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Detailed News On Page-08

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Saud Shakeel slams new Asian record

Detailed News On Page-06



'To avoid chaos'

PTI calls off rally after roadblocks, NOC revocation

Who sent Azam Swati for early morning meeting with Imran Khan? Aleema Khan questions

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Thursday put off its public gathering in Islamabad and rescheduled it for September 8, after the local administration of the city revoked its no objection certificate and sealed roads leading to the federal capital. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan said the notification about postponement of the rally had been issued and it would now be held on September 8, as per instruction of PTI founder Imran Khan. "We postponed the jalsa following a meeting with the PTI founder in Adiala jail," he said. PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub also confirmed date for the rally was changed on instruction of Imran.

"We have received information that the government is conspiring to spread anarchy, under the cover of the jalsa," he maintained. Upon the opposition party's announcement of a new date for the rally, the Islamabad administration issued a notification granting it permission in this regard. The notification containing 40 instructions is issued by the district magistrate of the federal capital. "The Islamabad administration revoked the NOC due to protests of the religious parties. The administration would provide security for the September 8 gathering," it said. However, the notification warned that fundamental rights of the citizens should not be violated by the participants of the rally. People should gather at 4pm and the event should be concluded by 7pm. "It will be the jalsa organiser's duty to disperse the party workers at the end of the rally. The workers will not be allowed to stay at the rally site on September 8," it said. The notification emphasised that the permission is granted for public gathering and not for a sit-in. "No object of lethal or non-lethal force including batons of any size would be wielded by any participant of the gathering nor any participant shall indulge in

Continued on Page 06

Witnesses disown testimonies in 9 May cases

COURT REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Former Punjab Deputy Speaker Wasiq Qayyum Abbasi and MPA Umar Tanveer Butt have denied becoming witnesses against former prime minister Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in cases linked to the May 9 unrest. Appearing before Anti-Terrorism Court Judge Malik Ijaz Asif today, both leaders refuted the claim that they provided confessional statements under Section 164. They insisted they never testified against the PTI founder or his wife, either verbally or in writing, before any magistrate. In court, Abbasi and Butt maintained that Imran Khan had consistently advocated peaceful protest and that the serious allegations against him lacked any foundation. Both also filed applications seeking acquittal due to insufficient evidence, which the court has accepted for further hearing. Their lawyer, Faisal Malik, submitted the applications, which have now become part of the court record. It was on the basis of these alleged statements that Bushra Bibi was implicated in the May 9 cases. The court has issued notices for the hearing of both acquittal requests, signalling potential relief for the accused leaders.



ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Greece in Pakistan, Konstantinos Moatsos, pays a farewell call on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr. - DNA

Pakistan new envoy to US takes charge

Rizwan Saeed Sheikh replaces Masood Khan as Pakistan's ambassador to the US

SAIFULLAH ANSAR

ISLAMABAD: The newly appointed Pakistani ambassador to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, has officially assumed his diplomatic responsibilities after arriving in the US capital, Washington, DC. According to the Pakistani mission in Washington, the new envoy took charge on Wednesday. Ambassador Sheikh, who is a career diplomat, replaced Masood Khan as Pakistan's ambassador to the US. The change of command at the Pakistani diplomatic mission in Washington

Continued on Page 06

Govt initiates process for discos privatisation

The Privatisation Commission invited requests for proposals from interested parties

NEWS DESK

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday formally initiated the privatisation process of power distribution companies also known as Discos. Proposals have also been sought for appointing financial advisors for the privatisation of three distribution companies in the first phase. The Faisalabad Electric Supply Corporation (FESCO), Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), and Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) will

Continued on Page 06

Mubarak Saani bail case CJP withdraws all objected paragraphs in revised judgment

Three-member bench led by CJP Isa hears Punjab government's petition against verdict

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faiz Isa has accepted the suggestions of ulema regarding Mubarak Saani bail case and withdrawn all objected paragraphs in the revised judgment. CJP Faiz Isa read out the short verdict in Urdu. The CJP announced that all the objected paragraphs shall not be cited as precedent in any case. The Supreme Court said the amended detailed judgment on the revision petition will be issued later. The CJP further ordered that the trial court should proceed by ignoring the deleted paragraph. The Supreme Court said the trial court will not be affected by the decision of the apex court on February 6 and July 24, 2024. In a brief verdict, Chief Justice Qazi Faiz Isa said this was not a curative review but a case of correction in the judgment.

