosing diplomacy over conflict, Iran would maintain its regional influence through non-military means and improve its international standing. This path would prevent further destruction and loss of life, fostering gradual improvements in regional stability and potential economic recovery for Iran. In this precarious situation where Pakistan could be directly affected, it is imperative for the country to resort to active and proactive diplomacy, leveraging its brotherly relations with Iran and its Non-NATO ally status with the USA. Pakistan should play a proactive yet balanced role in mediating tensions between Iran, Israel, and the USA by leveraging diplomatic channels and international platforms. With the support of like-minded countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and utilizing forums like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other regional and international bodies, Pakistan can work to calm heightened emotions and help sanity prevail. This approach, if successful, will save the region from imminent turmoil and instability, elevate Pakistan's status as a peace-pursuing nation, and safeguard its national interests.

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How the world can end the Rohingya crisis

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

Sanctions are a crucial tool to enforce accountability. The West has imposed limited sanctions on Myanmar's military, but broader economic sanctions are necessary. The strategic use of sanctions can compel Myanmar to address human rights abuses and the Rohingya crisis. Companies investing in Myanmar should also be held accountable for complicity in these crimes. Economic pressure, if correctly applied, can incentivize Myanmar to change its policies. Another possible approach that needs further exploration is decoupling...

AS the Rohingya crisis drags on, Bangladesh faces new challenges, with more refugees seeking shelter from the ongoing civil war pouring over its border. The Rohingya in camps in Bangladesh are eager to return home and the International Court of Justice's verdict on July 22, 2022, rejecting Myanmar's preliminary objections, paves the way for eventual accountability for the most persecuted minority in the world. However, critics argue that any repatriation plan must uphold the principle of non-refoulement. Several pathways for Rohingya repatriation have emerged, involving various national and international stakeholders. The New Lines Institute last month published a groundbreaking report looking at alternative pathways to possible Rohingya repatriation. The most obvious approach is for Bangladesh to work bilaterally with Myanmar, as it has tried to do since the crisis began. This approach included the signing of a memorandum of arrangement in 2017 that stipulated that the return of displaced persons would begin soon and be completed in a "time-bound manner." However, this approach has faced three major issues: the signing of an "arrangement" instead of a legally binding agreement, a lack of a clear timeline and a vague process for repatriation. The flexibility allowed Myanmar to delay the process. Moreover, during these bilateral meetings, a crucial issue seems to have been ignored: Myanmar's potential genocide and crimes against humanity. Despite clear evidence of mass atrocities, Bangladesh's diplomatic gestures, such as gifting ambulances to Myanmar, suggested a softer stance. This subdued approach, despite the moral high ground, has limited progress in repatriation efforts. The involvement of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been critical. The 2017 arrangement included provisions for the UNHCR and other UN agencies to assist in the return and resettlement of the Rohingya. However, significant progress has not been made and the focus of these agencies has shifted more toward Bangladesh than Myanmar. One critical area has been education. The UN has

urged Bangladesh to provide education to Rohingya refugees, but the debate centers on the language of instruction. Balancing the need for communication in the host community's language and equipping refugees with skills for their future in Myanmar is essential. A two-fold policy of achieving 100 percent literacy and teaching English could benefit both the Rohingya and the local population. In 2019, Bangladesh, Myanmar and China formed a tripartite joint working mechanism for Rohingya repatriation. Several meetings have taken place, with the latest in Kunming in April 2023, discussing a pilot project for repatriation. China's interest in resolving the crisis stems from its investments in both countries and a desire to offset Western influences in Myanmar. China's significant investments in Bangladesh and Myanmar drive its quest for stability. Furthermore, resolving the Rohingya crisis could enhance Beijing's regional and global status. Despite these interests, the tripartite approach has yet to achieve substantial progress. The pilot project plans to repatriate more than 1,000 Rohingya refugees, but mixed reactions from Rohingya representatives and the lack of UNHCR involvement pose challenges. The West has imposed limited sanctions on Myanmar's military, but broader economic sanctions are necessary. In the past five years, significant strides have been made in addressing accountability for crimes committed against Rohingyas. The International Court of Justice has made two provisional rulings acknowledging the genocide by the Myanmar military and recognizing the Rohingya identity. This was a major legal victory for the Rohingya. The court's hearings on the Rohingya genocide took place in December 2019, with Gambia bringing the charges against Myanmar. By January 2020, the court had granted the provisional measures requested by Gambia. The ruling was unanimous, which Myanmar did not anticipate. The court's identification of the group as "Rohingyas" was also critical, countering Myanmar's efforts to deny their identity. This recognition challenges Myanmar's long-standing

policy of disenfranchising and dehumanizing the Rohingya people, as enshrined in its 2008 constitution, which ties representation to race, thus excluding them. Myanmar's labeling of the Rohingya as "Bengalis" or "illegal migrants" has become untenable due to growing international scrutiny and legal pressure. The International Criminal Court and the US have recognized the genocide, further pressuring Myanmar. Sanctions are a crucial tool to enforce accountability. The West has imposed limited sanctions on Myanmar's military, but broader economic sanctions are necessary. The strategic use of sanctions can compel Myanmar to address human rights abuses and the Rohingya crisis. Companies investing in Myanmar should also be held accountable for complicity in these crimes. Economic pressure, if correctly applied, can incentivize Myanmar to change its policies. Another possible approach that needs further exploration is decoupling, a policy of separating specific activities from others. Japan, for example, co-sponsored a UN resolution favoring the Rohingya, signaling a shift in its strategic interests. Recognizing the Rohingya identity and inviting their delegations can pressure Myanmar to acknowledge and address the crisis. Economic incentives could also play a role. A so-called mini-Marshall Plan for the Arakan region could provide the Myanmar military with a legal and profitable alternative to the drug trade, fostering stability and encouraging Rohingya repatriation. The potential for militancy remains a significant concern. The 2017 attacks by the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army and the subsequent military crackdown highlight the volatile situation. The Rohingya youth, particularly those in refugee camps, are at risk of being drawn into militancy if the crisis remains unresolved. These pathways resemble an octopus, with each arm representing a different approach to resolving the Rohingya crisis. While some pathways show more promise, it is premature to determine which will have the most lasting impact. The complexity and sensitivity of the situation require a patient and multifaceted approach.

– Sourced by Arab News

Briefs

UNSC
detailed
report
spotlights...

