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Shehbaz on Bangladesh unrest

One who led anti-Pakistan movement met his fate: PM

"What goes around comes around," says premier referring to demolition of statues of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman

FAISAL SHEIKH / DNA

ISLAMABAD: Referring to demolition of Bangladesh founder Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's statues during the recent protests led by students, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the one who spearheaded an anti-Pakistan movement met his fate. Infuriated people vandalised several statues, pictures and murals of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman following an end to Sheikh Hasina-led government who fled to India on board a military helicopter along with her sister. The Hasina government collapsed on the back of riots — one of the worst in the country's history of 50-odd years. Almost 300 people were killed and thousands of others injured in the recent violence that started in early July. The protesters launched their rallies last month, demanding the government abolish civil service job quotas. However, the large-scale demonstrations escalated into the worst unrest of Hasina's 15-year rule, with protesters later calling on the 76-year-old to step down. "What goes around comes around", the premier said while referring to the demolition of statues of Bangladesh former president, who according to him divided Pakistan. Speaking about other issues at the National Youth Convention in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz said that Pakistan had sacrificed thousands of lives in its fight against terrorism besides suffering an economic loss of \$150 billion. "Not just Pakistan, the whole world has benefited from the elimination of terrorism by Pakistan," he added. The Convention was attended by federal ministers, Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir, Chairman of the Higher Education Commission, teachers, vice-chancellors and students from across the country. Calling the 1973 Constitution a binding force for the nation, he said Pakistani nation also showed unity when the country carried out the nuclear tests in 1998 to make its defence impregnable, setting aside the serious challenges. He said that besides the common citizens, the security

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Germany to provide €24m to Pakistan

Ahad Khan Cheema appreciated German support for Hydropower Projects in Pakistan and the Pakistan German Climate and Energy Partnership

FARRUKH SHEHZAD

ISLAMABAD: Germany will provide twenty four million euro to Pakistan for projects in the field of sustainable energy and emissions trading. This was said by German Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Svenja Schulze who called on Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema in Islamabad today. Acknowledging the potential of textile industry of Pakistan, she emphasized the need to expand the bilateral cooperation in this sector. Both sides also agreed on the importance of climate friendly projects and the development of Small and Medium Enterprises as the critical factors for the economy of Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Ahad Khan Cheema highlighted the German support extended to Pakistan for attaining the GSP+ status. He also expressed gratitude for the 91.1 million euro for country's post flood climate resilient reconstruction. Ahad Khan Cheema appreciated German support for Hydropower Projects in Pakistan and the Pakistan German Climate and Energy

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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir distributing laptops among the high achievers during National Youth Convention. — DNA

PTI vows to 'go ahead'

Islamabad admin revokes NOC for PTI's today's rally

District administration cancels NOC for public rally in federal capital citing security reasons

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has announced holding jalsa in the federal capital today (Thursday) despite the revocation of the non-objection certificate (NOC) that was granted earlier to the Imran Khan-founded party. In a statement, PTI Islamabad President Amir Mughal said that the district administration had cancelled the notification, but "we haven't cancelled the jalsa". "A peaceful political struggle is our constitutional and legal right." The district administration revoked the NOC granted to PTI on the "report of district intelligence committee," according to an official statement. The decision was taken during a meeting chaired by Islamabad Chief Commissioner Chaudhry Mohammad Ali Randhawa. The session also reviewed the NOC, granted by Deputy Commissioner Islamabad.

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Imran seeks Gen Faiz's 'open trial'

Info minister says PTI founder's demand to hold open trial of former spy chief "is intervention in army's affairs"

COURT REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan on Wednesday demanded an open trial of former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lieutenant General (ret'd) Faiz Hamid who was taken into custody by the military on charges of abuse of power and violating the Army Act. The former prime minister, who was removed from office via a

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Hafiz Naeem urges public to support strike

The JI chief also slammed the government

DNA

HYDERABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) emir Hafiz Naeem Rehman urged the public to support the nationwide strike on Aug 28 without violence. Addressing the audience, he stressed the significance of a successful strike and highlighted the participation of the traders community. The JI chief also slammed the government, particularly targeting the IPPs for their financial activities like stripping people and expressing disapproval of the Sindh government. He said that the PPP was hand in glove with the establishment.

Balochistan home minister denotified

JUI candidate Sardarzada Saeed Lango had challenged Ziaullah Lango's victory in PB-36

DNA

QUETTA: The Election Tribunal de-notified provincial home minister Zia Lango on Wednesday. The tribunal, comprising High Court Judge Abdullah Baloch, heard the election petition filed by Saeed Lango. Advocate Akram Shah represented Saeed Lango, while Advocate Saleem Lashari appeared on behalf of Zia Lango. The tribunal ordered re-voting at seven polling stations in PB-36 Kalat and also nullified Zia Lango's position as Home Minister. JUI candidate Sardarzada Saeed Lango had challenged Ziaullah Lango's victory in PB-36.

Stresses on unity

Where are those predicting Pakistan's default: COAS

Says state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from the harmful effects of social media

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir has underscored the state's responsibility to protect the public from the dangers and chaos caused by social media. Addressing a National Youth Convention in Islamabad on Wednesday, where Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was also in attendance, the army chief emphasised the importance of safeguarding the nation from the disruptive impact of online platforms. "A strong bond between the people, the government, and the military is the guarantee of Pakistan's security and development," General Munir stated. He expressed confidence in the country's future, pointing out that the "sparkle in the eyes" of the youth is a sign of hope and security for Pakistan. The army chief highlighted the value of an independent state, urging the audience to consider the struggles of those in regions like Libya, Syria, Kashmir, and Gaza. "To understand freedom's worth, look at their plight," he said. Addressing the youth directly, he noted,

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Taliban barred UN rapporteur from entering Afghanistan

A human rights advocate with 30 years of experience in the field, he has repeatedly criticized the Taliban administration for its human rights track record

AGENCIES

KABUL: The Taliban have barred UN special rapporteur Richard Bennett from entering Afghanistan, an official at the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed on Wednesday. The news of Bennett's entry ban made the rounds in local and international media this week after Taliban administration spokesperson Zabihullah Mujahid accused him of engaging in propaganda.

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Accident in Iran kills 28 Pakistani pilgrims

Ill-fated bus overturned and caught fire near Taftan-Dehshir checkpoint, says Iranian media

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: At least 28 people were killed and 23 others sustained serious injuries after a bus carrying Pakistani pilgrims met with an accident in Iran's Yazd, confirmed Pakistan's Ambassador to Iran Mudassar Tipu on Wednesday. Taking to social media platform X, formerly Twitter, Tipu said the accident occurred around 700 kilometres from the embassy. The ambassador's statement comes after a bus carrying Pakistani pilgrims overturned and caught fire near Taftan-Dehshir checkpoint.

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New currency notes by December

SBP Governor says new notes to feature enhanced security measures

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmed on Wednesday announced that the design of Pakistan's currency notes would be revamped by December. He was addressing the Senate Standing Committee on Finance, which was led by Senator Salim Mandviwala. It was further disclosed that the new design of notes would be in place with full security features. He elaborated that the State Bank is actively seized with

Continued on Page 06

SC issues notice to Punjab govt in Jinnah House case

Justice Minallah questioned whether there was any CCTV footage of Nazir's presence at the scene

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has issued a notice to the Punjab government regarding the bail petition of Hamid Nazir, a suspect in the Jinnah House attack case. The petition was heard by Justice Athar Minallah and Justice Mansoor Ali Shah. Justice Shah inquired about the charges against Nazir. The defence lawyer responded that Nazir was accused of injuring a police constable with a stick, but the medical report indicated that the constable was actually injured by stones thrown by the crowd. Justice Minallah asked if Nazir was present at the scene. The lawyer clarified that Nazir, a shopkeeper, was not at the location. Justice Minallah also questioned whether there was any CCTV footage of Nazir's presence at the scene. Justice Shah further asked about the evidence presented regarding Nazir's presence. The lawyer submitted that no CCTV footage or other evidence was provided. The court then issued a notice to the Punjab government on Nazir's bail petition and adjourned the case indefinitely. Additionally, a two-member

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SC rejects Ali Gohar Baloch's recount request for NA-97

Baloch's lawyer was unable to produce evidence of the request made to the Returning Officer

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has rejected the request of Ali Gohar Baloch, a leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N), for a recount in the NA-97 Faisalabad constituency. A two-member bench, consisting of Justice Ameen-ud-din Khan and Justice

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CDA, Islamic Relief Pakistan collaborate to tackle climate change

ISLAMABAD : Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA), Muhammad Ali Randhawa, on Wednesday met with Country Director Islamic Relief Pakistan, Asif Shirazi, to discuss joint efforts in addressing climate change and developing Islamabad. Randhawa praised Islamic Relief's contributions to Pakistan's development since 1992, particularly in environmental initiatives. He highlighted CDA's efforts in plantation drives, especially in Margalla Hills, and the establishment of the Climate Change Fund to protect Islamabad's environment. The meeting focused on tackling climate change, with discussions on projects to meet Islamabad's growing water needs. CDA offered technical support to address the water problem, while Islamic Relief expressed readiness to collaborate with CDA's development partners, including the World Bank and International Development Bank. Both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to working together to protect against climate change's effects and develop Islamabad into a modern city.—DNA

Skill development program vital for self-reliant: Rubina

KARACHI : BISP Chairperson Rubina Khalid announced on Wednesday the resumption of the skill development program focused on human resource development under BISP. She stated that this initiative would not only help people become financially self-reliant but also contribute to improving the economy. She made these remarks while speaking to the media after a meeting at the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Provincial headquarters. Rubina Khalid urged officers to collaborate with renowned institutions providing training in handicraft design to ensure participants receive certifications meeting modern global standards. This, she said, would facilitate employment opportunities abroad and boost foreign exchange earnings. The Chairperson praised the performance of BISP staff, noting their dedication despite limited resources. In response to a question, Khalid criticized the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government for neglecting the health sector in the province. She said that government hospitals were ignored while private hospitals benefited from the Sehat Card scheme. She also noted the provincial government's failure to maintain peace in the region, reversing progress achieved through significant sacrifices. Earlier, BISP Director General Sindh, Usman Azam, briefed the Chairperson on BISP's performance. The meeting was attended by BISP Director General Headquarters Islamabad Naveed Akbar and other officials.—APP

Govt advertisement rates to be increased soon, says Info Secy

The APNS suggested that to resolve the issue of nonpayment of current dues, a revolving fund be established at the Information Ministry for payment to newspapers on behalf of sponsoring departments



DNA

ISLAMABAD: Ms Ambreen Jan Secretary Information and PIO, Mr. Mobasher Hasan attended the meeting of Executive Committee of the APNS held at Islamabad presided over by its President Ms. Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani. APNS Secretary General Sarmad Ali apprised the Secretary Information about the problems being faced by the newspaper industry due to non implementation of the decision of the Prime Minister, Mian Shabbaz Sharif announced at the end of his first tenure

to increase govt advertisement rates. He highlighted the issues faced by the print media related to the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting including constant decline in the quantum of government advertisements, non payment of current and old outstanding dues, streamlining of ABC, renewal of newspapers' registration and functioning of the Press Registrar office. The APNS suggested that to resolve the issue of non payment of current dues, a revolving fund be established at the Information Ministry for payment to newspapers on behalf of sponsoring departments. The

members of the executive committee apprised the Secretary Information about the problems faced by them including non implementation of regional quota, problems in transfer of declarations after demise of the publisher and establishment of PID regional office at Bahawalpur. The Secretary Information assured the Executive Committee that the Ministry of Information has moved a summary for rate increase to the Finance Ministry which would be processed shortly. She stated that a meeting of APNS PID joint committee will be called soon to sort out issues relating to ABC, renew-

al of registration and related issues. Earlier the Executive Committee of APNS in its meeting approved reports of Regional Press Committee, Federal Capital Committee and Metro B publications Committee. The members approved provisional accreditation to M/s Vibrant Communication, Islamabad and M/s Resonance Digital (Pvt.) Lt, Karachi. Later the Executive Committee hosted a dinner to welcome Ms. Ambreen Jan as new secretary information and to bid farewell to Ms Shahera Shahid, outgoing Secretary information. The dinner was attended by dignitaries

including former PIO Rao Tehseen Ali Khan, former Information Secretaries Mr. Ashfaq Gondal and Mr. Shafiq Jilil and members of the Executive Committee. Following attended the meeting: Nazafreen Saigol Lakhani (President), Sarmad Ali (Secretary General), S.M. Munir Jilani (Joint Secretary), Shahab Zubeir (Finance Secretary), Mohsin Seyal (Daily Aftab), Mohsin Bilal (Daily Ausaf) Waseem Ahmed (Daily Awam Quetta), Humayun Tariq (Daily Business Report), Anwar Mahmood Bhatti (Monthly Centerline), Javed Mehr Shamsi (Daily Kaleem), Syed Ayaz