Continued on Page 06

PBC members move SC against Election Act

Amendments conflict with Constitution and attempt to nullify top court decisions, says petition

FAISAL SHEIKH

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council (PBC) filed an application in the Supreme Court against the recent amendments made to the Election Act. Six members of the PBC filed the petition in the top court. The Election Commission

Continued on Page 06

Briefs

Govt aims to include Pak in G-20

Only youth can transform the destiny of country, he says

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar has said that making Pakistan part of G-20 by 2030 was the mission of the government. Addressing National Youth Convention in Islamabad, he said that the youth, who make up 60 pc of the total population, have to play their crucial role to achieve this milestone. He said the youth were future of this country and we wanted to leave a better Pakistan for the coming generations. Alluding to the steps taken over the years by the PML-N for the uplift of the youth, the Information Minister said the present government was focusing on the initiatives aimed at exploiting the potential of the youth.

Fawad supports Imran's decision

DNA

LAHORE: Former Federal Minister Fawad Chaudhry has endorsed the decision by PTI founder Imran Khan to postpone the rally that was scheduled today (Thursday). In his statement, Chaudhry noted that extremists were capable of anything and that their gathering in Islamabad could lead to accusations being directed at the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). He warned that the campaign by extremists was becoming increasingly dangerous. Chaudhry concluded with a prayer for Pakistan's safety, expressing hope that the country remained free from turmoil.

Demands relief in bills

Ji to hold shutter-down strike on August 28

It pledges to compel government to provide relief to public in electricity, gas bills

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) emir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman has announced a shutter-down strike on August 28 against electricity and gas overbilling and taxes. Addressing a press conference in Lahore, he stated that traders were on board with them as traders organisations had also called for the same strikes. His party was representing the public and whole Pakistan will support them in their movement against inflated bills and taxes. JI emir affirmed. Rehman demanded the government to provide them relief in electricity bills and the Punjab government's two months relief in electricity bills wouldn't resolve the crisis. He berated the governments of other provinces for not granting relief from their budget. He argued that "the same Punjab government is governing the federal government. Why don't they provide relief to the public by taking austerity measures?" JI emir took the credit of relief and claimed that Rs 14 relief by the Punjab government

Continued on Page 06

ECC approves Rs 20b for Op Azm-e-Istehkam

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC), chaired by Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, has approved the allocation of Rs 20 billion for Operation Resolute Stability, according to the Ministry of Finance. During the meeting, the ECC also granted conditional approval for the export of 100,000 metric tons of sugar, extending the export period from 45 to 60 days. The export of sugar to Afghanistan has been permitted on the condition of receiving advance payment. Additionally, the Letter of

Continued on Page 06

Pakistan desires to revive partnership with Germany

Will announce a five-year economic plan very soon as parameters finalised: PM



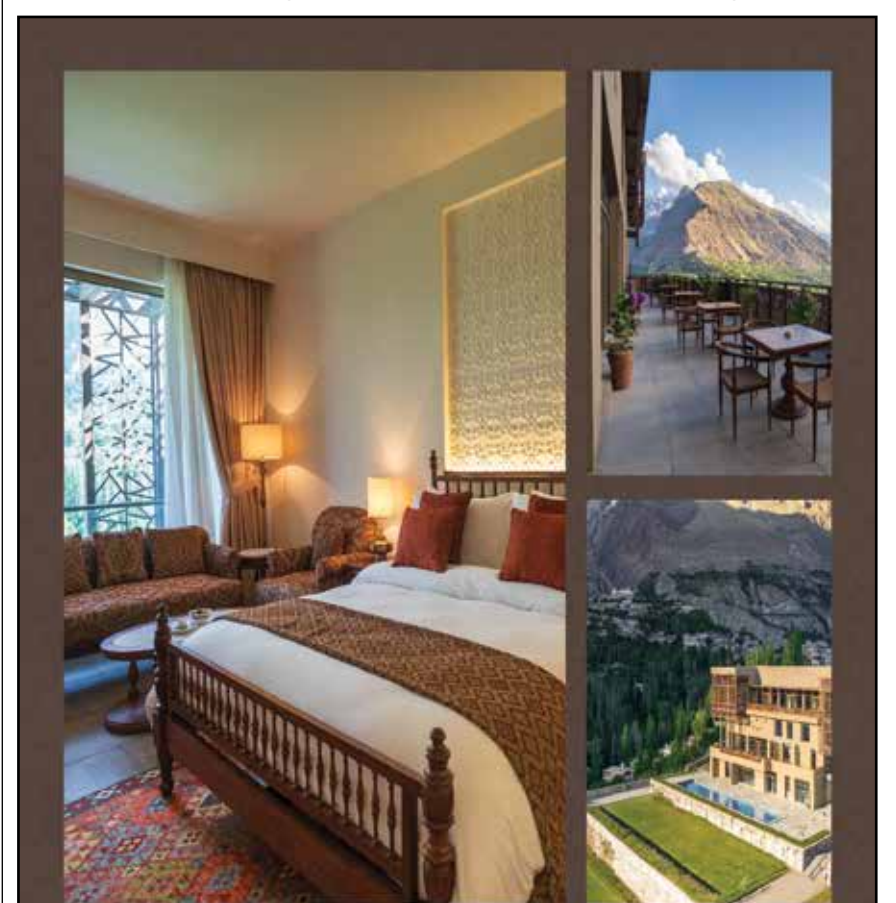
KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with German Federal Minister for