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conducting more lethal attacks under the banner of Tehrike Jihad Pakistan (TJP). Therefore, TTP could transform into an umbrella organization for other terrorist groups," the report said. ISIL-K or Da'esh, it said, remains the most serious threat, projecting terror beyond Afghanistan, while Al-Qaeda exercises strategic patience, prioritizing its relationship with the Taliban. "Some Member States estimate that ISIL-K has increased from 4,000 to 6,000 fighters, despite the loss of territory and attrition among leadership, while others assess its strength remaining at between 2,000 and 3,500 fighters," the report said, adding it was difficult to estimate an accurate figure. "ISIL-K has relocated some personnel away from its core area of Kunar and Nangarhar, with factions migrating to Badakhshan, Herat and Nimroz Provinces, adopting an asymmetric warfare strategy better suited to local conditions and to resist Taliban pressure," it said, adding, "The group aspires to control Afghan territory from which to infiltrate neighbouring countries, expanding the terrorist threat to Central Asia, the Russian Federation and Iran." At the same time, the report said that ISIL-K perceives the Taliban as an ideological enemy and opposes the notion of a Pashtun-centric Taliban governance. "The group's narrative aims to reduce the Taliban's credibility among the Afghan population and trigger sectarian fault lines, promoting the idea that the Taliban has deviated from Islamic principles, while portraying itself as advancing the wider Khorasan." As regards Al-Qaeda, its status, location, and strength in Afghanistan have not changed, remaining dormant, according to the report, noting that this group remains strictly hierarchical.

Bill to
'circumvent'
'reserved...'

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filed a declaration with the returning officer about their affiliation with a particular political party before seeking the allotment of a poll symbol. Similarly, it also said that an independent candidate shall not be considered a candidate of any political party if, at a later stage, they filed a statement to that effect. The amendments to sections 66 and 104 also included a declaration that the proposed amendments would take precedence over court orders, including the Supreme Court. Some political observers are seeing the controversial bill as a move to frustrate the Supreme Court judgement on July 12, which had declared the PTI eligible for reserved seats in the National Assembly and provincial assemblies and also confirmed its status as a parliamentary party. The National Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs met today to discuss the bill and approved it by a vote of eight against four with one abstention from the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl.

CTD takes
Rauf Hasan
in custody...

FROM PAGE 01
The move comes after a district and sessions court in the federal capital sent the PTI media head, along with other suspects, on a 14-day judicial remand on charges of pulling the strings of an anti-state social media propaganda network. On July 22, a police contingent along with officials of the country's Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) stormed the party secretariat in Islamabad and detained Hasan along with the party's acting chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, who was later released. It was later confirmed that Ahmad Waqas Janjua, the party's coordinator for international media coverage, was also among the detained.

Babar improves Test rankings
as Root becomes No. 1 batter

Root surpassed New Zealand's Kane Williamson, reclaiming the No.1 spot he last held a year ago

LONDON: England's Joe Root regained his position as the top-ranked batter in the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings following an impressive series against the West Indies. With 291 runs across three matches, including a crucial 87 in the final Test in Birmingham, Root surpassed New Zealand's Kane Williamson, reclaiming the No.1 spot he last held a year ago. Meanwhile, Pakistan's Babar Azam and New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell are now levelled at third with 768 points, while Australia's Steve Smith and India's Rohit Sharma hold the fifth and sixth positions respectively. England's Harry Brook has fallen four places to seventh due to a less impactful series.

In the Test bowler rankings, England captain Ben Stokes has climbed four spots to 30th, thanks to his role as an all-rounder. Teammates Mark Wood and Gus Atkinson have also seen improvements, moving to 20th and



46th respectively, reflecting their strong bowling performances. For Test all-rounders, Stokes has advanced to sixth, and Chris Woakes has moved up to ninth. Ravindra Jadeja remains the top-ranked all-rounder with a significant lead. In T20I batting rankings, Yasir Hameed and Shubman Gill have made notable advances, with Jasprit Bumrah moving up to fourth and Gill achieving a career-high 21st place. This has pushed Babar Azam and Mohammad Rizwan down to fifth and sixth, respectively. On the T20I bowler rankings, Ravi Bishnoi has re-entered the top 10 after an eight-place jump. Arshdeep Singh, Washington Sundar, and Mohammed Siraj have also seen improvements, while Matheesha Pathirana of Sri Lanka has risen to 77th place. In the T20I all-rounder rankings, Australia's Marcus Stoinis has reclaimed the No.1 position, overtaking Wanindu Hasaranga, who has dropped to joint third. - Agencies

China's top table tennis star
suffers shock loss in Olympics

China's Wang Chuqin suffered devastating defeat a day after having his bat broken at the Paris Olympics

PARIS: Just a day after having his bat broken, China's table tennis world number one star Wang Chuqin suffered a shock defeat in the men's Olympic singles on Wednesday. Wang won mixed doubles gold on Tuesday in Paris but his elation quickly turned into anger after a photographer accidentally snapped his bat while jostling to take a picture. Less than 24 hours later, the 24-year-old table tennis star went out in the round of 32 of the singles after a 4-2 defeat to Truls Moregard of Sweden. The 26th-ranked Moregard sank to the floor in disbelief and put his hands on his head, before doing a tour of the crowd, who rose in

appreciation after roaring on the underdog throughout. It capped a mixed couple of days for Wang. With his playing partner Sun Yingsha they beat North Korea in the mixed doubles final, but Wang admitted he "lost control of my emotions a little" after his bat was broken. A familiar bat and its grip can be of vital importance to table tennis players. Wang though refused to blame his replacement bat for his stunning defeat to the unheralded Moregard, 22. "It didn't really have an influence on the match," he told AFP. "It was just that my opponent played really, really well." Wang will next compete in the men's team event.

The triumphant Moregard said he "had a feeling I could beat him today", having never done so before in eight previous attempts. "I've almost never taken a set against Wang so it's crazy to win here at the Olympics," the Swede, into the last 16 for the first time, said. Moregard, who is coached by his older brother Malte, said Wang was not at his best - but said it had nothing to do with the Chinese player's bat. "I think you have 10 rackets at least and 500 rubbers here, so it doesn't matter if you lose your bat. I mean, I don't know which one is my first or third, so it doesn't matter," he said. - Agencies

Djokovic beats
Koeper to reach
Olympics quarter

PARIS: Novak Djokovic found his rhythm in the punishing heat to beat Germany's Dominik Koepfer and reach the quarter-finals of the Paris Olympics on Wednesday, staying on track for an elusive gold. The Serbian top seed, who crushed Rafael Nadal in the previous round, came through 7-5, 6-3 and will face world number 11 Stefanos Tsitsipas in the last eight. "I'm soaking wet, honestly. It's a very, very humid day as it was yesterday. I just hope it rains so it cools down the temperature a bit and the air. "But it is what it is. You have to kind of accept and embrace the conditions and it's the same for you and your opponents so you have to try to make the best out of it." The 24-time Grand Slam champion broke Koepfer early but the German world number 70 returned the favor in the next game to get back on serve. Djokovic, a three-time French Open champion on the clay courts at Roland Garros, took the first set 7-5 when Koepfer went long to concede another break. As the sun beat down on Court Philippe Chatrier, Djokovic found his groove, surging into a 3-0 lead to take a grip on the second set, sealing the win with a minimum of fuss. - Agencies