Badshah (Daily Mashriq Peshawar), Shakir Ali (Daily Mashriq Quetta), Zahida Abbasi (Daily Nau Sijj), Bilal Mahmood (Daily Nawa-i-Waqt), Sardar Khan Niazi (Monthly Naya Rukh), Muhammad Farooq (Daily Pakistan Lahore), Faisal Zahid Malik (Daily Pakistan Observer), Humayun Gulzar (Daily Sayadat), Imran Athar (Daily Tajarat) and Syed Haroon Shah (Daily Wahdat) Following attended the meeting as special observer: Mumtaz Ali Phulpo (Daily Awami Parchar), Rao Noman Ahmed (Daily Ebadat), Zahore Dhareja (Daily Jhok), and Tariq Javed (Daily Karnama)

'Govt fully committed to Empowering a Digital Pakistan'

DNA

ISLAMABAD : Speaking at the Empowering a Digital Pakistan conference organized by the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) and Center of Pakistan. Minister for Planning said peace, political stability, continuity of policies and commitment to reforms are crucial to take the country forward on the path of economic development. Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan is standing at a defining moment and cannot afford to lag behind in embracing the latest technology. He said we have to introduce technology in every sector to compete with the world. He called for collaboration and collective efforts to take the country in the right direction. Speaking at the event, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President of IRS, underscored the importance of aligning policies and institutions

with modern technologies so to speed up the digital transformation process in the country. He pointed out that there was a digital divide, with some sectors of the economy and society benefiting from digital transformation adequately while others lagged behind. He stressed the need for expanding upon e-governance and digitalization of all public services on the one hand and promoting digital awareness and adoption of best practices on the other. Pakistan could now only catch up with other high-growth economies through digital transformation at a fast pace. To address these challenges and fully leverage emerging technologies, we must focus on Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain Technology, Open Source Intelligence (OSINT), Quantum Computing, Cyber security, Digital Media Literacy, Infrastructure Development and Education and Training. Dr. Haider Abbas, Director

Let us unite in our efforts to digitally empower every individual and transform Pakistan into a beacon of innovation and progress. Ms. Aisha Humera Chaudhry, Additional Secretary of IT and Telecom Ministry, briefed the participants about the Ministry of IT and Telecom's efforts in advancing information technology infrastructure in the country. She also touched upon endeavors for promoting digital transformation through collaborations with domestic and foreign companies. Dr. Baber Majid Bhatti, CEO of NITB, emphasized the importance of adopting digital technologies to achieve holistic socio-economic development. He also stressed upon the need to address the overlapping phenomena of digital initiatives and projects in the country as they were not contributing effectively to the development of digitalization. Dr. Haider Abbas, Director

General of the National CERT shared that as per global and national cybersecurity indexes, Pakistan ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries in terms of cybersecurity. He mentioned that the Pakistan Cyber Emergency Response Team had implemented various initiatives to protect Pakistan's digital borders and was working closely with all major stakeholders to enhance digital security resilience. Khurram Rahat, Vice Chairman of P@SHA, recommended the establishment of a strong framework for digital transformation and cybersecurity. He also emphasized the need for strict enforcement of legal frameworks and an open data policy to promote data monetization and enhanced public access. Mr. Amer Shahzad, Director General, Wireless, PTA, highlighted the strategic framework adopted by PTA to drive digitalization forward.

PWPA organises seminar on digital literacy at PU

LAHORE : In a seminar organised by the Punjab Women Protection Authority (PWPA) at Punjab University, Chairperson Hina Parvez Butt and Lady Marieme Jamme, CEO of "I Am The Code," highlighted the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to empower women. The event marked the official launch of the "I Am The Code Pakistan" chapter at the university's Social Work Department. PWPA Chairperson Hina Parvez Butt emphasized that this initiative is a crucial step towards enhancing digital literacy and gender equality in Pakistan. The program aims to equip women and girls with digital literacy and coding skills, supporting their empowerment. Hina Butt also noted that safeguarding women in educational and workplace settings is a key priority for Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz.—APP

River Indus still flow in medium, low flood: FFC

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Federal Flood Commission (FFC) has said that at present, the River Indus is experiencing "Medium Flood" in Gudu-Sukkur reach and "Low Flood" in Tarbela-Taunsa reach and at Kotri Barrage. According to the daily FFC report on Wednesday, rest of the major Rivers i.e. Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi & Sutlej are discharging normal flows. The Maximum Conservation Level (MCL) of 1550 feet in Tarbela Dam has been maintained since August 19, 2024, whereas Mangla Reservoir is currently at an elevation of 1214.70 feet (27.30 feet space left to reach its MCL of 1242 feet). Combined live storage of the Tarbela, Chashma, and Mangla reservoirs stands at 11,110 MAF which is 83.20% of the total live storage capacity of

13,354 MAF. According to Flood Forecasting Division (FFD), Lahore, yesterday's low-pressure area over the North Bay of Bengal and adjoining Bangladesh remained stationary. Trough of Westerly Wave persists over Northeastern Afghanistan and adjoining Pakistan while the Seasonal Low centered over Northwestern Balochistan. At present, light to moderate moist currents from the Arabian Sea were penetrating into upper parts of Pakistan up to 5000 feet at the reporting time. For the ensuing 24 hours, FFD, Lahore has predicted scattered thunderstorm rain of Moderate Intensity with isolated Heavy Falls over Islamabad, Punjab (Rawalpindi, Sargodha, Gujranwala, Lahore & DG Khan Divisions), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan (Zhob & Kalat Divisions) including upper catchments of all major rivers of Indus River System.

Commissioner reviews arrangements for Chehlum, Urs

LAHORE : Lahore Divisional Commissioner Zaid bin Maqsood conducted a review of arrangements for the Chehlum of Imam Hussain (AS) and the Urs of Ali bin Osman Al-Hajveri (RA), popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh by visiting key locations along the routes, including Data Darbar Chowk, Delhi Gate, Bhatti Gate, and Lohari Gate. During his visit, Commissioner Lahore directed that all road repairs and the removal of hanging wires along the Chehlum route be completed promptly. He emphasized the need for all departments to finish their assigned tasks on the route without delay. The commissioner also noted that surveillance of the entire Chehlum route would be enhanced with the use of Safe City cameras and additional monitoring. He was briefed on municipal and security arrangements for both the Chehlum and the Urs of Data Ganj Bakhsh. Zaid bin Maqsood instructed that in rain, WASA should ensure effective drainage management to provide timely responses. The Urs of Data Ganj Bakhsh, which spans three days, is expected to draw thousands of visitors to the shrine of Hazrat Ali bin Usman Al-Hujwiri, a major center of reverence for Muslims across the subcontinent. The commissioner also specified that Rescue services, sanitation teams, polio and dengue control teams, and health personnel would be stationed at the shrine throughout the Urs. Parking arrangements for the visitors would be managed by the Lepark Company. Additionally, the quality of food and langar (community meal) would be monitored by the Punjab Food Authority (PFA). Deputy Commissioner Lahore Syed Musa Raza, SP Security Lahore, Chief Corporate Officer of Metropolitan Corporation Lahore (MCL), Additional Deputy Commissioner Headquarters, and Assistant Commissioner City were also present during the visit.—DNA

Females receive four times more impacts of heatwave than males

ISLAMABAD : The Speakers at a seminar on the psychological impacts of climate change on women underscored that women received four times more impacts of a heatwave than males increased climate anxiety among women, a serious issue affecting their health post disasters, and needs attention of the policymakers. The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) organised a seminar titled "Climate Anxiety and its Impact on Women: Addressing the Silent Crisis" that provided an open platform for women hailing from different fields and backgrounds to share their insights on the study done on climate anxiety prevalence in Pakistan. Dr Shafiqat Munir, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI said that climate anxiety in the context of women showed that she faced anxiety twice once during her suffering and the other if her family member was impacted by any disaster. In urban areas, women are facing climate anxiety but in rural areas and others where women have no voice, no idea of climate anxiety that needs to be probed and further studied to

bring tangible outcomes for enhancing women's resilience, he added. Dr Shafiqat mentioned that the study would serve as a baseline data for further rollout of the research in the rural areas. Zainab Naem, Associate Research Fellow SDPI while presenting the key study findings said that the country in 2020 realized that the region was facing the highest temperatures as compared to the preceding years. However, recent projections indicate that the rising temperature might cross human bearable thresholds in the long run. "Climate Change has increased heatwave and floods' intensity with extreme prevalence of anxiety disorders that directly linked mental disorders to climate change. In 2019, mental disorders affected 301 million people around the globe," she said. Women, youngsters, and children from impoverished communities were more prone to bear the impacts of climate disasters, whereas people with mental illness were three times more prone to risk of death than people without mental illness, she added. "One percent increase in suicides with an approxi-

mate one-degree increase in temperature above local ambient threshold revealed that hotter cities were more violent than cooler cities," Zainab said. Zainab Naem said that the objective of the study was to assess the linkage of climate change with mental health of the masses and for that an online survey was done that received 500 responses. However, the respondents hailed from different occupations comprising 65% females and 35% males from age cohorts expanding from 18 to 60 years. "38.3% of the respondents claimed that heat almost directly impacted them, whereas 43.3% got psychological symptoms post extreme climate events. 91.5% of them read or watch climate news regularly," she said. Humaira Jahanzeb, Team Lead at the Living Indus Initiative said the study shared useful findings and recommendations that should be shared with the policymakers, relevant ministries, and departments for effective interventions. "We cannot ignore the impacts of climate change on people whether they are in rural or urban centers. Food insecurity, employment opportunities,



and health crisis in the aftermath of climate change are interlinked and demand stakeholder engagement," she added. Zofeen Ebrahim, Environmentalist and Journalist said that Karachi has over 60% population living in an informal setup and women there are uneducated with poor access to the internet and have much stress in their lives. Halima Khan, Head of Corporate Affairs, Energy Update said there was a need for awareness and education on mental health impacts of climate change which needs to be shared with the government authorities for proper policymaking. Aftab Alam Khan, an international development consultant said interaction with women from different strata of society indicates challenges and problems faced by them amid the climate crisis whereas role of individuals at different levels in society was imperative to educate women on the health impacts of climate change. Climate Change is exacerbating other issues related to women during disasters whereas it was necessary to engage women from the most impacted regions in research and solution-finding endeavors.—DNA



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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 Independence Day
- Aug 30 /Turkey Armed Forces Day
- Aug 31/Kyrgyz Republic Independence Day
- Aug 31/Malaysia National Day

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Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad.....1122 & 16
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Motorway Police.....9270601-20
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Rawalpindi.....9270601-20



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WASA Rawalpindi.....5555489
CAA.....9281092



Hospitals

CMH.....5611111
MH.....5611116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ.....5556311-4
RGH.....9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS.....9261170-79
Polyclinic.....9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666



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CDA.....9208301-04
Met Office.....9250360-6
RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

PM directs institutions to accelerate efforts to do away with smuggling

During the briefing, the prime minister was told that the interior ministry was running a countrywide campaign and effective measures were being taken to curb the smuggling of petroleum products, cigarettes, mobile phones, gold, tea, clothes, commodities, vehicle tires and spare parts

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressing satisfaction over the reduction in the smuggling, instructed the relevant institutions to accelerate their efforts to purge the country of this menace in toto. The prime minister, chairing a meeting to review the measures for the elimination of smuggling, reiterated that the government would never allow the smugglers to damage the national economy. He said the government utilized modern technology to curb smuggling and instructed to apprehend the people involved in smuggling, their facilitators and confiscate the transport vehicles used for the purpose. He also asked the federal Board of Revenue, interior ministry and other relevant departments to improve their coordination and sought a comprehensive strategy to create employment opportunities in the frontier regions. During the briefing, the prime minister was told that the interior ministry was running a countrywide campaign and effective measures were being taken to curb the



smuggling of petroleum products, cigarettes, mobile phones, gold, tea, clothes, commodities, vehicle tires and spare parts. It was told that web portal to curb the smuggling of urea and sugar had been launched and 54 joint checkpoints had been established as per the prime minister's directives. A mechanism for identification and mapping of non-custom paid vehicles, and the draft legislation

to establish the Pakistan Land Port Authority were in the final stage. A report on the outcomes of the anti-smuggling drive was also presented in the meeting which said that 212 Afghan transit trade goods at risk of smuggling had been banned and a bank guarantee had been made mandatory for the trade, instead of an insurance guarantee. It was told that besides essential commodities, the smuggling of

petroleum products had also reduced by half and sugar by 80%, besides other eatables. During the year 2023-24, the smuggling goods worth Rs106 billion were confiscated and the anti-smuggling drive also led to the reduction in hoarding practices. The participants were also apprised of the action taken against the officers involved in smuggling. It was told that the process to identify the smugglers, their fac-

ilitators and transporters was on a fast pace, with the collaboration of NADRA, Excise and other relevant departments. Federal ministers Jam Kamal Khan, Ahmad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Dr Musaddik Malik, Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission Jahanzeb Khan, PM's Coordinator Rana Ehsan Afzal and provincial chief secretaries attended the meeting.

Advance technology being used to enable Sahiwal Coal plant

Ash and these all gases are dangerous for the environment if they are not controlled. In the Sahiwal Coal Fired Power Plant, low NOx burner technology is being incorporated in the super-critical boiler.