Economic Cooperation and Development, Svenja Schulze here wherein he expressed Pakistan's strong desire to revive its partnership with Germany back to its glorious past. In the meeting, the prime minister appreciated

Germany's longstanding support for Pakistan's socioeconomic development, according to a PM Office press release. He said that Pakistan and Germany had a history of mutually beneficial commercial and economic ties and lauded Germany's role in Pakistan's industrial development. Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighted Pakistan's commitment to sustainable development, climate change mitigation, and economic growth while sharing his government's priorities including structural reforms for the country's economic revival. Minister Schulze conveyed the greetings of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz to the prime minister and reaffirmed Germany's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan,

Continued on Page 06



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President orders lifetime pension for disabled employee's son

President said that the person with disability (PWD) could not be left in a merciless situation by the state, given the fact that his elders were deceased and were receiving pension before their death

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday directed the Employees' Old Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) to ensure lifetime payment of pension to Muhammad Shehzad, a person with visual disability as the facility was earlier denied to him following his father's death. The president said that the person with disability (PWD) could not be left in a merciless situation by the state, given the fact that his elders were deceased and were receiving pension before their death. He regretted that EOBI displayed grave insensitivity by neglecting a PWD and that too at a time when all his predecessors had passed away leaving him without any support. Muhammad Shehzad (the complainant), who was blind by birth, had filed a

complaint with the Wafaqi Mohtasib, stating that his father, Muhammad Afzal Zafar, was an Old Age Pensioner of EOBI and died on December 20, 2016. The complainant's mother had passed away even before his father. So, he requested EOBI to grant him a "family pension" for life as a "disabled legal heir" of his late father. The EOBI, however, rejected his application citing Section 22B (3) (i) of the EOB Act, 1976, which provides that only male minors under 18 years of age are eligible for a family pension, whereas Shehzad was 44 years old. The Mohtasib closed further investigation of his complaint, after which, Muhammad Shehzad filed a representation before the President of Pakistan. The president accepted the complainant's representation and emphasised that keeping in view the letter and spirit of the Constitution of

Pakistan, particularly Articles 9 and 25, a Person with Disability could not be deprived of such a pension, since he deserved to be treated on a much better footing and placed in a more deserving category than any other recipient of pension in the country presently. He also endorsed Mohtasib's recommendation that EOBI's law in this regard should be reviewed and brought in line with the federal policy. While accepting Muhammad Shehzad's representation, the president directed EOBI to ensure payment of some reasonable pension/stipend, which should not be less than the pension which the complainant's deceased father was receiving at the time immediately preceding his death. "This pension should be paid to the petitioner out of the existing funds of EOBI", held the president.



ISLAMABAD : Coco Ushiyama, Representative and Country Director for WFP Pakistan called on Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain .—DNA

3-day Pharma Asia Exhibition concludes

KARACHI : The three-day 21st Pharma Asia Exhibition, the premier pharmaceutical exhibition in the region, successfully concluded on Thursday at the Expo Centre in Karachi. The event, organized by E-Commerce Gateway, featured Deputy Mayor Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad, as the chief guest, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of Pakistan's pharmaceutical industry. Running from August 20 - 22, Pharma Asia 2024 showcased the latest advancements and innovations, transforming the pharmaceutical landscape of the country. The event attracted over 200 companies and more than 750 booths, offering a platform for manufacturers, suppliers, traders, distributors, policymakers, and investors to converge and explore opportunities for collaboration and business development. With participation from 15 countries, including a prominent pavilion from China, the exhibition was a bustling hub of activity and networking. The event provided unparalleled opportunities for international collaboration, making it a key highlight in the global pharmaceutical calendar. Speaking on the success of the event, Deputy Mayor Karachi, Salman Abdullah Murad, expressed his appreciation for the enthusiastic participation of both local and international stakeholders. "Pharma Asia 2024 has demonstrated the tremendous potential of our pharmaceutical sector.—APP

USAID, Pakistan varsities discuss sustainable reforms

NAZIR SIYAL

KARACHI :The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), through its Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), implemented by the University of Utah, brings together an extensive network of American professors to support its partner universities in strengthening their institutional performance. The opening session of this 2-day dialogue was chaired by Ms. Kate Somvongsiri, Mission Director USAID/Pakistan, alongside Chairman Sindh Higher