PBF expressed
serious concern over
baseless reports

AFZAL JAVED

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Boxing Federation (PBF) has strongly condemned recent reports that are contrary to the facts and baseless. The PBF clarified that national boxer Zohaib Rasheed traveled abroad on a blue passport. In a statement, Pakistan Boxing Federation Secretary General Col (ret'd) Nasir Tung said that Zohaib Rasheed has represented Pakistan in five international competitions, won a medal at an Asian event, and was selected for the Olympic Games qualifying round. Tung explained that No Objection Certificate (NOC) was issued to Zohaib Rasheed by his department to participate in the Olympic qualifying round. Rasheed traveled on a blue passport but, after facing financial difficulties, chose not to return home immediately after the event. This decision was personal which he already admitted in the media. PBF secretary general said that the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) did not provide any funding for the training or participation of national boxers in the Olympic qualifying round. He questioned why the PSB did not provide adequate support to athletes who represent the country. The PBF dismissed the reports of a ban by the IPC Ministry as untrue, baseless, and absurd. Meanwhile, The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has formed a new Scrutiny Committee to investigate the affairs of the Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) and evaluate the affiliated basketball clubs. Initially, Mahfooz-Haq was appointed as the chairman of the committee. However, due to personal reasons, he excused himself from the position. Consequently, the PBBF reconstituted the committee, appointing Muhammad Ashfaq as the new chairman. The committee also includes Islam Khan Niazi and Wasim ur Rehman as members. The newly formed committee has been tasked with thoroughly scrutinizing the operations and governance of the KBBA.

Pak U19
to play tri-
series with
Afghanistan,
UAE

DNA

LAHORE: The Pakistan U19 cricket team will play a 50-over tri-series with Afghanistan and the United Arab Emirates from 13 to 26 November, confirmed the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Wednesday. The venue of the tri-series is yet to be confirmed but Pakistan will face the UAE in the first match of the series as the tournament will be played on a double-league format and the top two sides will qualify for the final. The series will be played in preparation for the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup 2024, which is scheduled for later this year. The goal of the tri-series is to provide enough opportunity for the players to prepare themselves for the Asian event. Before the tri-series, the PCB will organize a National U19 Cup (50-over) and Championship (three-day) in October which will provide a great platform for the players to perform.

Afghanistan to play SA in
ODI series for first time

CAPE TOWN: Afghanistan is set to host South Africa for a three-match ODI series in Sharjah this September. This series, confirmed via a joint media release from the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) and Cricket South Africa (CSA) on July 31, will be the first bilateral series between the two nations and will serve as a preparation for the 2025 Champions Trophy. The matches are scheduled for September 18, 20, and 22, all to be played at the Sharjah International Cricket Stadium. This historic series comes after productive negotiations between the ACB and CSA, despite not being part of the initial Future Tours Programme (FTP). ACB Chairman Mirwais Ashraf expressed his enthusiasm for the upcoming series. "These fixtures were not initially part of our FTP. Still, based on our productive negotiations with our counterparts at Cricket South Africa, we concluded that we will host the Proteas for an ODI series in September. They are an excellent team, and we are eagerly looking forward to hosting them and playing them regularly in the future," Ashraf stated. This will be only the third time Afghanistan and South Africa face off in ODIs, having previously met during the World Cups in 2019 and 2023. Additionally, the two teams recently played against each other in the semifinals of the 2024 T20 World Cup in Trinidad, where South Africa emerged victorious with a nine-wicket win. CSA Chairman Lawson Naidoo also shared his excitement about the series. "We are excited to embark on this historic ODI series with Afghanistan, who have become

a very competitive all-round team as evidenced by their recent performances in the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 and most recently at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. This is a significant milestone in our cricketing relations, and we look forward to a competitive and entertaining series," Naidoo said. Both teams have shown impressive form in recent international tournaments, making this series a highly anticipated event. It will not only be an opportunity for both teams to fine-tune their squads ahead of the Champions Trophy but also to strengthen their cricketing ties. Interestingly, Afghanistan and South Africa are also grouped together in the Pakistan Cricket Board's draft schedule for the 2025 Champions Trophy. The tournament is set to take place in Pakistan, with Group A featuring India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and New Zealand, and Group B comprising Australia, England, South Africa, and Afghanistan. The series in Sharjah is expected to draw significant attention as both teams aim to build momentum and assess their strengths ahead of the Champions Trophy. With Afghanistan's rise in international cricket and South Africa's established reputation, this series promises to be a thrilling encounter. In conclusion, the upcoming ODI series between Afghanistan and South Africa marks a historic moment in cricketing relations between the two nations. It serves as a vital preparation for the 2025 Champions Trophy and is set to be an exciting and competitive series in the sweltering Sharjah heat. - Agencies

Govt
determined
to promote
AI platform

FROM PAGE 01

Initiative, the whole system was being digitised and expressed the hope that the digitisation of Federal Board of Revenue would prove to be a milestone towards economic digitisation and automation. During the briefing, it was informed that consultation with all stakeholders on the draft of Personal Data Protection Bill was in progress. Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the services of Asia Internet Coalition in promoting IT and Internet infrastructure in the Asia Pacific Region. The delegation members apprised the prime minister of the Coalition's services in Pakistan's IT sector. Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, IT expert Tania Aidrus and relevant senior officers attended the meeting. Meanwhile the prime minister has approved a cut in petrol prices. The Petrol price has been reduced by Rs 6 per liter while the diesel price is slashed by Rs 10 per liter.

JI vows
to continue
sit-in

FROM PAGE 01

The head of the JI's negotiation team warned that his party would stop negotiations with the government if it showed a non-serious attitude towards the party's demands including reviewing contracts with the independent power producers (IPPs) blamed for bloated power bills.

PTCL
internet
Services...

FROM PAGE 01

It stated that metrics show national connectivity at 24% of ordinary levels, corroborating user reports of a "widespread outage". The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) also confirmed the disruption in internet services in the country.