ISLAMABAD: The Focal Person of Sahiwal Coal Fired Power Plant has said that the clean and green environment of the power plant is evidence of its environmentally friendly nature. The advanced technology being used at Sahiwal Coal Fired Power Plant enables it to produce clean energy, according to a press release. The combustion of coal in the boiler produces the heat to convert water into high-pressure steam to rotate the turbines and ultimately rotate the electrical generator to produce electricity, along with ash and other gases like CO₂, NO_x, and SO_x majorly, it further said. Ash and these all gases are dangerous for the environment if they are not controlled. In the Sahiwal Coal Fired Power Plant, low NOx burner technology is being incorporated in the super-critical boiler. So, significantly less NOx is formed by reducing the peak flame temperature of burners in the boiler. To control the effect of CO₂, more than 50000 trees have been planted in the power plant and more trees are being planted under the Pakistan Prime Minister's 10 billion Tree Campaign, the focal person further said. After the combustion in the boiler, the flue gas is treated in ESP (Electrostatic Precipitation) and FGD (Flue gas desulfurization). The incorporation of ESP technology has enabled the Sahiwal coal-fired Power Plant to remove ash from the flue gas while the FGD technology to desulfurize the flue gas to a value that is far less than that of the standards set by the Punjab Environmental Protection Agency (PEPA) and even World Bank. All the emission values of flue gas are monitored through a Continuous Emission Monitoring System (CEMS). The values are monitored and controlled by the operation engineers 24/7 a day. The ash is removed from the flue gas with an efficiency of 99.9% in ESP. The ash is then dumped into the ash yard where the spraying water vehicle sprays water several times a day to keep the top surface of dumped ash wet so that it does not fly in the air to cause environmental pollution. After ESP, the flue gas enters into Absorption Tower which is the main unit for the desulfurization process. In the tower, the sulfur dioxide reacts with limestone slurry in the presence of oxygen to form gypsum as a byproduct. 100% availability of FGD and ESP systems is ensured to guarantee environmental protection. The verification of the safe limit of emissions is executed by a third party which is certified by PEPA. The environmental reports are also submitted to the Government Departments regularly from the Sahiwal Coal Fired Power Plant. These formal procedures and measures taken for protecting the environment by installation of advanced technology prove the sincerity of Sahiwal Coal Fired Power plant to provide clean energy to Pakistan National Grid. The focal person said, a confusion, which is prevailing among the masses of Pakistan, is important to be cleared here. Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant is the first power project under the CPEC in Pakistan with a capacity of 1320MW. It is also the first among the power plants of Pakistan which is equipped with the Super-critical boiler technology.—DNA

Health reforms government's top priority

RAWALPINDI: CM's Advisor on Health, Major General (Rtd) Azhar Mehmood Kayani on Wednesday said that health reforms in Punjab are the top priority of the government. He said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has a special focus on improving health facilities. The advisor remarked this during his visit to Holy Family Hospital (HFH). He emphasized that CM's vision is to provide quality

health facilities to the people for which all resources must be utilized. He expressed satisfaction that after revamping and renovation, the hospital is fully functional. "The hospital is equipped with modern facilities where standard treatment facilities are available to the patients", he added. He observed that according to the CM's vision, provision of free medicines is being ensured in the hospitals.

The health advisor made a detailed visit to the hospital's various departments including emergency, OT and OPD. He reviewed the provision of health facilities in the hospital. He met and inquired from the patients about the treatment facilities being provided in the hospital. The advisor also checked the attendance of the staff, record of supply of medicines, cleanliness situation and other issues. He categorically inquired about the

provision of free medicines to the patients. Medical Superintendent HFH, Dr. Ejaz Butt briefed the advisor regarding treatment in the hospital and other issues. Vice Chancellor Rawalpi di Medical University (RMU), Dr. Muhammad Umar informed the Health Advisor regarding the ongoing educational activities in RMU. Gen (r) Azhar Kayani informed the hospital administration that the purpose of his visits to various hospitals in the city was to ensure the provision of quality healthcare facilities in accordance with the vision of CM Maryam Nawaz. "I am reviewing the health facilities on the instructions of the Punjab Chief Minister", he said.

FAO workshop highlights key steps

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) hosted a workshop in Quetta to discuss new policies and legislation aimed at revolutionizing water management in Balochistan. FAO gathered around 80 stakeholders in Quetta to discuss the Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) Policy and the Water Bill for Balochistan including representatives from Balochistan's irrigation, agriculture, forestry, and livestock departments, as well as media professionals and members of both local and international NGOs, said in a press release issued by FAO. The workshop aimed to disseminate information about these new initiatives, which could significantly reshape how water resources are managed in the province. Developed with FAO's technical assistance and funded by the World Bank under the Balochistan Integrated Water Resources Management and Development Project (BIWRMDP), the IWRM Policy and Water Bill seek to modernize

water governance in the region. The initiatives are designed to create a legal framework that ensures the sustainable and fair distribution of water resources. This framework also aims to strengthen institutions, promote inclusive water management practices, and establish effective monitoring and evaluation systems. During the workshop, Provincial Minister for Irrigation, Mir Muhammad Sadiq Umrani, underscored the importance of these measures. He described the IWRM Policy and Water Bill as a crucial step towards sustainable and equitable water management in Balochistan. Waleed Mahdi, FAO's International Program Coordinator and Head of Office in Balochistan, highlighted the collaborative effort behind these initiatives. He stressed that the partnership between the Government of Balochistan, FAO, and the World Bank is vital for promoting inclusive water governance in the province. Dr. Robina Wahaj, Senior Land and Water Officer at FAO, pro-

vided further insight into the scope of the policy and bill. She explained that the new framework covers all aspects of water management, including surface and groundwater resources, climate change adaptation, and environmental protection. By unifying these elements under one legal framework, the policy and bill aim to provide a modern approach to managing water in the province. The workshop also facilitated discussions where participants shared their insights and feedback on the IWRM Policy and Water Bill. The policy has already received the Chief Minister of Balochistan's endorsement and is set to be presented to the Cabinet for final approval. Meanwhile, the Water Bill is in the final stages of vetting before it is presented to the Provincial Assembly for consideration and enactment. These developments mark a significant shift in Balochistan's approach to water management, with the potential to improve sustainability and equity across the province.—APP

RDA forms special enforcement squad to remove encroachments

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, has formed a special enforcement squad to remove encroachments. According to a RDA spokesman, RDA had intensified its crackdown against encroachments across the city. He informed that chairing a meeting, the Director General (DG) RDA, Kinza Murtaza formed a special Enforcement Squad to take strict action in accordance with the law against encroachments. The squad, comprising six Inspectors and other staff members, would launch operations under the supervision of the Assistant Director Building Control, RDA, he said adding, the team has been directed to take strict action against encroachments in all areas. The spokesman further informed that the DG also instructed the Additional Director General RDA to monitor the squad's performance daily. The squad would be held accountable for their effectiveness in dealing with encroachments, ensuring that prompt and decisive action is taken, he added. The spokesman informed that the DG during the meeting emphasized the importance of this initiative, stating that encroachments were a blot on the beauty of the city and vowed to clear the city of them.—APP

Salik expresses sorrow over tragic

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic accident involving a bus carrying Pakistani pilgrims in the city of Yazd, Iran. In a statement, he extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the unfortunate incident. He emphasized that he stands in solidarity with the bereaved families during this difficult time. The minister prayed for the departed souls, asking for divine forgiveness for the deceased and patience for their loved ones. He also prayed for the swift recovery of those injured in the accident.—APP

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Briefs

Bilawal seeks reports about damage to canal embankments

ISLAMABAD: Chairman, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has sought detailed reports from the Irrigation Ministers of Sindh and Balochistan regarding the damage to canal embankments due to the recent rains in the provinces. Presiding over a meeting through video-link, he inquired about the floods and damages caused in Sindh and Balochistan following the recent rains. The ministers gave briefing over the damages caused by the floods in their respective provinces, said a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House on Wednesday. Sadiq Umrani and Jam Khan Shoro, the Irrigation Ministers for Balochistan and Sindh respectively, briefed the party chief on the performance of their respective departments. During the meeting, both Sindh and Balochistan Ministers agreed to adopt a unified stance on the formula for water distribution in the country at the platform of the Indus River System Authority (IRSA). In a response, both the ministers informed about the extent of the damage and the steps being taken to address and repair the affected embankments.—APP

Two killed, 7 injured in roof collapse

ISLAMABAD, Aug 21 (APP): Two women were killed and seven others sustained injuries while buried under the debris due to roof collapse in Khorgai Musakhel, area of Domel, Bannu. According to a private news channel, the incident took place when a roof of the house collapsed due to a lightning strike. The rescue team reached the spot immediately after the incident was reported. The injured were shifted to Khalfia Gul Nawaz Hospital, Bannu.—APP

AIOU announces results for autumn 2023 semester

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results for the Associate Degree Programs (General, Commerce, Education, Mass Communication, Library Science, and Dars-e-Nizami) and the BA (Old) Program offered in the Autumn 2023 semester. According to the Controller of Examinations, Mian Muhammad Riaz, the results have been uploaded to the students' portals. The students who have completed their programs will soon have their provisional certificates available on their portals, enabling them to enroll in the next academic phase. It is important to note that the second phase of admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester will begin on September 1st. This phase will include BS (ODL) programs, teachers' training programs, postgraduate diploma programs, and certificate courses. Graduating students have been advised to wait for this second phase to enroll in their desired programs.—APP

ISSI and NIMA sign MoU for closer collaboration

The MoU sets out a framework for future collaborative efforts, encompassing the exchange of researchers, organization of joint events, and the initiation of research projects covering subjects of mutual interest.

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Further enhancing its institutional collaboration, the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Institute of Maritime Affairs (NIMA). The signing ceremony, held at ISSI, marked the commencement of a new chapter in academic and research cooperation between the two institutes. Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and President NIMA Vice Admiral (Retd) Ahmad Saeed, signed the MoU on behalf of their respective institutions. The event was moderated by Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC. Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood warmly welcomed the NIMA delegation, highlighting the importance of formalizing the relationship between the two think-tanks. He lauded NIMA's contributions to Pakistan's maritime and security policies and expressed confidence that the MoU would pave the way for enhanced mutual collaboration, including impactful research, conferences, and capacity-building initiatives. Am-



bassador Mahmood concluded by reaffirming the commitment of both institutions to leverage their combined expertise and resources for the advancement of Pakistan's interests in the maritime and related domains. Vice Admiral Ahmad Saeed reflected on past collaboration between

NIMA and ISSI and expressed optimism for a higher level of collaboration through this formalized partnership. He highlighted that the joint endeavours would introduce a fresh perspective on policy orientation, particularly in maritime affairs. He concluded by stating that the collaboration

would yield positive outcomes in influencing the policy process, aligned with the strategic objectives of both institutions. Earlier, Malik Qasim Mustafa noted that ISSI and NIMA had a history of active collaboration, and this MoU will facilitate mutual cooperation in a more structured man-

ner with a focus on maritime security, Blue Economy, and broader maritime interests. The MoU sets out a framework for future collaborative efforts, encompassing the exchange of researchers, organization of joint events, and the initiation of research projects covering subjects of mutual interest.

Measures adopted to promote Pakistani farm product pour into China

ISLAMABAD: Necessary measures have been adopted to promote Pakistani farm product pour into China, China Economic Net (CEN) reported on Wednesday. Data released by the Pakistan National Bureau of Statistics recently showed that the country's total exports in the FY 2023-2024 (July 2023 to June 2024) were USD 30.64 billion, a year-on-year increase of 10.54%, among which agricultural product exports performed fairly well, reaching a record USD 8 billion, a year-on-year increase of 37%. Particular attention should be given to the rice exports, which has increased from USD 2 billion to USD 3.6 billion in fiscal year 2024, an increase of 80% year-on-year, ranking first in the country's export crops. Currently, Pakistan is the world's fourth largest rice exporter, and its rice has been exported to 193 countries and regions. So far, many Pakistani seed companies have cooperated with Chinese counterparts to carry out hybrid rice breeding on a large scale, and have cultivated a variety of hybrid rice that adapts to the planting conditions in different regions, and their export competitiveness continues to increase. Relevant departments in Pakistan predict that rice exports are expected to reach USD 5 billion this fiscal year. In addition to rice, vegetables such as onions, peppers, tomatoes, and fruits such as mangoes and cherries that come from the south Asian country are also quite competitive in the international market. Pakistan's fruit and vegetable products have been exported to including but not limited to Middle East, Central Asia, Europe. "The government is closely following the trends in the international agricultural product market as well as actively coordinating relevant measures with exporters. With the active promotion of various departments, Pakistan's agricultural product exports will further grow," noted Waheed Ahmed, chairman of All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters Importers and Merchants Association. At present, China and Pakistan have signed a protocol on the export of high-class agricultural products such as onions, cherries, and dried peppers to China. And in December 2023, the first batch of Pakistani dried chili peppers were exported to China; at the beginning of this year, the first batch of 500 kilograms of Pakistani frozen boiled beef entered the Chinese market after passing the inspection of Tianjin Customs; in June this year, the first batch of Pakistani cherries transported by cold chain entered the Chinese market... In recent few years, Pakistan's agricultural product exports to China have showed a sustainable growth, especially high-quality agricultural products such as rice, sesame, mango and nuts, which are extremely favored by consumers in the largest market of the globe. More than that, Pakistani agricultural product exporters have continually promoted high-quality products through platforms including the China International Import Expo, the China-South Asia Expo, and the China-ASEAN Expo. "Whether it is hybrid rice or cash crops such as cauliflower, radish, pepper, and tomato that Pakistanis love, through the empowerment of China's agricultural technology and development experience, as the scale of exports expands, the local agricultural economic benefits are constantly improving," said Zhou Xusheng, Director of Pakistan Business Department, Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed Co., Ltd.. Zhou Xusheng has been deeply engaged in agriculture in Pakistan for more than a decade, the report added.—DNA