Education Commission Prof Dr Tariq Rafi. The event provided a forum for the vice-chancellors to stimulate discussions on emerging issues in higher education, foster peer-to-peer learning, and facilitate the exchange of ideas and best practices among partner universities. Participants stressed the importance of extended leadership training, to equip vice-chancellors with the skills needed to effectively manage emerging challenges.

forms to guide universities towards sustainability. The Higher Education System Strengthening Activity (HESSA), implemented by the University of Utah, brings together an extensive network of American professors to support its partner universities in strengthening their institutional performance. The opening session of this 2-day dialogue was chaired by Ms. Kate Somvongsiri, Mission Director USAID/Pakistan, alongside Chairman Sindh Higher

Minister emphasizes modernization of agri sector

HYDERABAD : Provincial Minister for Agriculture, Sports, and Anti-Corruption, Muhammad Bakhsh Mehar has emphasized the significance of adapting agriculture to modern technology demands, highlighting the need for training students, particularly female students, in the latest technology. Addressing the concluding ceremony of a training workshop on tractor operation and maintenance for women at Tando Jam Agricultural University, he underscored the government's efforts to provide employment opportunities to women in agriculture. He announced that trained female students would be provided with tractors, acknowledging the private sector's role in this initiative. Minister praised the increas-

ing participation of women in agricultural departments, attributing this progress to the vision of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto. He stressed the need for modern research and education in agriculture, highlighting the department's work on providing subsidized agricultural machinery and introducing the Kisan Card. In response to media queries, Mehar defended the Sindh government's performance, urging critics to reflect on their responsibilities. He assured strict action against negligent officers and praised Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah's capabilities. Regarding sports, Mehar announced the upcoming Sindh Olympics initiative, aiming to train youth in Olympic sports and tap

into the country's talent pool. He cited Arshad Nadeem, a talented athlete, as an example of Pakistan's potential in sports. Later, addressing the event the Sindh Agriculture Secretary Rafiq Ahmad Burro emphasized the importance of involving women in the agriculture sector, stating that no society can develop without their participation. In a training workshop on tractor operation and maintenance for women, Burro highlighted the significance of training women in driving and maintaining tractors as a first step towards their inclusion in the agricultural sector. He announced the introduction of a start-up agriculture entrepreneurship program, financed by the Sindh government.—APP

BISP chairperson urges need assessment for skills

KARACHI :The chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) Rubina Khalid, on Thursday, emphasized carrying out a need assessment of the industrial sector while designing a skill development program so that students could be able to get employment instantly after completion of their training. She expressed the views while chairing a review meeting and addressing a ceremony held at Lasbela Industrial Estates Development Authority (LIEDA) in Hub town of Balochistan on the occasion of handing over of 4 Mobile Registrations Vans (MRVs) to BISP Balochistan Zone to facilitate registration process in far-flung areas. Advisor to Chief Minister Balochistan for Industries and Commerce Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, Directors General of BISP, Managing Director LIEDA Fareed Muhammad Hasni, local leaders of Pakistan Peoples Party, and others were also present at the occasion. Senator Rubina Khalid terming BISP as a ray of hope for the deserving and destitute segments of society said that Shaheed Benazir Bhutto envisioned the social security program aimed at economic empowerment of women folk and later President Asif Ali Zardari has transformed the dream into a reality. The BISP has given identity to millions of women around the country who earlier were deprived of their fundamental right of recognition, she said adding that PPP has always taken the lead in initiatives for the development and economic empowerment of women as well as elevating dignity and status of women in the society. Underscoring the significance of reaching remote areas to address the issues of backwardness and a sense of deprivation in Balochistan, the BISP chairperson said that her organization was working on different projects to extend its outreach to the uncovered population. We are taking various measures for the registration of deserving women.—APP

Kundi stresses fund transparency for good governance

PESHAWAR : Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Thursday highlighted the importance of ensuring transparent use of funds for good governance in the province. The Governor said this in a meeting with Nasiruddin Sarwar, the Accountant General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at Governor House. During the meeting, Sarwar briefed the Governor on the performance of his office. The discussions focused on financial matters, emphasizing the correct and transparent use of public funds. The audit systems for public sector universities and provincial institutions were also discussed. Governor Kundi on this occasion said that transparent use of funds for good governance in the province is need of the hour for the uplift of all sectors. He acknowledged the significant role of the Accountant General's Office in maintaining transparency in the province's economic affairs. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in a meeting with a four-member delegation from the