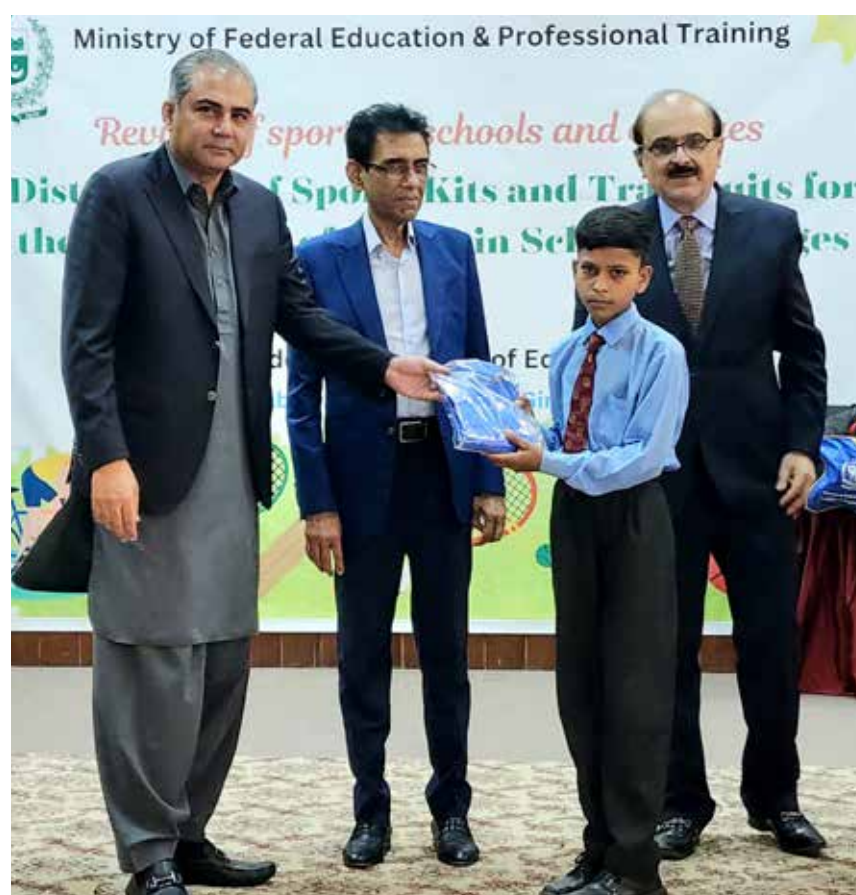
Mbappe
buys French
club Caen

PARIS: Real Madrid's new player and the captain of the France national team Kylian Mbappe bought Ligue 2 club Caen as he has taken over as majority shareholder, the 25-year-old's company Interconnected Ventures announced in a statement on Wednesday. Mbappe, 25, was recently presented as a Real Madrid player at a jam-packed Santiago Bernabeu where he was welcomed by 80,000 fans. As a youngster, Mbappe came close to signing for Caen but he has now bought 80 percent shares of the club through Coalition Capital, the investment entity of Interconnected Ventures, replacing US investment fund Oaktree as majority shareholder. While no official figure has been released, reports from the French media put the acquisition fee at 15-20 million euros (\$16-21.6 million). "This transaction marks a significant step in the club's strategic development and reinforces its natural ambition to remain one of the most successful clubs in French football," the club said in a statement. "This acquisition will provide Caen with additional strategic resources to strengthen its sporting policy, modernise its infrastructure and develop innovative projects." Mbappe's close friend Ziad Hammoud will take over as chairman of the club. "We are determined to create an environment where young talent can flourish and where the club can defend its identity with strength and ambition," Hammoud said in the press release. Mbappe became one of the youngest owners of a professional club. He was courted by Caen at the age of 13 before he joined AS Monaco, where he announced himself to the world and was eventually signed by Paris Saint-Germain. "You'd have to think that the time he spent at Caen in his youth left its mark on him! How proud we are to see a champion like @KMbappe investing in @SMCaen," the mayor of Caen Aristide Olivier posted on social media. - Agencies

Sports kits distribution ceremony held at IMCG F-6/2

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training organised "Sports Kits and Track Suits" distribution ceremony here at Islamabad Model College for Girls, F/6-2. The ceremony was attended by the Minister for Federal Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui as chief guest, while Chairman PCB and Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi as guest of honour. Secretary of Federal Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, and a large number of students and teachers were also present on the occasion. This initiative aims to promote physical education and encourage students to engage in sports activities, fostering a healthy body and mind. Under the project, the students of primary schools to be given track suits to wear during sports activities, promoting unity and team spirit. "A healthy body is essential for a healthy mind." This initiative is a step towards nurturing well-rounded individuals who excel in both academics and physical activities. In his opening remarks, Secretary Federal Education Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, emphasized the need to establish such an Eco-system under which besides focusing children's education, their health would also be improved. He said that under the project, around 26 Gyms had been established in schools while 23 outdoor sports facilities had also been provided. Meanwhile, in his address, Interior



Minister Mohsin Naqvi lauded the efforts of the Federal Education Minister Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui for his commitment of providing quality education to students. He also commended the government's initiative of providing lunch to primary school children, termed it a historical project. He reiterated his resolve to fully support the Ministry of Federal Education for promoting healthy activities, and restructuring of ICT educational institutions, adding this cooperation would also be continued in future. Maqbool Ahmad Siddiqui, speaking as chief guest said that after 18th amendment, the responsibility of education was transferred to the provinces. He said that several revolutionary steps were being taken in the education sector. He appreciated the efforts of teachers in ensuring the quality of education and supporting government initiatives. "We will secure the future of our country together" he added. On the occasion, Sports Kits were also distributed among the female students. It is pertinent to mention here that under the project as many as 20,000 sports kits and track suits would be distributed among the students of FDE Educational Institutions. Earlier, Interior Minister also visited newly established modern IT Lab in the college and appreciated the education ministry's efforts in this regard. He also asked about the ongoing IT Courses being taught in the college. The IT students briefed the Minister about the AI and other latest IT courses being taught to them.

Briefs

Kenya reports first mpox case

NAIROBI: Kenya has detected its first case of mpox, the health ministry said Wednesday, as the regional East African bloc urged caution in the face of an outbreak. The case of the viral infection was detected in a passenger at a border crossing in southern Kenya, the ministry said in a statement, adding that the person was traveling from neighboring Uganda to Rwanda through Kenya. It followed an announcement from Burundi on July 25 of three confirmed cases, while the Democratic Republic of Congo on July 20 reported more than 11,000 suspected cases including around 450 deaths. The outbreak triggered a warning on Monday from the eight-member East African Community (EAC), which called on countries "to educate their citizens on how to protect themselves and prevent the spread of mpox." The bloc would "convene a meeting of health experts to deliberate on the situation," it said, without giving a date. Mpox, formerly known as monkeypox, was first discovered in humans in 1970 in the DRC. It has since been mainly limited to certain West and Central African nations, with people mainly catching it from infected animals, such as when eating bushmeat. In May 2022, mpox infections surged worldwide, mostly affecting gay and bisexual men.—APP