Day of remembrance, tribute to victims of terrorism observed

ISLAMABAD: The International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism was observed all around the world on Wednesday. Acts of terrorism propagating a wide range of hateful ideologies continue to injure, harm and kill thousands of innocent people each year. On the occasion, Pakistan joins the international community in honouring the lives lost and the survivors of terrorist attacks. Pakistanis deeply understand the pain and suffering of the victims of terrorism around

the world. For the last two decades, Pakistan has been a victim of terrorism planned, supported and sponsored from across its borders. During this period, it suffered over 80,000 casualties and incurred over US\$ 150 billion in economic losses. Despite these challenges, Pakistan remained resolute in its resolve to combat terrorism. With national commitment, matchless resilience and unparalleled sacrifices of the people, Pakistan has managed to turn the situation and score victories against terrorism. On this day, the

world must also remember the victims of state terrorism including in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) since the 1990s Indian troops have martyred over 100,000 Kashmiris, widowed over 22,000 women, orphaned 108,000 children and raped over 11,000 women in IIOJK. The international community must stand with victims of state terrorism in IIOJK as well. The international community must adopt a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism and address its root causes.—APP

ANF recovers 37 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI: Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 37 kg drugs worth Rs 700 million and arrested 15 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that 7.5 kg weed was recovered from a passenger came from Nigeria at Islamabad Airport. 80 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Peshawar Airport. In third operation, 402 grams ice was recovered from a passenger going to Qatar at Karachi Airport. 150 grams intoxicated tablets were recovered from a passenger going to Saudi Arabia from Lahore Airport. 2.4 kg opium, 6 kg heroin, 1.2 kg hash.—APP

Punjab energy bill relief welcomed, outcry unjustified

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, on Wednesday said that it is a valuable decision of the government of Punjab to give relief to the people in electricity bills. He said the opposition's agitation on the move is unjustified, and the objection to Punjab's decision is anti-people. Mian Zahid Hussain said it would be better if other provinces followed this decision and used surplus funds to relieve the people. This can also be done by making a small cut in the capital funds given to the assembly members for the development budget. Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that the IMF should support the Punjab government's decision because it is using its resources for this relief. Not a single penny has been taken from the centre. The central government should also consider giving relief to the people by cutting the development budget of the assembly members, he demanded. Mian Zahid Hussain said that instead of objecting to Punjab's decision, other provinces should imitate it so that the people can get some relief. Different regions have resources; they can also gain political benefits by helping the people in this difficult time. Under the National Finance Commission, the provinces are paid trillions of rupees, much of which is wasted on politics. He said that apart from relieving people for two months, it is also essential to find a long-term solution for the expensive electricity for all consumers to improve the situation. The closure of factories can be stopped. If this does not happen, businesses will continue to close down, unemployment will increase, and there will be revenue losses, while capital, youth, and experts will continue to flee the country, further weakening the economy. Mian Zahid Hussain further said that a relief package should be announced for industries and the issue of IPPs should be resolved as soon as possible.—DNA

MoFA sets up Crisis Management Unit to facilitate repatriation of pilgrims' bodies

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Wednesday established a Crisis Management Unit to facilitate the repatriation of the Pakistani pilgrims' bodies who lost their lives in a bus accident in Yazd city of Iran. The Foreign Office spokesperson, in a statement, expressed condolences and sympathies to the families of the deceased Pakistani pilgrims and said that on the instructions of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, the Consul of Pakistan in Zahidan had been tasked with the responsibility of reaching the site of the accident and ascertaining the situation on the ground. "They will also coordinate with local authorities to provide medical relief to the injured and arrange repatriation of dead bodies to Pakistan, most of whom are residents of the Sindh province," the spokesperson said. Moreover, Ambassador of Pakistan in Tehran and Consul in Zahidan are also in contact with the Iranian authorities in Tehran and Zahidan to expedite the recovery and repatriation of the dead bodies and facilitate medical treatment of the injured.—APP

Ahsan for catching up with pace of digital revolution for national development

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday stressed the urgent need to keep pace with the global digital revolution to achieve development across all sectors and put the country on a sustainable growth trajectory. "The world is advancing at the speed of electrons. We cannot afford to lag behind, as in the next 22 years, we will be evaluating our development in the context of our 100 years of independence," he stated while addressing the opening session of the conference titled "Empowering a Digital Pakistan." Citing historical examples, the minister noted that nations embracing global changes achieved progress and prosperity, while those that ignored these changes faced failure. He highlighted that the world was now undergoing a digital revolution after the industrial revolution. "In the industrial era, the big used to eat the small; in the digital world.—APP

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been exported to 193 countries and regions. So far, many Pakistani seed companies have cooperated with Chinese counterparts to carry out hybrid rice breeding on a large scale, and have cultivated a variety of hybrid rice that adapts to the planting conditions in different regions, and their export competitiveness continues to increase. Relevant departments in Pakistan predict that rice exports are expected to reach USD 5 billion this fiscal year. In addition to rice, vegetables such as onions, peppers, tomatoes, and fruits such as mangoes and cherries that come from the south Asian country are also quite competitive in the international market. Pakistan's fruit and vegetable products have been exported to including but not limited to Middle East, Central Asia, Europe. "The government is closely following the trends in the international agricultural product market as well as actively

coordinating relevant measures with exporters. With the active promotion of various departments, Pakistan's agricultural product exports will further grow," noted Waheed Ahmed, chairman of All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters Importers and Merchants Association. At present, China and Pakistan have signed a protocol on the export of high-class agricultural products such as onions, cherries, and dried peppers to China. And in December 2023, the first batch of Pakistani dried chili peppers were exported to China; at the beginning of this year, the first batch of 500 kilograms of Pakistani frozen boiled beef entered the Chinese market after passing the inspection of Tianjin Customs; in June this year, the first batch of Pakistani cherries transported by cold chain entered the Chinese market... In recent few years, Pakistan's agricultural product exports

to China have showed a sustainable growth, especially high-quality agricultural products such as rice, sesame, mango and nuts, which are extremely favored by consumers in the largest market of the globe. More than that, Pakistani agricultural product exporters have continually promoted high-quality products through platforms including the China International Import Expo, the China-South Asia Expo, and the China-ASEAN Expo. "Whether it is hybrid rice or cash crops such as cauliflower, radish, pepper, and tomato that Pakistanis love, through the empowerment of China's agricultural technology and development experience, as the scale of exports expands, the local agricultural economic benefits are constantly improving," said Zhou Xusheng, Director of Pakistan Business Department, Wuhan Qingfa Hesheng Seed Co., Ltd..



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Achievements of China's reform

THE nearly 46 years of reform and opening-up in Chinese history include an impressive chapter of rapid economic development and win-win cooperation with the world, enriched by vivid stories of reform. While grand narratives are essential, it is the details that truly captivate. China's reform takes daily trivial matters seriously. This highlights the determination, strength and effectiveness of the Chinese government in promoting people-centered reforms, which provide a sense of fulfillment, happiness and security to the populace. Nationwide, 66,000 projects aimed at renovating urban infrastructure are underway. The Chinese government is transforming old neighborhoods, streets and factory areas into high-quality living spaces, tourist destinations and hubs for emerging industries. At the same time, facilities for elderly care, childcare, culture and sports are being upgraded, reflecting the tangible benefits of reform. Governments at all levels across China are continuously optimizing administrative services and improving efficiency to prevent the public and businesses from encountering unnecessary detours or inefficiencies. These seemingly minor issues related to people's livelihoods collectively contribute to significant progress in the reform process. Technological reforms have been integrated into daily life in China. As a result, the country has become a technological powerhouse, with achievements such as the Chang'e-6 lunar probe bringing back samples collected from the moon's far side and the unmanned submersible Haidou-1 completing a 10,000-meter deep-sea dive. Chinese technology has made significant strides in reaching for the sky and diving into the sea. Meanwhile, technology, closely related to daily life, continues to advance at a rapid pace. With the Chinese government's support for new energy vehicles, domestic automakers are making ongoing efforts in areas including battery, smart driving and intelligent connectivity. Technologies such as environmental protection, autonomous driving and automatic parking, which lead globally, have transformed everyday driving experiences. Due to the 144-hour visa-free transit policy, many foreign influencers traveling in China have immersed themselves in experiences such as the driverless taxi "Apollo Go" and the monorail train "Optics Valley Photon" in Wuhan. An increasing number of functional unmanned vehicles are becoming part of ordinary people's lives. Nothing is too small in foreign affairs. In addition to the grand diplomatic vision of building a global community of shared future and the Belt and Road Initiative, there are also smaller, community-focused projects that are taking root. These cooperation efforts are becoming part of daily life for local people, improving their well-being by enhancing living standards and creating sustainable social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits in developing countries. One example is the "African Light Belt" project, a collaborative innovation in clean energy between China and Africa which leverages China's photovoltaic industry to provide electricity and lighting to tens of thousands of impoverished households in Africa. Another example is when Chinese experts spared no effort to help restore ancient pagodas in Myanmar that were damaged in an earthquake.



Palestinians' plight and Instagram

AYA Danielle, a Palestinian woman from the besieged Gaza Strip, stands in her small kitchen, surrounded by the rubble of what used to be her home. The shattered window offers a stark view of the destruction outside. "This is where we live now," she says, her voice steady but her eyes filled with deep sadness. Just a few months ago, Aya's life was filled with dreams. On March 3, 2023, she got engaged, a bright spot in the grim reality of Gaza. For eight months, she and her fiancé, Mohammed Alshayyah, meticulously planned their wedding set for November 2023. Aya envisioned a celebration filled with love and hope for a better future. However, "Israel's" ongoing genocide in Gaza shattered those dreams, leaving their wedding plans in ruins. Now, instead of planning her future, Aya spends her days documenting life under relentless bombings. She and Mohammed share videos on Instagram, capturing the daily struggles of their community. These videos show what daily life in Gaza looks like: cooking traditional Palestinian dishes with limited ingredients and aid materials, and queuing for water and other essential supplies. "My heart breaks whenever I remember what could have been. I wanted a beautiful life with my husband, but Israel destroyed all my dreams", Aya told media. "Israel's" ongoing genocide in Gaza has now entered its tenth month, with the death toll exceeding 40,000 people, according to official reports. However, a new estimate published in The Lancet suggests the actual number could be as high as 186,000, accounting for indirect deaths caused by shortages of medical care, food, shelter, and water. The genocide has displaced around 1.7 million people multiple times, representing around 77% of Gaza's total population of 2.2 million, leading to a severe humanitarian crisis. Displaced Palestinians like Aya have turned to Instagram to share their stories with the world. These firsthand accounts provide a unique perspective on life under genocide. While some posts capture moments of daily life, others depict the harrowing realities, rescue efforts from the rubble, children mourning their parents, and direct reports of the devastation. One such voice is Mohamed Hatem, known to his followers as "GymRat in Gaza." Based in Khan Younis, Hatem shares fitness vlogs and daily activities on Instagram. In one of his striking posts, he lifts weights next to the remains of a bombed-out building. "Fitness helps me cope with stress", Hatem told media. "Even in the toughest circumstances, we must find strength and perseverance". Despite the dire situation, he remains determined to stay resilient and inspire others to do the same. "Every day is a struggle," he wrote in one of his captions. "But we can't give up. We must keep moving, for our families and our future." Firsthand accounts from Palestinians are among the most reliable sources for understanding the genocide in Gaza. The content posted by Palestinians like Mohamed Hatem, Aya, and others has drawn significant engagement and inspired acts of solidarity and support from around the world. Mohamed Hatem says he faces numerous obstacles in uploading his daily fitness vlogs.

Britain's Kursk Invasion Backfires

Kit Klarenberg

On top being a clear suicide mission, the eagerly advertised presence of Western weapons and vehicles on Russian soil "has put the Biden administration in an extremely awkward position." Washington has since the proxy war erupted been wary of provoking retaliations against Western countries and their overseas assets, and the conflict spilling outside Ukraine's borders. Adding to US irritations, the British-directed Kursk misadventure also torpedoed ongoing efforts to secure an agreement to halt "strikes on energy and power infrastructure on both sides." This comes as Kiev prepares for a harrowing winter without heat or light, due to devastating Russian attacks on its neighbour's energy grid. Putin has moreover made clear that Ukrainian...