Naghman Ultralight Club and Sports Flying Club, led by pilot Qazi Tufail, included Qazi Sajjad, Azad Khan, and Babar Khan. During the meeting, Governor Kundi praised the club for its positive activities and expressed that the club's promotion could attract global attention to the province. He acknowledged the club's efforts to continue its activities despite challenging conditions, noting that such initiatives could present Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a new and positive light to the international community. The Governor assured that every effort would be made to address and resolve the club's challenges. The delegation briefed the Governor on the club's history, explaining that it was established in 2009 and operated from the Peshawar University Botanical Garden in Aza Khel until 2012. They mentioned that the club currently has 35 members and 8 to 10 aircraft. Governor Kundi assured the delegation that he would ensure solutions to their problems are found. Similarly, Prof. Engineer Javed Farooqi,

CEO of Professional Education Foundation Karachi, and Prof. Mala Khan Haidri Educationist from Punjab called on Governor Faisal Karim Kundi here to discuss issues and potential solutions related to the promotion of education across the country. During the meeting, Governor Kundi emphasized the need for attention not only to universities in Peshawar but also to those in southern and northern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He highlighted the importance of providing modern education to students from merged districts and suggested that scholarships should prioritize students who completed their matriculation and intermediate education in these areas. Governor Kundi acknowledged the sacrifices made by the province in the fight against terrorism and said that poverty has left many children without access to education. He praised Prof. Farooqi for his commitment to improving education in the province and assured him of full support from the provincial government in promoting education.—APP

Rs. 124.7M scholarships awarded to police children

ABID RAZA

LAHORE : Under the education-friendly vision of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, record scholarships are being issued for higher education of police employees' children. On IG Punjab's instructions, priority efforts have been accelerated for educational welfare of police force children, with Rs. 1 billion being allocated this year for this initiative. He said that 1,445 students pursuing BS Honors have been awarded scholarships totaling over Rs. 82.2 million to cover

their fees. This amount has been distributed to students enrolled in BS Honors degree programs across various districts, including Lahore. Similarly, Rs. 41.8 million in scholarships have been awarded to 489 students enrolled in Information Technology degree programs. In total, over Rs. 124.7 million has been distributed to students in both categories. Inspector General of Punjab Police, Dr. Usman Anwar, said that under the current leadership, Punjab Highway Patrol (PHP) has shown exemplary performance in all sectors over the past one and a half years. IG Punjab emphasized that

the formulation and approval of PHP Promotion Rules under the leadership of Additional IG Rao Abdul Karim and DIG Athar Waheed is a commendable step that will benefit thousands of eligible PHP personnel. IG Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar said that departmental promotions are, in fact, a reflection of increased professional responsibilities and demand even more dedication. He advised the promoted personnel to be sincerely active in providing justice during duty and best services at citizen service centers. Dr. Usman Anwar highlighted that current welfare, promotion, and infrastructure

development measures in the police force are result from effective teamwork. He said that there is now a relationship of trust between the police leadership and the force, the force is committed to performing their duties with greater diligence than ever before. Meanwhile, IG Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, noted that there has been significant improvement in PHP's performance due to timely actions like crime eradication on highways, effective enforcement of traffic laws, protection of citizens' lives and property, axle load management, and paperless working.

SCCI proposes solutions for Pak-Afghan trade barriers

SHAMIM SHAHID

PESHAWAR : Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) president, Fuad Ishaq presented comprehensive proposals for improving bilateral Pak-Afghan trade and removal of hurdles in cross-border business. In his recommendations, Fuad Ishaq urged the government and institutions to enforce policies and orders after making consultation with chambers and the business community to avoid any collision between traders and relevant authorities and lead the country's economy on a path of sustainable growth and stability by enhancing mutual trade and export. Fuad Ishaq had given these proposals during a meeting

upon visit of Chief Collector Customs Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Jamil Nasir here at the chamber house. Collector Appraisement Customs Peshawar Mateen Alam, Collector Enforcement Customs Peshawar Ziaul Shams, and Additional Director (Transit Trade) Customs Peshawar Dr Tahir Iqbal Khattak accompanied the chief Collector Customs KP on the occasion. Chief Collector Customs KP Jamil Nasir in his address said that steps were being taken for ease of doing business. He assured that the dignity of the business community should be kept intact during the enforcement of rules and policies. He stressed the need to establish an atmosphere of trust between the customs department and the busi-

ness community. Senior customs officials emphasized close coordination and liaison between the Customs, chambers, and traders to make collective steps to resolve issues and enhance bilateral trade and export to stabilize the national economy. Fuad Ishaq in the meeting highlighted hurdles in Pak-Afghan bilateral trade and transit trade and briefed about reservations of the business community on policies and other issues. The SCCI chief urged the government to revisit policies and make them business/trade friendly to improve the economy. He called for bringing ease in TAD, the Transit Registration System, and suggested duties/tariffs of 212 items should be made equal to Afghan-