Islamophobic group steers anger towards UK Muslims

LONDON: Violent clashes have broken out in Southport, a seaside town in North West England, as police confronted demonstrators protesting in the wake of a knife attack at a Taylor Swift-themed dance class the previous day that killed three girls. Police said the situation escalated on Tuesday around 7.45 pm local time when supporters of the English Defence League—a far-right, Islamophobic organisation—threw items at the Southport Mosque. The tension quickly turned to violence as bottles and wheelie bins were thrown at officers. Thick plumes of smoke could be seen close to where riot police and protesters were standing off, with videos circulating on social media appearing to show a police van on fire. An officer suffered a suspected broken nose amid the chaos, and additional patrols, including the dog section, were deployed to the area. A police van burns as and unruly crowd clashed with police "The people of Southport are reeling after the horror inflicted on them yesterday. They deserve our support and our respect," Prime Minister Keir Starmer said. "Those who have hijacked the vigil for the victims with violence and thuggery have insulted the community as it grieves. They will feel the full force of the law," Assistant Chief Constable Alex Doss described the situation as "sickening," particularly in light of the community's recent trauma following the tragic loss of three young lives in the stabbing incident.—APP

Russia fines Google, TikTok over banned content

MOSCOW: Russia fined Google and TikTok on Wednesday for failing to comply with an order from communications regulator Roskomnadzor over banned content, the Moscow courts' press service said. Moscow's Tagansky district court fined Google 5 million rubles (\$58,038) and TikTok 4 million rubles, the court said, for failing to identify content that is very similar to content they have previously been ordered to remove. Google and TikTok did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Russia has for several years ordered foreign technology platforms to remove content it deems illegal, issuing small, but persistent fines when it sees failures to comply.—APP

FM reiterates support for GB development

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed his appreciation for the well-thought-out proposals and underscored the importance of reforming GB's administrative and fiscal frameworks

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the meeting of the Committee on the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan. The meeting was attended by Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan Engr. Amir Muqam, Minister for Finance-GB Muhammad Ismail, Minister for Agriculture-GB Mohammad Anwar, Ex CM GB Hafiz Hafeez Ur Rehman, Chief Secretary GB, Member WAPDA and other officials from relevant Ministries.

The meeting commenced with a detailed briefing by the Chief Secretary, who outlined the issues faced by the GB government. Some of these issues were related to insufficient fund allocations and delays in PSDP projects which lead to employee related and other liabilities. The Chief Secretary advocated for solar power projects designed to address the region's growing energy needs. He also proposed initiatives



for the digitization of land records and the expansion of airports to enhance tourism potential. These proposals aim to modernize GB's infrastructure and capitalize on its natural

beauty, further contributing to the region's economic development. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed his appreciation for the well-thought-out proposals and underscored

the importance of reforming GB's administrative and fiscal frameworks. He emphasized that these reforms are vital for both the welfare of the local population and the stimulation of tourism. The

Finance Minister acknowledged the concerns of GB government and reiterated the Government's commitment to support GB's development for overall economic growth.

EU postpones talks with BD over deadly protests

WEB DESK

BRUSSELS: The European Union has said it postponed negotiations with Bangladesh on a new cooperation agreement after criticism of Dhaka's response to contain deadly protests that killed at least 150 people this month. The cooperation pact seeks to enhance trade, economic and developmental relations between Bangladesh and the EU, which is the main trading partner for the South Asian country, accounting for 20.7 percent of Bangladesh's trade in 2023. EU Foreign Policy Chief Josep

Borrell last week criticised a reported "shoot on sight policy" in Bangladesh, killings "perpetrated by the authorities" as well as killings of law enforcement officers, mass arrests and property damage. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's government has denied any live rounds were fired, but hospital sources said the injured as well as dead bore wounds from bullets and shotgun pellets. "In light of the prevailing situation, the first round of negotiations on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement envisaged for September has been postponed with

no later date fixed as yet," Nabila Massrari, the EU's foreign affairs spokesperson, said in an email to Reuters. Bangladesh, however, said the talks had been delayed to November as they clashed with the United Nations General Assembly session that begins on Sept. 10. The EU did not immediately comment on Bangladesh's response. "This delay was due to the UN General Assembly and was decided well before the recent violence," said Uttam Kumar Karmakar, an additional secretary at the Economic Relations Division of Bangladesh's finance ministry. Protests and violence

A delay in talks could affect EU support for Bangladesh when it grapples with economic struggles, soaring inflation, high youth unemployment, and dipping foreign exchange reserves. The high cost of living sparked deadly demonstrations ahead of January's national elections, in which Hasina won a fourth straight term in a vote boycotted by the main opposition party. The recent protests led by students were against quotas in government jobs and quickly spiralled into violence, killing 150 people, injuring thousands and shutting the country for days as curfew was imposed.

Sudan military chief survives in drone strike

Sudan's military said its top commander, Gen. Abdel-Fatih Burhan, survived a drone attack on a military graduation ceremony that killed five people in the country's east. The military said in a statement on Wednesday that the attack by two drones took place in Gebeit, a town in eastern Sudan, after the ceremony was concluded. A statement by the army said the attack took place at a graduation ceremony at the Gibet army base, about 100 km (62 miles) from the army's de facto capital, Port Sudan, in Sudan's Red Sea state, and that five people were killed. According to Lt. Col. Hassan Ibrahim, from the military spokesman's office, military chief Burhan, who was attending, was not hurt. Sudan has been torn by war for more than a year between the military and the paramilitary group, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF). With fighting in the capital, Khartoum, the military leadership largely operates out of eastern Sudan near the Red Sea Coast. The RSF has not claimed responsibility for the strike or comment on Tuesday's incident. The assassination attempt comes nearly a week after Sudan's paramilitary leader said that he plans to attend ceasefire talks in Switzerland next month arranged by the United States and Saudi Arabia. Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Daglo, head of the RSF fighting Sudan's army.—APP

Boeing posts \$1.4 billion loss in 2nd quarter

LONDON: U.S.-based global aerospace manufacturer Boeing saw a net loss of more than \$1.4 billion in the second quarter, and an annual revenue decline of almost 15%, according to a financial results statement released Wednesday. The defense contractor posted a net loss of nearly \$1.44 billion in the April - June period, which is a steep decline from a \$149 million loss in the same period last year. Net loss from operations widened to almost \$1.1 billion, from \$99 million, during that period. Total revenues came in at \$16.86 billion in the second quarter - a 14.6% decrease from \$19.75 billion in the same quarter of 2023. For the first half of this year, net loss totaled almost \$1.8 billion, while net loss from operations amounted to approximately \$1.18 billion. Revenues for the January - June period stood at \$33.43 billion, showing an 11.2% loss from \$37.67 billion in the first half of 2023. "Despite a challenging quarter, we are making substantial progress strengthening our quality management system and positioning our company for the future," said Dave Calhoun, Boeing president and CEO. "We are executing on our comprehensive safety and quality plan and have reached an agreement to acquire Spirit AeroSystems."—APP