BRITISH Challenger 2 tanks reached Ukraine with enormous fanfare, ahead of Kiev's long-delayed, ultimately catastrophic 2023 "counteroffensive". On top of encouraging other proxy war sponsors to provide Ukraine with armoured fighting vehicles, Western audiences were widely told the tank - hitherto marketed to international buyers as "indestructible" - made Kiev's ultimate victory a fait accompli. As it was, Challenger 2 tanks deployed to Robotnye in September were almost instantly incinerated by Russian fire, then very quietly withdrawn from combat altogether. Hence, many online commentators were surprised when footage of the tank in action in Kursk began to circulate widely on August 13th. Furthermore, numerous mainstream outlets dramatically drew attention to the Challenger 2's deployment. Several were explicitly briefed by British military sources that it marked the first time in history London's tanks "have been used in combat on Russian territory." Disquietingly, The Times now reveals this was a deliberate propaganda and lobbying strategy, spearheaded by Prime Minister Keir Starmer. Prior to the Challenger 2's presence in Kursk breaking, Starmer and Defence Secretary John Healey had reportedly "been in talks about how far to go to confirm growing British involvement in the incursion towards Kursk." Ultimately, they decided "to be more open about Britain's role in a bid to persuade key allies to do more to help - and convince the public that Britain's security and economic prosperity is affected by events on the fields of Ukraine." A "senior Whitehall source" added: "There won't be shying away from the idea of British weapons being used in Russia as part of Ukraine's defence. We don't want any uncertainty or nervousness over Britain's support at this critical moment and a half-hearted or uncertain response might have indicated that." In other words, London is taking the lead in effectively marking itself out as a formal belligerent in the proxy war, in the hope other Western countries - in particular, the US - will follow suit. What's more The Times strongly hints that Kursk is to all intents and purposes a British invasion. The outlet records: "Unseen by the world, British equipment, including drones, have played a central role in Ukraine's new offensive and British personnel have been closely advising the Ukrainian military... on a scale matched by no other country." Britain's grand plans don't stop there. Healey and Foreign Secretary David Lammy "have set up a joint Ukraine unit," divided between the Foreign Office and Ministry of Defence. The pair "held a joint briefing, with officials, for a cross-party group of 60 MPs on Ukraine," while "Starmer has also asked the National Security Council to draw up plans to provide Ukraine with a broader range of support." On top of military assistance, "industrial, economic, and diplomatic support" are also being explored. The Times adds that in coming weeks, "Healey will attend a new meeting of the Ukraine Defence Coordination Group,"

an international alliance of 57 countries overseeing the Western weaponry flooding into Kiev. There, "Britain will press European allies to send more equipment and give Kiev more leeway to use them in Russia." The British Defence Ministry also reportedly "spoke last week to Lloyd Austin, the US defence secretary, and has been wooing Boris Pistorius, his German opposite number." Evidently, the new Labour government has an ambitious vision for the proxy war's continuation. Yet, if the "counterinvasion" is anything to go by, it's already dead in the water. As The Times notes, the imbroglio is primarily "designed to boost morale at home and shore up Zelensky's position," while relieving pressure on the collapsing Nordbass frontline by forcing Russia to redirect forces to Kursk. Instead, Moscow "has capitalised on the absence of four crack Ukrainian regiments to press their attacks around Pokrovsk and ChasivYar." Similarly, commenting on Starmer's widening efforts to compel overt Western action against Russia, a "defence expert" told The Times: "if it looks as if the Brits [are] too far ahead of their NATO allies, it might be counterproductive." This analysis is prescient, for there are ample indications London's latest attempt to ratchet tensions and drag the US and Europe ever-deeper into the proxy war quagmire has already been highly "counterproductive", and boomeranged quite spectacularly. Indeed, it appears Washington has finally had enough of London's escalatory convivances. In repeated press conferences and media briefings since August 6th, US officials have firmly distanced themselves from the Kursk incursion, denying any involvement in its planning or execution, or even being forewarned by Kiev. Empire house journal Foreign Policy has reported that Ukraine's snoop caught the Pentagon, State Department, and White House off-guard. The Biden administration was not only enormously unhappy "to have been kept out of the loop," but "skeptical of the military logic" behind the "counterinvasion". On top being a clear suicide mission, the eagerly advertised presence of Western weapons and vehicles on Russian soil "has put the Biden administration in an extremely awkward position." Washington has since the proxy war erupted been wary of provoking retaliations against Western countries and their overseas assets, and the conflict spilling outside Ukraine's borders. Adding to US irritations, the British-directed Kursk misadventure also torpedoed ongoing efforts to secure an agreement to halt "strikes on energy and power infrastructure on both sides." This comes as Kiev prepares for a harrowing winter without heat or light, due to devastating Russian attacks on its neighbour's energy grid. Putin has moreover made clear that Ukrainian actions in Kursk mean there is now no scope for a wider negotiated settlement at all. Which is to say Moscow will only accept its adversary's unconditional surrender. The US has also seemingly changed course as a result of the "counterinvasion". On August 16th, it was reported that

Washington had prohibited Ukraine's use of British-made, long-range Storm Shadow missiles against Russian territory. Given The Times reports securing wider Western acquiescence to such strikes is a core objective for Starmer, this can only be considered a harsh rebuke, before the Labour government's escalatory lobbying efforts have even properly taken off. The Biden administration had in May granted permission for Kiev to conduct limited strikes in Russia, using guided munitions up to a 40-mile range. Even that mild authorisation may be rescinded in due course. Berlin, which like Britain had initially proudly promoted the presence of its tanks in Kursk, is now decisively shifting away from the proxy war. On August 17th, German Finance Minister Christian Lindner announced a halt to any and all new military aid to Ukraine as part of a wider initiative to slash government spending. The Wall Street Journal reporting three days earlier that Kiev was responsible for Nord Stream II's destruction may be no coincidence. The narrative of the Russo-German pipeline's bombing detailed by the outlet was absurd in the extreme. Conveniently too, the WSJ acknowledged that admissions of "Ukrainian officials who participated in or are familiar with the plot" aside, "all arrangements" to strike Nord Stream "were made verbally, leaving no paper trail." As such, the paper's sources "believe it would be impossible to put any of the commanding officers on trial, because no evidence exists beyond conversations among top officials." Such an evidentiary deficit provides Berlin with an ideal pretext to step away from the proxy war, while insulating Kiev from any legal repercussions. The narrative of Ukraine's unilateral culpability for the Nord Stream bombings also helpfully distracts from the attack's most likely perpetrators. This journalist has exposed how a shadowy cabal of British intelligence operatives were the masterminds, and potential executors, of the October 2022 Kerch Bridge bombing. That escalatory incident, like Nord Stream's destruction, was known about in advance, and apparently opposed, by the CIA. Chris Donnelly, the British military intelligence veteran who orchestrated the Kerch Bridge attack, has privately condemned Washington's reluctance to embroil itself further in the proxy war, declaring "this US position must be challenged, firmly and at once." In December that year, the BBC confirmed that British officials were worried about the Biden administration's "innate caution", and had "stiffened the US resolve at all levels", via "pressure." The determination of Washington's self-appointed "junior partner" to escalate the proxy conflict into all-out hot war between Russia and the West has only intensified under Starmer's new Labour government. Yet, the Empire gives every appearance of refusing to take the bait, while seeking to curb London's belligerent fantasies. This may be an encouraging sign that the proxy war is at last reaching its end. But we must remain vigilant. British intelligence is unlikely to allow the US to withdraw without a fight.

Unconditional love, unmatched resilience: The journey of special mothers

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Despite these challenges, mothers of special children in Pakistan persevere, driven by their love for their child. Their emotional toll is immense, often leading to depression and anxiety, but mental health care is scarce and stigmatized. These mothers are expected to bear their burdens with a smile, embodying selfless love and sacrifice without...

IN the heart of every mother lies a unique strength, which becomes even more profound when her child differs from the norm. The boundless love of a mother is tested daily when raising a special child, particularly in a society like Pakistan's, where this love encounters daily challenges that are hard for others to understand. These mothers often endure the harshness of an unsympathetic world with minimal support from those who should be their strongest allies. Pakistan's societal structure is deeply rooted in family values, with the joint family system being common and relatives typically close-knit. Yet, for the mother of a special child, this support network often fades away when she needs it most. The journey begins with the initial diagnosis, a moment that shatters the dreams and expectations parents have for their child. The news is frequently met with disbelief, denial, and even shame from extended family members. Instead of rallying to support the mother, offering emotional and practical help, relatives often withdraw, driven by fear, ignorance, or stigma surrounding disability. Special children exhibit a pure, selfless love, untainted by deception, greed, or concerns about inheritance. They rely solely on their parents for care and affection. However, some parents hesitate to introduce their special children to others or enroll them in specialized centers due to fear and societal pressure. A renowned neurosurgeon, moved by meeting parents of special children, once expressed that Allah entrusts special children to special parents. He shared with the tears in his eyes that he himself had a special child who remained hyperactive despite global treatments, revealing the deep emotional connection and challenges faced by these parents. Cultural norms in Pakistan emphasize social appear-

ances and societal expectations. A child with special characteristics is often seen as a misfortune or punishment, isolating the mother further. She becomes the subject of whispers, pity, or blame. Relatives who should offer help and support may instead avoid acknowledging the child, refuse visits, or suggest that the mother is at fault for the condition. Caring for a special child demands extraordinary patience, resilience, and energy. These children have complex medical, emotional, and educational needs that require constant attention. In a country where quality healthcare, specialized education, and support services are limited, the burden falls squarely on the mother. She must navigate a healthcare system ill-equipped to handle special needs, facing unqualified doctors, inadequate facilities, and unclear guidance. The struggles and emotions of parents with special children are profound. Mothers sometimes pray that their children will leave this world before them, fearing for their child's well-being after they are gone. This anxiety is exacerbated by the lack of support from relatives, who often show little interest in the child's future. Fathers sometimes also show extraordinary dedication to his special daughter, taking on responsibilities typically managed by the mother, especially during illness of his wife. The financial strain on these mothers is another overlooked aspect. Raising a special child demands significant resources for medical care, therapies, specialized equipment, and education. Many mothers must choose between working to support their family and staying home to care for their child. Finding a job that accommodates the needs of a special child is nearly impossible, forcing many mothers into financial dependency and further isolating them.

Despite these challenges, mothers of special children in Pakistan persevere, driven by their love for their child. Their emotional toll is immense, often leading to depression and anxiety, but mental health care is scarce and stigmatized. These mothers are expected to bear their burdens with a smile, embodying selfless love and sacrifice without acknowledgment of the toll it takes on them. The lack of consistent support from family is perhaps the most painful aspect of their struggle. While friends and neighbors might offer occasional help, the absence of consistent familial support leaves these mothers alone in their journey, burdened by joys and sorrows that come with raising a special child. The bond between a mother and her child is profound, but it requires family support to flourish. Without it, the burden becomes too heavy for one person to bear. Even amidst overwhelming adversity, these mothers continue to fight for their children. They become advocates, warriors, and protectors, striving for better care, education, and futures for their special children. They challenge a society that often sees their child as less than human with a strength that is truly remarkable. The resilience of these mothers highlights the power of love. They show that every child, regardless of their abilities, deserves love, care, and support. Their fight is not just for their children but for all special children in Pakistan, who deserve to be seen and valued. For this fight to succeed, society and family members must change. They need to offer support, not shun; love, not judge; and stand by these mothers, who are performing the most important job in the world. Without this support, mothers of special children in Pakistan will continue to suffer in silence, their strength unmatched but their pain unacknowledged.

Briefs

One who led anti-Pakistan movement...

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forces played their fullest role in purging the country of terrorism, which the nation would always remember. Coming to the economic challenges, the prime minister said the government was compelled to privatise the Pakistan International Airline (PIA) which once used to be a model for other airlines in the region. "Similarly, South Korea copied Pakistan's five-year development plan and boosted its economy while Pakistan still lagged behind". "We have to decide whether the business will go as usual or we will move forward," he remarked. He assured that despite the challenges of electricity, revenue receipts and exports, the government would dole out maximum funds for youth empowerment and recalled the PML-govt's pro-youth steps in the past including the merit-based distribution of laptops, establishment of Punjab Education Endowment Fund to distribute scholarships worth Rs22 billion, and numerous schemes for skill development.

SC issues notice to...

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bench consisting of Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Athar Minallah heard the pre-arrest bail petition of MPA Latif Nazir. The assistant lawyer informed the court that Nazir's main counsel Akram Awan was unwell. Justice Shah inquired whether they wished to seek an adjournment. The assistant lawyer requested postponement until Awan's return. Justice Shah asked if Nazir was present in the courtroom, to which the assistant lawyer confirmed his presence. The Supreme Court subsequently adjourned the hearing of Nazir's case indefinitely due to the absence of his lead counsel.

SC rejects Ali Gohar...

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Naem Akhtar Afghan, heard the petition for a recount. During the hearing, the court inquired about the record of when the recount request was submitted. However, Baloch's lawyer was unable to produce evidence of the request made to the Returning Officer. The Election Commission of Pakistan also confirmed that no such request had been received. The Director General of Law at the Election Commission stated that no record of such a request existed. Consequently, the court dismissed Ali Gohar Baloch's appeal.

Where are those...

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"Knowledge is what sets a person apart." He also reminded them of the importance of resilience, quoting the Quran, "Do people think that they will be left alone because they say: 'We believe,' and will not be tested?" General Munir dismissed the narrative of Pakistan's impending economic collapse, asking rhetorically, "Where are those who predicted Pakistan's default now?" He declared Pakistan's youth as the nation's most valuable asset, vowing, "We will not let it go to waste."