istan and asked to allow Pakistani exporters to export these items so that the menace of smuggling will be eradicated. In his recommendations, Fuad Ishaq demanded making Azakhel Dryport port fully functional, re-launch of cargo trains from Peshawar, and functionalization of the railway system. He apprised traders of community reservations about loose cargo and bonded carriers. Fuad said SCCI is taking practical measures for the uplift of the Honey sector, which is a major source of foreign exchange and export, and asked the Customs department to address issues attached to the Honey sector on a priority basis. Businessman Forum leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour also

addressed the meeting calling for making policies trade and business-friendly to enhance bilateral trade, transit trade, and export. Chief Collector Customs KP Jamil Nasir agreed with the proposals of the SCCI president and directed relevant officials on the spot to resolve issues. Jamil Nasir said practical steps were being taken to facilitate cross-border trade. He emphasized the reactivation of committees between the Customs Department and the chamber so that issues would be resolved collectively. He assured actions would be taken in consultation with chamber/trade bodies and would keep the dignity of the traders/taxpayers intact during the implementation of rules and policies.

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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
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Motorway Police.9270601-20
Women Police Stations Islamabad.....9222596
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PIA Cargo.....9280979
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RDA.....5555864
TMA.....5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Water Tank

Islamabad.....0321-5744480

Pre-CEO summit reception at the Indonesian embassy

At his remarks, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires said that Indonesia is offering opportunities to the Pakistani business communities to participating in the Indonesia - South and Central Asia (INASCA) Business Forum 2024 and Trade Expo Indonesia 2024 and to bring fruitful results for the benefits of two brotherly countries, as the more concrete actions of Indonesia and Pakistan existing close bilateral relations

DNA

ISLAMABAD: In a move to foster deeper business connections and enhance bilateral trade relations, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires Mr. Rahmat Hindiarta hosted an exclusive Pre-CEO Summit Dinner for Pakistani CEOs, Business Leaders, and their spouses on 21 August at the Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad. The event was in collaboration with the CEO Club Pakistan and World CEO Forum.

This distinguished event precedes the much-anticipated CEO Summit Islamabad scheduled to take place on 5 September 2024, and Trade Expo Indonesia, to be held on 9 - 12 October 2024. The dinner has brought together prominent business leaders from Pakistan, providing a unique opportunity to discuss key topics related to the upcoming summit and trade expo. The evening served as a platform for networking, collaboration, and the exploration of new avenues for economic cooperation between Indonesia and Pakistan. At his remarks, the Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires said that Indonesia is offering opportunities to the Pakistani business communities to participating in



the Indonesia - South and Central Asia (INASCA) Business Forum 2024 and Trade Expo Indonesia 2024 and to bring fruitful results for the benefits of two brotherly countries, as the more concrete actions of Indonesia and Pakistan existing close bilateral relations. "Indonesia will proudly host the CEO Summit in Bali and warmly welcome Pakistani business communities in Jakarta and Bali. We will give you op-

portunities, insya Allah," he added before significant numbers of Pakistani outstanding businessmen. Special Assistant to the Prime Minister with the status of Minister on Energy, H.E. Muhammad Ali was among the attendees. "I extend my high appreciation to the Indonesian Embassy to host the Pre-CEO Summit Dinner and wish that the dinner will bring closer business-to-business relations, as

well as explore more opportunities between Indonesia and Pakistan," he said. President and Founder, CEO Club Pakistan & World CEO Forum, Mr. Ijaz Nisar, conveyed the plan of collaboration between the Indonesian Embassy and the CEO Club Pakistan to host the CEO Summit Bali as part of the World CEO Summit. Along with this, the session also present the respective speakers that includes Mr.

Zahid Latif Khan, President, CEO Club Islamabad Chapter; Mr. Sameer Piracha, MD Floret Commodities; and Mr. Sameer Hayat Mir; CEO TM Rubber. The attendees have had a chance to engage with the Chargé d'Affaires, other Embassy's officials, industry leaders, and other influential figures in a setting designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue and stronger partnerships. The event highlighted



the strategic importance of the CEO Summit Islamabad and Trade Expo Indonesia, which aim to bolster economic ties and create new business opportunities between the two countries. The CEO Summit Islamabad will be a premier gathering of business leaders, policymakers, and industry experts, designed to address critical issues, explore innovative solutions, and drive economic growth. The Trade

Expo Indonesia will be complement to the Summit by offering a comprehensive platform for showcasing Indonesian products, services, and investment opportunities. The participants were served by Balinese food such as Betutu Chicken and Sate Lilit to bring the Balinese vibes to the businessmen and CEOs in welcoming the CEO Summit Bali