Ukraine sees improving energy situation

KYIV: Ukrainian officials pointed to a much improved situation in the energy industry following waves of relentless Russian attacks that caused major power cuts across the country. Several regions have faced regular blackouts and forced energy rationing since Russia invaded in February 2022, as Moscow has targeted missile and drone strikes at the war-torn country's power stations. "Due to the early completion of repairs at two units of nuclear power plants and a drop in air temperature, the situation in the energy sector has stabilized," Prime Minister Denys Shmygal said Tuesday. State-run electricity operator Ukrenergo said July 30 was the first day of the month with no power cuts. "If there is no more shelling, it will be possible to manage with minimal restrictions or no power outages at all in the next three months," said Yuriy Boyko, an adviser to Shmygal who sits on Ukrenergo's supervisory board.—DNA

Macron supports Moroccan sovereignty over western Sahara

RABAT: In a message to His Majesty King Mohammed VI, French President Emmanuel Macron, officially informs the Sovereign that he "considers that the present and future of Western Sahara lie within the framework of Moroccan sovereignty". In this message, which coincides with the 25th anniversary of Throne Day, the French President reaffirms "the unwavering position of France on this issue of national security for the Kingdom" and asserts that his country "intends to act in alignment with this position both nationally and internationally." In this regard, President Emmanuel Macron stresses that "for France, autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the framework within which this issue shall be resolved. Our support for the autonomy plan proposed by Morocco in 2007 is clear and unwavering," adding that this plan "constitutes now the only basis to achieve a just, lasting, and negotiated political solution, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions." "Today, an increasingly broad international consensus is emerging," notes the French President regarding the autonomy plan under Moroccan sovereignty, emphasizing that "France fully plays its part in all relevant fora," particularly through its support for the efforts of the United Nations Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy. "It is time to move forward. I therefore encourage all parties to come together for a political settlement, which is within reach," President Macron states in his message. Commending Morocco's efforts to promote the economic and social development of the Moroccan Sahara, the French President committed to ensuring that "France will support Morocco in this endeavor for the benefit of the local populations."—DNA



ISLAMABAD: -Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam, Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan Per Albert Ilsaas giving certificate among the participants during a ceremony titled "Pakistan wildlife protection award 2024" at PNCA, in the Federal Capital.—ONLINE

India landslide toll hits 150 as rain hampers rescue work

Hundreds of rescue workers search through mud and debris for a second day after multiple landslides hit a hilly district in India's southern state

FOREIGN DESK

WAYANAD: Relentless downpours and howling winds hampered Wednesday's search for survivors of landslides that struck Indian tea plantations and killed at least 150 people, most believed to be laborers and their families. Days of torrential monsoon rains have battered the southern coastal state of Kerala, with blocked roads into the Wayanad district disaster area complicating relief efforts. With the only bridge connecting the worst-hit villages of Chooralmala and Mundakkai washed away, rescue teams were forced to cart bodies on stretchers out of the disaster zone using a makeshift zipline erected over raging flood waters. Several who managed to flee the initial

impact of the landslides found themselves caught in a nearby river that had burst its banks, volunteer rescuer Arun Dev told AFP at a hospital treating survivors. "Those who escaped were swept away along with houses, temples and schools," he said. Senior police officer M.R. Ajith Kumar told AFP that around 500 people had been rescued since successive landslides struck before dawn on Tuesday. "So far we have got more than 150 bodies," he said. "Still large areas are to be explored and searched to find out whether live people are there or not." Wayanad is famed for the tea estates that crisscross its hilly countryside, which rely on a large pool of laborers for planting and harvest. A number of brick-walled row homes built to accommodate seasonal workers were inundated by a

powerful wall of brown sludge as laborers and their families slept inside. Other buildings were caked with mud as the force of the landslide scattered cars, corrugated iron and other debris around the disaster site. "Catastrophic debris flows are extremely violent, so survival is very difficult," Hull University earth scientist Dave Petley told AFP. "This will have been exacerbated by the timing - in the early hours when people were asleep - and by flimsy structures that offered little protection." More than 3,000 people were sheltering in emergency relief camps around Wayanad district, the state government said. At least 572 millimeters (22.5 inches) of rain fell in the two days leading up to the landslides, according to state chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan. Kerala's disaster agency said

more rain and strong winds were forecast for Thursday with the likelihood of "damage to unsafe structures" elsewhere in the state. Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi, who until recently represented Wayanad in parliament, said he had been unable to go through with a planned visit to the disaster. "Due to incessant rains and adverse weather conditions we have been informed by authorities that we will not be able to land," he said in a post on social media platform X. "Our thoughts are with the people of Wayanad at this difficult time," he added. Monsoon rains across the region from June to September offer respite from the summer heat and are crucial to replenishing water supplies. They are vital for agriculture - and therefore the livelihoods of millions of farmers, and food

security for South Asia's nearly two billion people - but they also bring regular destruction. The number of fatal floods and landslides has increased in recent years, and experts say climate change is exacerbating the problem. "Events like landslides, they are part of these climate-change-triggered heavy rainfall disasters," Kartiki Negi of the Indian environment think tank Climate Trends told AFP. "India will continue to see more and more of these kinds of impacts in the future," she added. Damming, deforestation and development projects in India have also exacerbated the human toll. India's worst landslide in recent decades was in 1998, when rockfalls triggered by heavy monsoon rains killed at least 220 people and buried the tiny village of Malpa in the Himalayas.