Taliban barred UN...

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"It (the ban) happened earlier but was not made public," the foreign ministry official told Arab News on condition of anonymity, as he was not authorized to speak to the media. Bennett assumed duties as the UN special rapporteur in May 2022, after the Taliban took over Afghanistan as American-led international forces withdrew in August 2021 - two decades after the US invaded the country. A human rights advocate with 30 years of experience in the field, he has repeatedly criticized the Taliban administration for its human rights track record.

Pakistan recover after early setbacks in BD Test

The hosts finished on 158/4 at stumps after 41 overs were bowled on opening day

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan recovered after suffering early blows on day one of the first Test against Bangladesh which is being played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Wednesday. The hosts finished on 158/4 at stumps with vice-captain Saud Shakeel on 57* (92) while wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan made 24* (31). After being asked to bat first, the home side struggled greatly against Bangladesh's pace attack as Abdullah Shafique (2), along with skipper Shan Masood (6) and Babar Azam (0) were dismissed inside the first 10 overs. After losing three wickets, the hosts managed to come back in the game and Saim Ayub and Saud formed a crucial 98-run partnership that took Pakistan out of trouble. Saim reached to his first Test fifty in his third innings. He made 56 off 98 balls which included four fours and a six. Saud



carried on with Rizwan and took Pakistan to a respectable position at the end of the day. For Bangladesh, Shoriful Islam and Hasan

Mahmud picked two wickets each. Earlier today, Shan decided to go with the all-pace attack in the first Test in Rawalpindi with the bowl-

ing attack consisting of Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Khurram Shehzad and Mohammad Ali.

Playing XI: Pakistan: Abdul-

lah Shafique, Saim Ayub, Shan Masood (c), Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Ali, Khurram Shahzad
Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Shadman Islam, Zakir Hasan, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana
Remember, the match started with a delay as wet outfield due to rain made it impossible for the match officials to start the play. The Test matches between Pakistan and Bangladesh are being played as part of the World Test Championship (WTC) 2023-25 as both teams are eager to perform and strengthen their position on the WTC points table. Both teams have so far locked horns in 13 matches in six Test series with the Green Shirts emerging winners in 12 of them as one ended in a draw.

Jay Shah set to replace Barclay as ICC chairman



DUBAI: Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Jay Shah is set to replace Greg Barclay as the chairman of the International Cricket Council (ICC), The Age reported Wednesday. Shah seemed to be a strong candidate for the top position after Barclay, who had been

chairing the ICC since November 2020, informed the directors of the administrative body during a video call on Tuesday night that he is stepping down from his post. Barclay made his decision after Shah expressed his desire to become the chairman of the ICC while claiming that he has the

support of other members.

"ICC chair Greg Barclay confirmed to the board that he will not stand for a third term and will step down from the post when his current tenure finishes at the end of November. Barclay was appointed as the independent ICC chair in November 2020, before being re-elected in 2022," an ICC spokesperson told The Age. "Current directors are now required to put forward nominations for the next chair by 27 August 2024 and if there is more than one candidate, an election will be held with the term of the new chair commencing on 1 December 2024."

If elected, Shah would be walking into the footsteps of India's Jagmohan Dalmiya and Sharad Pawar who have previously served as ICC chiefs among others. Shah claimed that he has secured support from key ICC nations, such as England and Australia, to potentially become the next chairman of the cricket regulating body for a three-year term, at least. - Agencies

Babar records first duck on home soil in Test cricket

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan's star batter Babar Azam was dismissed for a duck in the first innings of the first Test against Bangladesh, marking the first time in his career that he has been out without scoring on home soil. This rare occurrence occurred at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium, where Babar, known for his consistent performances, was sent back to the pavilion without adding a single run to the scoreboard. Before this match, Babar had played 24 innings across 14 Test matches at home without ever experiencing the disappointment of a duck. His last duck in any Test match came three years and 36 innings ago, underscoring the rarity of such a failure for the top batter. To date, Babar has been dismissed for a duck 8 times in his 95 Test innings. However, what makes this particular instance noteworthy is that all of his previous ducks occurred outside Pakistan. Pakistan are 81/3 in 21 overs at Tea with Saim Ayub at 42* while Saud Shakeel made 28* after being asked to bat first. The Men in Green recovered after being 16/3. Before Babar, Abdullah Shafique (2) and skipper Shan Masood (6) were dismissed. Pakistan: Abdullah Shafique, Saim Ayub, Shan Masood (c), Babar Azam, Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Salman Ali Agha, Shaheen Afridi, Naseem Shah, Mohammad Ali, Khurram Shahzad, Bangladesh: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Shadman Islam, Zakir Hasan, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hassan Miraz, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Nahid Rana. - Agencies

Atletico Madrid sign Conor Gallagher from Chelsea

"The club has reached an agreement with Chelsea for the transfer of the England international midfielder, who has signed a five-year contract," Atletico Madrid said in a press release.

LONDON: Atletico Madrid completed the signing of midfielder Conor Gallagher from Chelsea on a five-year deal which will keep him at the Spanish capital till 2029, the club announced on Wednesday. The 24-year-old is reportedly already training with his teammate as Madrid's head coach, Diego Simeone, plans to name him in the squad for the team's next La Liga match against Girona. "The club has reached an agreement with Chelsea for the transfer of the England international midfielder, who has signed a five-year contract," Atletico Madrid said in a press release. "Atletico de Madrid and Chelsea have reached an agreement for the transfer of Conor Gallagher, who has signed for the club until 2029. The midfielder was born in England in 2000 and is a full international for his country." Gallagher made his first-team debut for Chelsea in August 2022 and went on to represent the Blues in 95 matches where he scored 10 goals and provided 10 assists. He made his debut for England in November 2021 and was called up for the 2022 World Cup, where the Three Lions played the semi-final against Croatia and lost. Meanwhile, he was also called up for the 2024 European Championships (Euro), where his country lost the final to Spain. With Gallagher's signing completed, Joao Felix, who returned to the club after a loan spell at FC Barcelona, will rejoin Chelsea but on a permanent deal this time. Atletico have so far spent a total of 182.5 million this summer with the signings of Julian Alvarez, Robin Le Normand and Alexander Sorloth as Simeone is focused on competing for the league title with Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. - Agencies

Saud Shakeel equals Pakistan's 65-year-old record

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Test vice-captain completed 1000 runs in the longest format during the first innings of the first Test against Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium. He became the joint-fastest Pakistani batter to reach 1000 runs in Test cricket, achieving this feat in just 20 innings. This achievement places him on par with Saeed Ahmed, who also reached 1000 runs in his 20th Test inning during the Karachi Test against Australia in 1959. After Saud and Saeed, Sadiq Mohammad is on the list who reached in 22 innings, while Javed Miandad did it in 23. Taufeeq Omar, Abdullah Shafique and Abid Ali reached in 24 innings. It must be noted Pakistan recovered after suffering early blows courtesy of Saud and Saim Ayub. After being asked to bat first, the home side struggled greatly against Bangladesh's pace attack as Abdullah Shafique (2), along with skipper Shan Masood (6) and Babar Azam (0) were dismissed inside the first 10 overs.

Joe Root could break three records during SL Test series

LONDON: Joe Root could break three records during the three-Test series against Sri Lanka which is set to begin on August 21 at Old Trafford Cricket Ground in Manchester. Root, 32, has a remarkable record against Sri Lanka as he has scored 1,001 runs in 10 Tests with an impressive batting average of 58.88 which included four centuries. Root has 12,027 runs in 143 Tests at an average of 50.11, including 32 centuries and 63 fifties. During England's home series against West Indies, Root completed 12,000 runs in Test cricket, joining Alastair Cook as the only English batter to reach the feat. As the Sri Lanka Test series approaches, Root could break three more records.

1. Most runs against Sri Lanka by English batter
As of now, Cook is the English batter with the most runs (1,290) against Sri Lanka in 16 Tests. Root is placed second with 1,001 runs in 10 matches. The right-handed batter needs 290 runs to surpass the former captain.

2. First to score 5,000 runs in World Test Championship (WTC)
Joe Root is currently the top scorer of WTC with 4,598 runs in 55 matches. The prolific English batter needs 402 runs to become the first player to amass 5,000 runs in WTC history.

3. England's all-time leading Test run-scorer
With 12,472 runs, Cook is the player with the most runs for England in Test cricket and is followed closely by Root, who has 12,027 runs. The right-handed batter needs 446 runs to surpass to former skipper and became England's all-time leading run-scorer in red-ball cricket.

Playing XI: Sri Lanka: Dimuth Karunaratne, Nishan Madushka, Kusal Mendis, Angelo Mathews, Dhananjaya de Silva (c), Dinesh Chandimal (wk), Kamindu Mendis, Prabath Jayasuriya, Milan Rathnayake, Asitha Fernando, Vishwa Fernando
England: Dan Lawrence, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope (c), Joe Root, Harry Brook, Jamie Smith (wk), Chris Woakes, Gus Atkinson, Matt Potts, Mark Wood, Shoaib Bashir. - DNA

Sinner cleared of wrongdoing after failing anti-doping tests

World number one Jannik Sinner's escape from a doping ban has prompted claims of double standards from some tennis players

PARIS: Tennis world No. 1 Jannik Sinner has been cleared of any wrongdoing after twice testing positive for a banned substance earlier in the season, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA) announced. Sinner provided an in-competition sample at the Indian Wells Masters on March 10, 2024 which contained the presence of a metabolite of clostebol at low levels, according to the ITIA. Clostebol is an anabolic agent prohibited at all times by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). A further sample, conducted eight days later out of competition, also tested positive for low levels of the same metabolite. "ITIA today confirms that an independent tribunal convened by Sport Resolutions has ruled by Sport Resolutions the conduct by Italian tennis player Jannik Sinner bears No Fault or Negligence for

two Anti-Doping Rule Violations under the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme (TADP)," said the agency in a statement on Tuesday. "The player explained that the substance had entered their system as a result of contamination from a support team member, who had been applying an over-the-counter spray (available in Italy) containing clostebol to their own skin to treat a small wound." The ITIA added that the support team member in question had applied the spray between March 5-13 during which time they also provided daily massages and sports therapy to Sinner, which resulted in the contamination. While the 23-year-old Italian has been cleared of any wrongdoing, he will be stripped of his results, prize money and the 400 ranking points he accumulated at Indian Wells, in accordance with



the anti-doping rules in force. "I will now put this challenging and deeply unfortunate period behind me," said Sinner in a statement published on X. "I will continue to do everything I can to ensure I continue to comply with the ITIA's anti-doping program and I have a team around me that are meticulous in their own compliance." But other players on the tour have reacted to the news with

skepticism and anger. "Ridiculous - whether it was accidental or planned," wrote Australian player Nick Kyrgios on X. "You get tested twice with a banned (steroid) substance... you should be gone for 2 years. Your performance was enhanced. Massage cream... Yeah nice." Canadian Denis Shapovalov wrote on social media: "Can't imagine what every other player that got banned for contaminated substances is feeling right now." The positive tests were not initially made public while the ITIA investigation was ongoing. Provisional suspensions were applied to Sinner after the two tests, however he successfully appealed them both meaning that he was able to continue competing. ITIA CEO Karen Moorhouse said: "Following that investigation, the ITIA accepted the play-

er's explanation as to the source of the clostebol and that the presence of the substance was not intentional." The ATP, the governing body of men's professional tennis, backed up Sinner and the investigation process. "We are encouraged that no fault or negligence has been found on Jannik Sinner's part," read a statement on the ATP Tour's website. "We would also like to acknowledge the robustness of the investigation process and independent evaluation of the facts under the Tennis Anti-Doping Programme (TADP), which has allowed him to continue competing. "This has been a challenging matter for Jannik and his team, and underscores the need for players and their entourages to take utmost care in the use of products or treatments. "Integrity is paramount in our sport."

Germany to provide €24m to...

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Partnership. The Minister expressed hope that the Government of Germany would continue its support in areas of clean energy and climate change, and the pipeline assistance would not be subject to any budgetary cuts.

Islamabad admin...

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During the meeting, Islamabad Inspector General of Police (IGP) Ali Nasir Rizvi pointed out the security concerns due to multiple events. Citing strict security concerns, the administration noted that the Bangladesh cricket team is in Islamabad, adding that it is difficult to control the crowd of a jalsa. "A few days ago, some protesters also reached the Supreme Court building," it said, adding that in such circumstances, permission to hold public rallies cannot be given. The development came a day before the public rally was scheduled, as announced by Adviser to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister on Information Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif.

Imran seeks Gen Faiz's...

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parliamentary vote in 2022, said the open trial would benefit the country and allow it to prosper. "I demand an open trial of Faiz Hamid with media should be given access to cover it," said the ex-premier during an informal interaction with journalists in Rawalpindi's Adiala Jail where he has been incarcerated for over a year in different cases ranging from corruption to terrorism. Responding to Khan's statement, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar termed the ex-prime minister's statement an intervention in the army's affairs. Taking a swipe at the former PM, the information said the PTI founder was continuously trying to make the matter related to the army's internal accountability process "controversial" through his statements.

Accident in Iran kills...