Leading Chinese platform celebrates Pak achievements

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Alibaba.com, a leading Chinese platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, hosted the finale of its Key E-commerce Leader Awards (KEL Awards) Pakistan round, marking a significant milestone in recognizing and celebrating the exceptional achievements of Pakistani e-commerce sellers. The event, held in collaboration with the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP), showcased the remarkable talents and strategies of six top finalists, each of whom delivered insightful presentations highlighting their success stories on the Alibaba.com platform. After a rigorous evaluation process, all six finalists were selected as Alibaba.com Pakistan Ambassadors for 2024, with Tayyub Hussain from Norwich Streetwear and Muzaffar Hussain from JNM Leather Safety Gloves

being honored as the Key E-commerce Leaders for the year, Gwadar port reported on Thursday. These two outstanding individuals will now represent Pakistan in the upcoming KEL Awards Regional Finale, scheduled to take place in Vietnam later this year. In addition to the prestigious accolades, the event also featured a People's Choice Award, which was awarded to Tayyub Hussain from Norwich Streetwear based on audience voting. Rocky Lu, Head of Pakistan Business at Alibaba.com, emphasized the importance of the KEL Awards in showcasing the entrepreneurial excellence of Pakistani SMEs. "The Pakistan KEL Awards are a celebration of the ingenuity and resilience of our sellers," he said. "We are proud to provide a platform where they can showcase their success and have the opportunity to be recognized on a regional stage." Rafia Syed, Director General of TDAP, echoed

these sentiments, highlighting the significance of showcasing local businesses on a global platform by saying that "the KEL Awards hosted by Alibaba.com are a significant milestone in nurturing the entrepreneurial spirit within Pakistan's e-commerce sector. We are proud to see our local businesses receive recognition in such a prestigious arena." One of the standout stories of the evening was that of Tayyub Hussain, who shared his compelling journey from a modest start to becoming a successful e-commerce entrepreneur. After graduating from Govt. Murray College in Sialkot in 2014, Hussain embarked on his career with a monthly salary of just 16,000 PKR. However, his entrepreneurial spirit was ignited when he received a laptop from the Chief Minister of Punjab, which introduced him to the world of Alibaba.com. Through the platform, Hussain secured

his first major order of 770 pieces of clothing, a significant achievement that boosted his confidence and inspired him to leave his stable job to pursue his entrepreneurial dreams full-time. Leveraging the global reach of Alibaba.com, Hussain methodically expanded his business, focusing on market demand, quality, and nurturing customer relationships. In 2023, he achieved a remarkable milestone by landing the largest order to date valued at \$1 million through the platform. Hussain's story serves as a powerful inspiration for aspiring entrepreneurs in Pakistan, demonstrating the transformative power of ambition, innovation, and technology in the e-commerce sector. With the support of Alibaba.com and initiatives like the KEL Awards, Pakistani SMEs are poised to continue making their mark on the global stage.

CDNS to accomplish mark of Rs 150 billion in fresh bonds

Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added

ISLAMABAD: Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has achieved a target of Rs 150 billion in fresh bonds and achieved 10.5 percent of the annual target in the first months of current fiscal year, from July 1 to August 15th. Central Directorate of National Savings (CDNS) has set an annual target of Rs 1650 billion for the current Fiscal Year, 2024-25, which will promote the saving culture in the country, the senior official of CDNS told APP here on Thursday. Similarly, the CDNS has set a target of Rs 170 billion in investment in Islamic finance for the Current Fiscal Year, which will lead to growth in the Islamic economy in the country. Replying to a question, he said that the CDNS has realized a target of Rs1.742 trillion in fresh bonds and exceeded 100 percent of

the annual target in the last fiscal year 2023-24, from July 1 to June 30th. National Savings has set an annual target of Rs 1.7 trillion for the year 2023-24; it is encouraging that this year, "We surpassed the 100 percent of the annual target." CDNS surpassed the annual target and achieved the target of Rs 1.6 trillion in fresh bonds in the previous fiscal year 2022-23, he said. He said this was an Rs 200 billion additional annual target than the target of Rs 1300 billion for the previous financial year 2021-22. CDNS has set a reviewed saving target of Rs 1.4 trillion for the financial year (2021-22) which will promote a savings culture in the country, he said, adding that given the current market trend in the country, the ambitious target

had been set to improve the savings culture further. The official said that work was being done on institutional reforms in CDNS and new reforms and innovations were being introduced. At this time Automated Teller Machine (ATM) has also been introduced in CDNS which will provide enough facilities to the users," he added. The official added that the directorate had set a target of Rs 75 billion for the new financial year 2023-24 for Islamic finance bonds. Replying to a question; he said the CDNS aimed to introduce new dimensions in the Islamic finance sector. Islamic finance has a very important role in the global financial sector at this time and a large part of the economy of many major countries currently includes Islamic finance," he added.