Lobster dinner for King Charles cost France €450,000

PARIS: A lavish lobster dinner for King Charles III cost the French president's office 475,000 (€400,000), according to the country's audit office. President Emmanuel Macron pulled out all the stops for the monarch's visit in September - with guests being treated to blue lobster, crab and an assortment of cheeses. But in its annual report of the presidential accounts, the Cour des Comptes warned that higher spending on state receptions had contributed to leaving their budget 8.3m in the red. And it says the Elysée now needs to make "significant efforts... to restore and sustain the financial balance of the financial balance of the presidency". Guests at the star-studded banquet - which included actor Hugh Grant, football manager Arsene Wenger and Rolling Stone Mick Jagger - were treated to a menu of blue lobster and crab followed by Bresse poultry and mushroom gratin. There was also a course of cheeses - including French Comté and British Stichelton blue. And for dessert they were served a rose macaroon cookie, composed of rose petal cream, raspberries and lychees. The extravagant banquet at the Palace of Versailles was part of King Charles' three-day state visit to France, aimed at reinforcing a key alliance between the two countries.—Agencies

Briefs

LPG prices surge as OGRA issues new notification

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) has announced an increase in the price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) effective from August 1, as per a notification issued on Monday. According to the notification, the price of LPG has been raised by Rs 2.27 per kilogram, setting the new rate at Rs 236.99 per kilogram. Consequently, the price of an 11.8 kg domestic cylinder has also been increased by Rs 26.90, bringing the total cost to Rs 2,796.56. In comparison, the price of an 11.8 kg domestic cylinder in July was Rs 2,769.66. This recent hike reflects the ongoing adjustments in fuel prices that the regulatory body periodically undertakes. The revised pricing will impact consumers nationwide, particularly affecting households that rely on LPG for cooking and heating purposes. The change is expected to further strain household budgets amid rising inflation and economic challenges. The increase follows a trend of periodic adjustments in LPG prices by OGRA, aimed at aligning domestic prices with international market rates. However, the frequency and magnitude of these hikes often draw criticism from consumer rights groups and the general public, who cite the growing financial burden on average citizens.

Eurozone inflation unexpectedly rises in July

BRUSSELS: The eurozone's annual inflation rate unexpectedly edged up in July due to rising energy costs, official data showed on Wednesday, leaving it still uncertain if the European Central Bank will cut interest rates in September. Consumer prices in the single currency area rose 2.6 percent in July, faster than June's 2.5-percent rate, the EU's statistics agency said. Economists surveyed by FactSet had predicted that the inflation rate would ease to 2.4 percent in July. The data proves inflation remains sticky in the eurozone, which recorded a rate of 2.6 percent in February this year before dipping to 2.4 percent and then rising again. It remains above the ECB's two percent target, but has come down significantly since hitting a peak of 10.6 percent in October 2022 after energy prices soared following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. That prompted the ECB to aggressively raise interest rates to cool red-hot inflation until it cut rates for the first time in five years last month. - APP

Speakers urge green practices for textile industry

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on Wednesday urged that the textile sector required green measures to ensure sustainability and circularity as refurbishment of these goods burdened local water and energy resources. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute in collaboration with UNEP organised the hybrid Seminar on "Circularity and Used Textiles Trade in Pakistan: Policy and Practice for Sustainable Development", said a news release. The Speakers said Pakistan was among the top importers of second-hand textiles mostly exported by EU. Head Economic and Trade Policy Unit UNEP Asad Naqvi said "59% of exports of Pakistan are textile-based and 40% workforce is associated with this sector. The second-hand textile is important for poor masses and the SMEs and value chains that are around it." It is a perfect osmosis in which three pillars of sustainable development interact creating harmony among resource efficiency and environment, social economic side, and poverty. - APP

Morocco, Pakistan relations getting stronger and stronger

The plight of Gazans requires global efforts to genuinely work towards a definitive solution to the conflict

ANSAR M BHATTI

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune has said the celebration July 30, 2024 of the 25th anniversary of His Majesty King Mohammed VI's ascension to the Throne is a moment for the renewal of the strong ties that unite the Moroccan citizens with their King and the commemoration of positive transformations and great achievements that Morocco has accomplished over the last twenty-five years under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI. It is also a time to evaluate the present and reflects on the challenges that still lie ahead to achieve a modern and prosperous State. The Ambassador expressed these views on the occasion of the Fifth Anniversary of the Accession to the throne of His Majesty the Kingdom of Morocco. Ambassador Karmoune further said over the past 25 years, the democratic institutions have been strengthened, the country's GDP has tripled and the social protection policy has witnessed considerable efforts to improve access to medical care and social services. He said the Moroccan political landscape has undergone significant changes during His Majesty King Mohammed VI's reign. An in depth constitutional reform was adopted in 2011 to improve the efficiency of the political institutions. On the economic level, hundreds of mega restructuring projects have been achieved or are on the way to completion, be it in infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, airports, ports networks, digital connectivity, to mention only



these. 'This infrastructure has enabled Morocco to diversify its economy and emerge as a major African industrial and technology platform, by developing key sectors like the automotive and the aerospace industries'. He said these projects, coupled with an ideal environment for foreign investors, have boosted the competitiveness of the country and attracted significant foreign investment. Between 2007 and 2023, the country attracted around 37.5 billion US dollars in net foreign direct investments, averaging 2.2 billion dollar per year, placing the country as one of the most attractive investment destinations in Africa. Morocco has become a catalyst or even a driving force

that uplifts its own economy and those of neighboring and continental countries. The Atlantic initiative, launched by His Majesty is beginning to reshape the geostrategic landscape in Africa. This project, which aims to provide Sahelian countries with a maritime outlet, has been receiving much attention and praise for its great potential to establish multilateral partnership and boost African economic integration, he added. The ambitious plan will end the isolation of Sahelian countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and Mali by opening their doors to the Atlantic Ocean, something that will undoubtedly bring numerous economic benefits to these nations. He said consid-

erable efforts have been made to improve access to medical care and services. The country is focusing on providing solid and reliable social protection to all Moroccans. 3.8 million Families are now receiving a state social income and 23 million Moroccans are benefiting from mandatory health insurance. On the Palestinian question, His Majesty reiterated Morocco's support for the Palestinian cause. He stressed that the plight of Gazans requires global efforts to genuinely work towards a definitive solution to the conflict. This should ensure that Gaza remains an integral part of the territories of an independent Palestinian state that will have East Jerusalem as its capital. 'On this occasion, as an Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, I avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the relations which unite our two countries based on mutual respect, trust and historical ties that have linked our two nations for more than 66 years'. Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune said 'on the political level, we are on an eye-catching, the cooperation is getting more and more stronger, by maintaining a regular political dialogue, reinforcement of the legal framework, numerous exchanges of high-level visits, and commendable coordination in the different International Organizations'. The Kingdom of Morocco is determined to continue its cooperation with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We strongly believe that working together will achieve our common development vision and embed our relations in excellence, he concluded.