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reported Iranian media. "Embassy officials have already left for Yazd this morning. An officer in Zahedan is overseeing emergency arrangements," the ambassador further said. Speaking with a private news channel, the envoy said overspeeding and brake failure caused the ill-fated bus to crash into a school wall. According to Maulana Qamar Abbas Naqvi - a member of a peace committee based in Larkana - said at least 30 people died on the spot, while five succumbed to their injuries at the hospital. Meanwhile, Iran's Mehr News Agency said emergency imposed in hospitals across the city to treat the injured.

New currency...

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the initiative, and the designs of the new notes will be introduced after formal approval. Other issues were potential for digital and plastic currency. The SBP Governor elaborated on the initiative, noting that the State Bank is actively working on introducing these new designs, which will be issued following formal approval. Additionally, the committee reviewed the potential for digital and plastic currency. He mentioned that while they are currently focused on traditional notes, they plan to test plastic currency as well. If the plastic notes are well-received by the public, they may become a permanent part of the country's currency system. The introduction of plastic currency sparked a discussion among committee members. Senator Shahzad Durrani raised concerns about the environmental implications, questioning the move towards plastic at a time when efforts are being made to reduce its use. In response, Governor Ahmed assured that the plastic notes would undergo thorough testing to assess their durability and public acceptance.

Briefs

Philippines says new mpox case 'not' deadly variant

MANILA: The first mpox case reported by the Philippines this year is a mild variant and not the deadly strain sparking global alarm, Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa said Wednesday. The highly transmissible Clade 1b strain of the virus has killed hundreds of people in the Democratic Republic of Congo and has also been detected Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Sweden. "It's the old variant," Herbosa said of the virus that struck a 33-year-old Filipino male, referring to the mild Clade 2 variant. "It's not as alarming as the Clade 1b," Herbosa said. He said the patient had not traveled outside the country and was "still confined" in the hospital. "For us doctors, that means the virus is circulating in the community," Herbosa said. Nine mpox cases were reported by Philippine authorities in 2022 and 2023, with the previous most recent one last December. President Ferdinand Marcos on Tuesday ordered health officials to continuously monitor areas and people vulnerable to the virus.—APP

UK strengthens crackdown on immigration crime networks

LONDON: The British home secretary on Wednesday set out new measures to strengthen border security, enforce immigration rules, and increase returns. The measures include the immediate recruitment of up to 100 new specialist intelligence and investigation officers at the National Crime Agency (NCA) to target, dismantle and disrupt organized immigration crime networks, the Home Office said in a statement. Yvette Cooper also announced a "major surge in immigration enforcement and returns activity" to make sure that immigration and asylum rules are respected and enforced. She said the government has new plans for the next six months to achieve "the highest rate of removals" of those with no right to be in the country, including failed asylum seekers, for five years (since 2018). A new intelligence-driven illegal working program will be rolled out to target, investigate, and take down unscrupulous employers who illegally employ those with no right to work here, added the statement. The plan also includes a large surge in enforcement and returns flights, increased detention capacity, redeployment of staff to drive this increase in returns, and sanctions to be taken against unscrupulous employers who hire workers illegally. This comes on top of the 50% uplift in the number of NCA officers stationed in Europe, it added.—APP

Denmark, Sweden announce joint crackdown on gang crime

COPENHAGEN: The justice ministers of Denmark and Sweden on Wednesday announced joint measures to crack down on organized gang crime following a series of violent incidents in Denmark, allegedly involving Swedish youth, the Danish state news media outlet DR reported. The Danish and Swedish justice ministers, Peter Hummelgaard and Gunnar Strömmer, respectively, made the announcement at a press conference in Copenhagen. "We are unfortunately well aware that gang violence knows no borders. Our response must therefore be strong and coordinated," Hummelgaard said. The ministers confirmed that under the agreement, both neighboring countries will enhance information-sharing mechanism to prevent recruitment of young people into criminal gangs. They have also agreed to strengthen their coordination with third countries to extradite gang leaders who are at large, the ministers noted.—APP

Yoon: N.Korea faces 'end of regime' if invades South

'We must make it clear to North Korean regime, which harbors dreams of forceful unification and constantly eyes the Republic of Korea, that any invasion will lead to end of its regime,' says South Korean president

NEWS DESK

SEOUL: South Korea on Wednesday warned that North Korea would face the end of its regime if it attempted to invade South Korea. "We must make it clear to the North Korean regime, which harbors dreams of forceful unification and constantly eyes the Republic of Korea, that any invasion will lead to the end of its regime," said South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol, using South Korea's official name, during his visit to the Ground Operations Command in Yongsu, south of Seoul, according to Seoul-based Yonhap News. During his visit, Yoon was briefed on the Ulchi Freedom Shield

exercise. The 11-day exercise, an annual affair, was launched by the US and South Korea on Monday. It is being held on the heels of heightened cross-border tensions between South and North Korea.

Yoon underlined the significance of the joint exercise in evaluating military preparedness and strengthening the combined defense stance of the allies in response to North Korea. Yoon had also warned in September 2023 that the North Korean regime will be "brought to an end" if it uses nuclear weapons. Meanwhile, South Korean prosecutors have cleared President Yoon Suk Yeol's wife of charges stemming from her



acceptance of a luxury bag as a gift two years ago, different media outlets reported on Wednesday.

A legal team handling First Lady Kim Keon Hee's case at the Seoul Central District Prosecutors Office (SCDPO) has concluded that anti-graft charges against her cannot be pursued. The investigation focused on allegations that she illegally accepted a \$2,255 luxury handbag from Korean American pastor Choi Jae-young in Sept. 2022. The case also involved other expensive gifts that Pastor Choi allegedly gave Kim. The division tasked with the case recently informed Chief Prosecutor Lee Chang-soo of their decision to drop charges against the first lady. Lee plans to report the decision to the prosecutor general, according to Seoul-based Yonhap News Agency. The probe team is expected to re-

port its findings to the top prosecutor on Thursday, the news agency said, citing officials. The decision comes about four months after the top prosecutor directed the SCDPO to form a special investigation team for the case. The investigation team also concluded that the bag received from Choi appears to have no bearing on President Yoon Suk Yeol's official duties. The team reportedly considered the bag as a personal gift exchanged as an expression of gratitude, given the circumstances and Choi's alleged requests for Kim's assistance, including a favor to secure a future burial site for former Korean American US House Rep. Jay Chang Joon Kim at a national cemetery.

Modi lands in Warsaw for landmark Poland, Ukraine visit

India has largely shied away from explicit condemnation of Russia and abstained on UN resolutions targeting the Kremlin

WEB DESK

WARSAW: Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Warsaw on Wednesday for a historic visit to Poland before traveling on to Ukraine later this week to campaign for a "peaceful resolution" of the Russia-Ukraine war. Modi will be the first Indian premier to visit Ukraine and first in 45 years to travel to Poland, Ukraine's staunch ally and neighbor, and a key transit for foreign leaders heading to Kyiv. He is expected to meet with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk and President Andrzej Duda on Thursday, as well as with Indian nationals living in the Central European country. Poland "needs a lasting

partnership with India," deputy Prime Minister Wladyslaw Kosiniak-Kamysz told reporters before Modi's visit. Modi has trodden a delicate balance between maintaining India's historically warm ties with Russia while courting closer security partnerships with Western nations as a bulwark against regional rival China. His government has avoided explicit condemnations of Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, instead urging both sides to resolve their differences through dialogue. "As a friend and partner, we hope for an early return of peace and stability in the region," Modi said in a statement published Wednesday before his departure for Poland. In Kyiv, Modi will hold talks with President Vo-

lodymyr Zelensky and "share perspectives on peaceful resolution of the ongoing Ukraine conflict," the statement added. Zelensky said on Monday that "a number of documents are also expected to be signed" during Modi's visit. In July, hours after Russia pummeled multiple cities across Ukraine, Modi visited Moscow and was pictured hugging Putin at his residence, drawing condemnation from Zelensky. Modi also visited Russia in 2019 and hosted Putin in New Delhi two years later, weeks before Moscow began its offensive against Ukraine. India has largely shied away from explicit condemnation of Russia and abstained on UN resolutions targeting the Kremlin.

Iran's parliament approves all members of president's Cabinet

FOREIGN DESK

TEHRAN: The Iranian parliament (Majlis) has ended the debate on nominees for the country's new cabinet and approved all of President Masoud Pezeshkian's 19 cabinet picks. In a session on Wednesday, following four days of intense deliberations and hearings, the lawmakers voted in favor of all 19 ministers proposed by the new president. Pezeshkian submitted the list of his proposed ministerial picks to the parliament for a vote of confidence on August 11, 12 days after his swearing-in ceremony. The lawmakers convened on Saturday to discuss the qualifications and programs of the ministerial nominees and the process continued till Wednesday before the voting took place. Among the ministerial nominees to get the parliament's nod is Abbas Araghchi, who will take over as the Islamic Republic of Iran's new foreign minister, succeeding Hossein Amir-Abdollahian.

Switzerland to join European Cyber Security Organization

BERN: The Swiss government on Wednesday decided to join the European Cyber Security Organization (ECSO). In a press release, the government said the move would strengthen Switzerland's cyber security and enable greater coordination with European partners. "Membership of ECSO allows Switzerland to obtain important information on current technology decisions and developments as well as access to expert networks," it said. "Furthermore, thanks to ECSO membership, Swiss specialist agencies will have access to ECSO's recommendations and priorities for the EU's research programs," the press release added. According to the federal government, Switzerland will also have access to the ECSO working groups, which enable a topic-specific exchange with experts from the EU. Bern will also have access to the technology papers produced by the working groups and can help shape the organization. ECSO was founded in 2016 as a non-profit association in Belgium to launch a public-private partnership with the European Commission in the field of cybersecurity. In its press release, the Swiss government describes the organization as the only European cross-sectoral and independent membership organization for cybersecurity. According to its website, ECSO brings together and represents public and private European cybersecurity stakeholders and promotes their cooperation. According to the organization, the approximately 300 members of ECSO include large companies, SMEs and start-ups, research centers, universities, associations and local, regional and national public administrations of the member states of the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA). The EU repeatedly sees itself as a victim of cyberattacks, for which it blames Russia in particular. On May 3 of this year, for example, the EU condemned "malicious cyber activities" against Germany and the Czech Republic. "The insidious cyber campaign demonstrates Russia's continued pattern of irresponsible behavior in cyberspace by attacking democratic institutions, government agencies and critical infrastructure providers across the European Union and beyond," EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said in a statement.—APP

China vows to protect its EV firms against EU tariffs

BEIJING: The Chinese Commerce Ministry announced on Tuesday that China will implement all necessary measures to robustly defend the legitimate rights and interests of its companies against the European Union's proposed import duties on Chinese electric vehicles. Earlier in the day, the European Commission revealed its draft decision to impose import duties on Chinese electric cars, with rates varying from 17% to 36.3%, depending on the manufacturer. In comparison, import duties on Tesla are set at 9%. These measures are anticipated to be finalized by November. The ministry stated, "China will take all necessary measures to resolutely protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese enterprises." It criticized the EU's actions as "unfair competition under the guise of fair competition," and voiced strong objections and significant concern. The Chinese Commerce Ministry reiterated its commitment to resolving trade disputes with the EU through dialogue and consultations. It expressed hope that the EU would adopt a rational and pragmatic approach and expedite discussions to address the existing disagreements. China requests WTO consultations over EU tariffs on EVs. Last week, China launched a dispute settlement procedure at the World Trade Organization (WTO) regarding the European Union's tariffs on Chinese electric vehicles, the WTO announced on Wednesday.—APP

Thailand reports first case of new Mpox variant

BANGKOK: Thailand has detected the first suspected case of the Clade 1 strain of mpox in the country, local media said on Wednesday. The patient is a foreign national who traveled from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, local outlet Thai Enquirer reported. No further details have so far been shared by health authorities. The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the mpox situation a "public health emergency of international concern." Since the beginning of 2024, over a dozen African countries have reported the disease, with the Democratic Republic of Congo accounting for more than 90% of reported cases. The Clade 1 variant of mpox is believed to be both more contagious and more deadly than the Clade 2, which was responsible for the global outbreak that began in 2022. A person infected with mpox develops symptoms within two to 19 days after exposure, and causes rashes and flu-like symptoms, according to health professionals. Mpox is a viral disease that can spread through close contact as well as through contaminated materials like sheets, clothing and needles, according to WHO.—APP

Türkiye exports AI system to Japan

ANKARA: In a significant advancement, Turkish engineers have developed a highly sophisticated artificial intelligence system named 'Covision,' now being utilized in Japan according to a report by media reporters. The system, designed to minimize errors in manufacturing processes, integrates advanced AI with robotics to revolutionize quality control. As countries increasingly prioritize minimizing errors in production, optimizing costs, enhancing energy efficiency and maximizing personnel productivity, the need for advanced systems like Covision has become more critical. Historically, quality checks in factories were primarily manual, but the Covision system, developed by Turkish engineers, promises to change that paradigm. Developed by Kadersan, a subsidiary of Türkiye's Defense Industry Presidency's SSTEK, Covision represents a major leap in digital production.—APP