ATC orders to produce Imran Khan, Qureshi

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) on Wednesday directed the jail administration to present PTI founder Imran Khan and Shah Mehmood Qureshi through video link in two different cases. ATC Judge Tahir Abbas Sapra heard the case against the two accused. During hearing the judge questioned that whether Shah Mehmood Qureshi was a convicted prisoner and where he is housed currently. The PTI's lawyer adopted the stance that Mr Qureshi was not a convict person and he is in Kot Lakhpat Jail Lahore. - APP

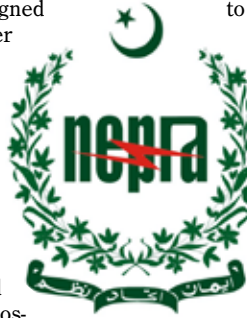
LHC issues notice to DG FIA

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Wednesday issued a notice to the Director General Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on a petition filed by Punjab Information Minister Azma Bukhari, seeking action against persons involved in sharing her edited video on social media. LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum heard the petition filed by the provincial minister as an objection case and overruled the objection after hearing the initial arguments from the petitioner's counsel. - APP

NEPRA launches 'NEPRA Asaan Approach' mobile app

The app is designed to allow users to quickly register complaints related to electricity issues, including power outages, fluctuations, electrical fires, line faults, and billing discrepancies

ISLAMABAD: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) on Wednesday introduced a new mobile application, 'NEPRA Asaan Approach,' aimed at improving service for electricity consumers across Pakistan. The app is designed to allow users to quickly register complaints related to electricity issues, including power outages, fluctuations, fires, line billing discrepancies. By streamlining the complaint process, the app ensures that issues can be reported and addressed in the shortest possible time. At the launch event, NEPRA Chairman Waseem Mukhtar emphasized that the app is a crucial component of NEPRA's strategy to offer multi-channel service delivery to electricity consumers nationwide. He addressed criticisms regarding NEPRA's efforts to enhance consumer facilities and highlighted the app as a step towards better service. The 'NEPRA Asaan Approach' app features a user-friendly interface that simplifies the complaint submission process and enables users to track the real-time progress of their issues, thus improving the efficiency and convenience of filing complaints. Member Technical Rafique Ahmad Shaikh noted that NEPRA receives approximately 20,000 complaints related to the power sector, underscoring the need for more effective complaint management solutions. - APP



ICCI President slams IPPs as threat to national sustainability

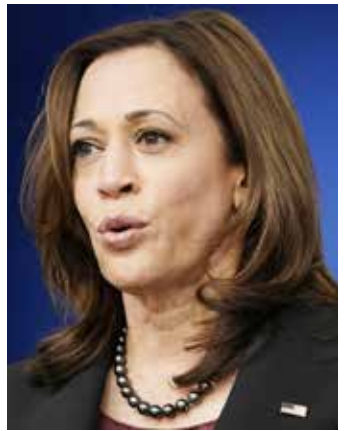
Entire business community is on the same page over the issue and it will not let the government to renew their contracts without taking it on board

MAHNOOR ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has termed the IPPs as detrimental for country's sustainability by demanding their forensic audit. He said that entire business community is on the same page over the issue and it will not let the government to renew their contracts without taking it on board. He said that the individuals responsible for excessively costly agreements should be held accountable, with consequences for negligence or misconduct. He said that the high tariffs and capacity payments have made electricity unaffordable for the industry as well as the common people which is badly affecting country's export sector as the buyers in the global market have started looking alternates of Pakistani products. The ICCI President said this while addressing a largely attended press conference entitled 'IPPs and electricity crisis' here at the Chamber House on Wednesday. He urged the government to comprehensively review all agreements with IPPs, prioritizing the nation's best interests, and ensure full transparency through disclosure of all contracts and associated details. This review should identify and address power plants receiving payments without generating output, and include regular performance evaluations and machinery condition assessments, with findings made public. Additionally, agreement expiration dates should be published pre-renewal, and all agreements should require mandatory parliamentary approval.

Kamala Harris dares Trump as White House battle deepens

ATLANTA: US presidential hopeful Kamala Harris launched a searing attack on Donald Trump Tuesday, telling her biggest campaign rally yet that the momentum was shifting in the White House race and daring the Republican to debate her face to face. Vice President Harris's trip to Atlanta, Georgia, comes as reenergized Democrats regard the swing state as being in play again, after it looked beyond hope under President Joe Biden before his shock withdrawal from the 2024 election. The presumptive Democratic nominee is aiming to expand the party's 2024 battleground map and appeal to young Black voters, delivering a firm, 20-minute speech to about 10,000 supporters in a packed arena and pledging Americans "are not going back" to the "failed policies" of Trump. "Now, the baton is in our hands," Harris said to loud applause. "We have a fight in front of us... And we are the underdogs in this race." Harris's nascent presidential bid took off following Biden's July 21 exit from the race, with much of the party coalescing behind her and her campaign raising a staggering \$200 million. "The momentum in this race is shifting, and there are signs that Donald Trump is feeling it," she said. The Republican nominee recently said he would forego political tradition and not debate Harris, and also unleashed a barrage of insults against his rival, calling her "crazy" and a "bum." "Well Donald, I do hope you'll reconsider to meet me on the debate stage, because as the saying goes, if you've got something to say, say it to my face," Harris said, to roars of approval. Harris also repeated her popular line about how, as a former prosecutor and California attorney general going up against predators and fraudsters, she knows "Donald Trump's type." "In this campaign, I will proudly put my record against his any day of the week," she said. With just 98 days before the election, Harris is under pressure to announce her vice presidential pick. Asked Tuesday whether she had chosen one, Harris told reporters: "Not yet." - Agencies



Ethiopia, Pakistan discuss Defence & Aviation Cooperation



DNA

THE Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Wednesday explored various avenues to strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation in different areas such as defence and aviation. The matter of such utmost importance came under discussion during a meeting between H.E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of FDR Ethiopia to Pakistan, and H.E. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Minister for Defence and Aviation of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Both sides also discussed full spectrum of ongoing bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation between the two brotherly countries. During the meeting, H.E. Ambassador Jemal Beker expressed his gratitude for a continued support of the Government of Pakistan to the Government of Ethiopia at bilateral and multilateral level. The Ambassador briefed the minister on ongoing economic reforms carried out by the Government of Ethiopia to achieve macroeconomic stability, attract Foreign Direct Investment, increase productivity and job creation.

He also apprised the minister about relief and rescue efforts carried out in Gofa region of Ethiopia for permanent relocation of the affected persons. Expressing his condolences for the loss of lives in landslide incidents that took place in Gofa region of Ethiopia, the minister reiterated the Government's commitment and support to the people and Government of Ethiopia in difficult times. H.E. Khawaja Asif expressed his government's commitment to increase its presence in the African continent of more than 1.4 billion people with untapped resources. The Minister recognized pivotal role of the FDR Ethiopia in effective implementation of Look Africa and Engage Africa policy of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan that attached utmost priority to Ethiopia which is a gate way to Africa. H.E. Khawaja Asif appreciated arrival of the Ethiopian Airlines in Karachi which has given a major boost to the bilateral relations of the two countries especially people-to-people and business-to-business ties between Ethiopia and Pakistan as well connect the rest of Africa. He also lauded economic progress achieved by Ethiopia under the leadership of H.E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, who successfully implemented home grown economic reforms for peace and prosperity in the country.