Record high in aid workers killed amid war on Gaza: UN

GENEVA: The United Nations has reported a troubling increase in aid workers killed in war zones, primarily due to the ongoing Israeli aggression on Gaza. On Monday, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) disclosed that in 2023, 280 aid workers were killed—over twice the 118 deaths reported in the previous year. "With 280 aid workers killed in 33 countries last year, 2023 marked the deadliest year on record for the global humanitarian community," OCHA stressed in a statement on World Humanitarian Day. The report also indicated that 2024 could potentially be even more deadly, with the Aid Worker Security Database showing that 172 aid workers had been killed by August 7. The increase in fatalities—primarily from Israeli airstrikes in Gaza between October and December of the previous year—marks a 137 percent rise compared to 2022, which saw 118 aid worker deaths. Since the war on Gaza began, now in its 11th month, over 280 humanitarian workers have been killed, mostly due to Israeli airstrikes. The majority of these deaths have been among Palestinians working for the UN Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA), according to OCHA.—APP



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatisation, Board of Investment & Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan presided 222nd meeting of Privatisation Commission Board.—DNA

Pearl-Continental, Foundation University partner for educational growth

The partnership will focus on a range of initiatives, including tailored professional training programs, skill development projects, and knowledge exchange workshops

DNA

RAWALPINDI: Pearl-Continental Hotel Rawalpindi, the city's premier 5-star luxury hotel under the Hashoo Group, has entered into a strategic partnership with Foundation University, aiming to bridge the gap between academia and the hospitality industry. This collaboration promises to benefit not only the two organizations but also the broader community. The partnership will focus on a range of initiatives, including tailored professional training programs, skill development projects, and knowledge exchange workshops. Additionally, Pearl-Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi will offer exclusive deals and discounts to students and faculty members of Foundation University, further strengthening this alliance. The official launch of this collaboration was marked by a ceremony held at Pearl-Continental Hotel, Rawalpindi. The event was graced by senior executives from both Hashoo Group and Foundation University, including Bastien Blanc, CEO of the Hospitality Di-

vision at Hashoo Group, and Major General Muhammad Kaleem Asif HI (M) (Retd.), Rector of Foundation University.

Speaking on this occasion, Bastien Blanc, CEO of the Hospitality Division at Hashoo Group, said, "Strong inter-industry linkages can create exponential impact and foster innovation. Through our partnership with Foundation University, we aim to achieve these results. This collaboration

will unlock more growth opportunities for students in the tourism and hospitality sector through innovation and creative ideas."

Major General Muhammad Kaleem Asif HI (M) (Retd.), Rector of Foundation University, remarked, "This MoU marks a pivotal collaboration that will open new avenues for innovative learning and practical experiences for our students. Pearl-Continental's esteemed reputation in the

hospitality industry makes them an ideal partner in our mission to bridge the gap between academia and industry. We are confident that this partnership will inspire progress, set new standards of quality, and benefit both our institutions by fostering cooperation and mutual growth in the hospitality sector." Hashoo Group is Pakistan's premier conglomerate, with a diversified business portfolio spanning both national and international mar-

kets. The Group owns and operates the Pearl-Continental Hotels & Resorts, PC Legacy, Hotel One, and Pearl Residences brands in Pakistan, and has business interests encompassing the information technology, education, investment, travel & tourism, and real estate sectors. Foundation University Islamabad (FUI), a project of Fauji Foundation, was established under a Federal Charter in October 2002. The university has been rated as 'W4' (the highest rating category) by the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan. FUI aims at providing quality education to its students through its two prominent schools: The Foundation University School of Health Sciences (FUSH) and the Foundation University School of Science and Technology (FUSST). FUSH produces competent health professionals in the fields of Medicine, Dentistry, Physical Therapy, and Nursing. Additionally, FUSST is gaining prominence in IT, Engineering, Arts and Social Sciences, and Management Sciences, offering degrees from undergraduate to PhD levels.



Briefs

Power tariff for Karachiites raised by Rs5.75

DNA

KARACHI: The National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) on Wednesday approved a whopping Rs5.75 per unit increase in electricity rates for consumers of K-Electric. The hike of Rs 5.75 per unit is a result of the monthly fuel price adjustment (FPA) for May. For the month of May, electricity tariffs will see an increase of Rs 2.59 per unit, while June's adjustment will add an additional Rs 3.16 per unit to consumer bills. These changes are set to be reflected in the electricity bills issued for the months of October and November.

The regulatory authority has confirmed that this price hike will apply to all lifeline customers as well as those utilising electric vehicles, impacting a wide range of consumers across the city. The authority stated that these adjustments are necessary to align with the fluctuating fuel costs used in power generation.

ECP's updated list of parties includes PTI

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan on Wednesday unveiled an updated list of registered political parties in the country. The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf was included among the registered parties. However, it merits mention that the party's leadership names remained in limbo as the PTI's chairman slot was not updated specifically due to unresolved status of intra-party elections.

According to the new list, the ECP has 166 registered political parties including the PTI. The intra-party elections of the PML-N and Jamat-e-Islami have also been accepted. The names of new presidents and chairmen of various political parties have also been updated. The new list had also not updated the name of PTI chairman however, the names of PML-N President Mian Nawaz Sharif and JI Emir Naeemur Rehman have been updated. By the same token, Mahmood Khan's name as chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians and Asif Ali Zardari's name as chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians have also been included. Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari's name as PPP chairman and Asfandiyar Wali as ANP president have been enlisted.

Pak launches apostille convention for int'l document authentication

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presided over today's launching ceremony which was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information Technology and National Information Technology Board (NITB)

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The formal launching ceremony of the "Apostille Convention", was held today at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad. With this launch, public document authentication for international use has been streamlined. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar presided over today's launching ceremony which was attended by senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Information Technology and National Information Technology Board (NITB).

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister outlined the government's priority of public facilitation and the efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in provision of efficient public service delivery by simplifying the attestation and legalization of documents. He urged that the officers of the Ministry to be more proactive in provision of efficient public service delivery.

With the formal launch of the Apostille certification, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Liaison Offices at Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta and Gujrat will receive documents for Apostille attestation though already notified five courier companies. From today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also introduced an "Online Apostille Application System". Under this system any individual can apply online for apostille by creating their profile and submitting documents directly through "Online Payment App" introduced by the Habib Bank Ltd.



KP CM wants massive crowd in Islamabad rally

CM Gandapur directs all party leaders to bring as many people as possible to the rally

STAFF REPORT

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Amin Gandapur presided over a meeting to discuss arrangements regarding the much-awaited public rally of the PTI scheduled on Aug 22 in the capital, Islamabad. The meeting was attended by the members of the national and provincial assemblies. Besides, the KP chief minister met divisional leaders of the party. CM Gandapur directed all party leaders to bring as many people as possible to the rally, urging them to use face masks along to avoid any untoward incident (a reference to teargas shelling or other government measures). He said the government would hold public rally at Tarnol. "The time has come to settle score with the government over injustices meted out to us," he said. He informed the participants that conveyance for the Insaf Students Federation (ISF) would be arranged by the party while instructing the workers to gather at Swabi at 2pm from where he would lead the caravan to Islamabad.

PTA links internet disruptions to 'fault in undersea cable'

Regulatory body's chief says govt can provide explanation on firewall as it issued directions for its installation

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: After receiving immense flak from netizens and information technology sector bodies over intermittent internet disruptions, the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA) has finally commented on the issue linking it with a "fault in the undersea submarine cable". "Submarine Consortium has informed [us] that the internet [services] are affected due to a fault in the submarine cable which will be resolved by August 27," PTA Chairman

Finmin sees approval of IMF bailout package next month

Muhammad Aurangzeb says Pakistan is making good progress with IMF for Board's approval in September

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: The government in Islamabad has said it is making good progress with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and hopes to get board approval in September for a new \$7 billion loan programme. "We are making good progress with the IMF for Board approval in September," Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Wednesday in a text message to an international media outlet. The federal minister's remarks come as the country is so far unable to sign a Letter of Intent (LoI) for making a formal request to the Washington-based lender's executive board for considering approval of \$7 billion under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme. A day earlier, The News report stated the country is yet to secure confirmation on an external financing gap of \$3 to \$5 billion, despite passage of five weeks after striking a staff-level agreement under a fresh EFF bailout package. The finance czar and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) governor Jameel Ahmad are supposed to sign the LoI on behalf of the government

and the commitment would be dispatched to the IMF's executive board with a request for approving \$7 billion under the EFF programme of 37 months. It should be noted here that Pakistan and the IMF had struck a staff level agreement on the 37-month loan programme on July 12, 2024, with the country hoping that its request would be considered for approval by the IMF's executive board in four to six weeks. The IMF said the programme was subject to approval from its executive board and obtaining "timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners". Islamabad again faces external financing as major stumbling block in the way for securing fresh bailout package from the IMF. Pakistan is in talks with Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and China to meet gross financing needs under the IMF programme, Aurangzeb said in July following a trip to China to seek energy sector debt reprofiling. Rollovers or disbursements on loans from Pakistan's long-time allies, in addition to financing from the IMF, have helped Pakistan meet its external financing needs in the past.

Govt decides not to 'abolish' Health Ministry

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided not to abolish the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination. According to sources, some departments under the ministry will be merged instead and the ministry will be right-sized. Sources revealed that the ministry will coordinate with international organizations and provinces to improve healthcare services. The government is also considering transferring employees of merged departments to other departments. The National Emergency Health Services will be merged with the National Health Institute and the Sheikh Zayed Hospital in Lahore will be handed over to the Punjab government, sources added. Sources further said that the government is also considering handing over Rawalpindi's under-construction hospital to the Punjab government.

IHC turns down Imran, Bushra's pleas

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday rejected former premier Imran Khan and former first lady Bushra Bibi's pleas against terming the arrests in Toshakhana case as illegal. Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Babar Sattar of the IHC heard the case.

The IHC dismissed the applications of the couple, rendering them null and void while also disposing of the pleas in second Toshakhana reference.

The application of documents submission by the PTI founder were accepted as the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) submitted record of case closure in the court. Besides, copies of case closure record were given to the PTI founders counsels and the court took back the order of not announcing the verdict of the 190 million pound case.

Karsaz accident: Court sends suspect to jail

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI: A Karachi East court on Wednesday sent the woman, accused of killing two people in a road accident on Karsaz Road, to jail on judicial remand. The judicial magistrate remanded the suspect, Natasha, in the judicial custody a day after an order to produce her before the court was issued along with a medical report. An investigation officer (IO) had sought seven-day physical remand of the accused, stating that the Section-322 is non-bailable offence.

The development comes after a case was lodged against the suspect who allegedly rammed her car into multiple vehicles on Monday which also resulted in five people being wounded. A day earlier, the court had given a one-day physical remand of the suspect who is a resident of Karachi's KDA Scheme-I area.

Meanwhile, the two people who lost their lives have been identified as daughter and father, 26-year-old Aamna Arif and 60-year-old Imran Arif. Following the incident, police and Rangers had taken the woman driver into custody and brought her to the police station following the mishap and impounded her jeep.

Subsequently she was also taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) for a medical check-up as she also received an injury to her head. A case had been filed by Imtiaz Arif, the deceased's brother, who has alleged that his brother and niece died due to the suspect's "negligence, free-wheeling and speeding". Police had said since the suspect had a driving licence, therefore charges of culpable homicide would be applied to her case. Whereas, they had said, charges of negligence and rash driving had also been added to the FIR.

Israeli strikes kill dozens in Gaza after Blinken ends visit

The military issued new evacuation orders in the heavily overcrowded area of Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced by the fighting have sought shelter

NEWS DESK

CAIRO/JERUSALEM: Israeli airstrikes across Gaza killed at least 50 Palestinians in the past 24 hours, Palestinian health authorities said on Wednesday, as the military said troops continued to target militants and seize weapons and ammunition. As last-ditch diplomatic efforts continued to halt the 10-month-old war between Israel and Hamas, the Israeli military said jets hit around 30 targets throughout the Gaza Strip including tunnels, launch sites and an observation post. It said troops killed dozens of armed fighters and captured weapons including explosives, grenades and automatic rifles. The military issued new evacuation orders in the heavily overcrowded area of Deir Al-Balah, in central Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians displaced by the fighting have sought shelter. The evacuation orders, which the military said were needed to clear civilians from what had become "a dangerous combat zone," were soon followed by tank fire with at least one person

killed and several wounded by machine gun fire, medics and residents said. The conflict churned on as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken ended his latest visit to the Middle East with no clear sign over whether a deal to end the fighting is in sight. At stake in the talks Blinken had with leaders of ceasefire mediators, Egypt and Qatar, as well as in Israel, is the fate of tiny, crowded Gaza, where Israel's military campaign has killed more than 40,000 people since October according to Palestinian health authorities, and of the remaining hostages being held there. The war in Gaza began on Oct. 7 last year when Hamas gunmen stormed into Israeli communities and military bases, killing around 1,200 people and abducting about 250 hostages, according to Israeli tallies. For the displaced left exposed in Deir Al-Balah, the lack of progress toward a ceasefire compounded the misery as they searched for space away from the fighting. "Where will we go? Where will we go?" said Abu-rakan, 55, a displaced person from Gaza City in the territory's north who has had to change refuge five times since October.

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