UAJK introduces Manual Admission Forms

ISLAMABAD: In response to the challenges faced by prospective students due to slow internet connectivity, the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK), Muzaffarabad, has initiated the issuance of manual admission forms alongside the existing online application process. This step aims to ensure that all applicants can conveniently apply for their desired programs, said a press release. According to a press release issued by the Public Relations Department of the UAJK, the students seeking admission can now obtain printed admission forms directly from the Director Student Affairs (DSA) offices at both the Chella Campus and King Abdullah Campus (Chatter Klass). These forms can be submitted to apply for the program of their choice. Additionally, to assist students in completing their online admission forms, the university has established online entry facilities at the Chella Campus and King Abdullah Campus (Chatter Klass). Information desks have also been set up in all academic departments to guide prospective students.—APP

MNA Javid Iqbal unanimously elected as Chairman NA Standing Committee

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly (MNA) Javid Iqbal on Thursday got unanimously elected as Chairman Standing Committee on Defence Production of the National Assembly. The Standing Committee on Defence Production in a meeting held here in the Parliament House elected MNA Javid Iqbal as its Chairman, a news release said. The election was conducted by Acting Secretary, Muhammad Mushtaq, Additional Secretary (Committees), Syed Jawad Murtaza Naqvi, and Joint Secretary (Committees), Syed Haseen Raza Zaidi. The Acting Secretary, the National Assembly Secretariat welcomed the Committee Members and briefed them about the procedure for the election of the Chairman. MNA, Asad Alam Niazi who is a member of the committee, proposed the name of MNA, Javid Iqbal, Chairman of the Committee while MNA, Ali Zahid, a Member seconded his candidature. The Acting Secretary congratulated the newly elected Chairman on behalf of the Honorable Speaker, Deputy Speaker, Secretary National Assembly and assured him of full support from the Secretariat for the effective and efficient functioning of the Committee. The Chairman expressed his gratitude to the members for posing confidence in him and assured them to run the business of the Committee with consensus. The members while appreciating the views of the Chairman assured him their fullest support in the process of legislation. Malik Muhammad Aamir Dogar, MNA/Chief Whip congratulated the newly elected Chairman and extended his support for the Committee.—DNA

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Briefs

Consumers likely to get 31 paise per unit relief in FCA for July

DNA

ISLAMABAD: The consumers of XWAPDA power distribution companies (DISCOs) are likely to get 31 paise per unit relief in power tariff for month of the July under the monthly fuel cost (FCA) adjustment mechanism. In a petition to the power regulator National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA), the Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA-G) on behalf of XWAPDA DISCOs has sought 31 paise reduction in power tariff for July. The reference price for month of July was fixed as Rs 9.352 per unit but the actual cost remained at Rs 9.037 per unit, it said in the petition. A total of 14,880 GWh electricity worth Rs 133,295 million was generated while 14,411 GWh worth Rs 130,243 million was delivered to DISCOs. As many as 35.89 per cent electricity was generated through hydel, 10.12 per cent local coal, 7.64 per cent important coal, 7.93 per cent gas, 19.96 per cent RLNG, 13.36 per cent nuclear and 2.99 per cent wind while 0.69 per cent was generated from furnace oil during the said period. —APP

AIU's Phase-II admissions to begin from 1st Sept

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIU) will begin the second phase of admissions for the Autumn 2024 semester on September 1st. The educational programs offered in this phase include Associate Degree in Arts (BA General), Associate Degree in Commerce (B. Com), BBA, Associate Degree in Education, BS (ODL) programs, 1.5-year, 2.5-year, and 4-year B.Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs, and Certificate courses. Prospective students can access admission forms and prospectuses on the university's website from September 1st. Forms for Associate Degrees (BA/B. Com) and B.Ed programs will also be available at AIU's regional offices and designated sale points nationwide. For more information, students can contact regional offices or the university's helpline at 051-111-112-468. Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice-Chancellor AIU has directed regional offices to guide and support prospective students, including providing free access to computers and the internet for those without these facilities to ensure they can complete their applications with ease.

EU-backed plan strengthens stakeholder collaboration

Amid these challenges, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO), in collaboration with consortium lead International Rescue Committee (IRC) and partner Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF), organized a day-long Provincial Networking Workshop

FAISAL SHIEKH

ISLAMABAD: The EU-supported programme have initiated collaboration among the stake holders to combat malnutrition in Sindh as the high rates of malnutrition continue to impact the province adversely. The situation is dire, with nearly half of the children under the age of five suffering from stunting, wasting or being underweight. The consequences of malnutrition are far-reaching and have long-lasting impact, not just on the directly affected individuals but also on the rest of the family and the nation's development. Amid these challenges, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO), in collaboration with consortium lead International Rescue Committee (IRC) and partner Medical Emergency Resilience Foundation (MERF), organized a day-long Provincial Networking

Workshop, a news release said. This event brought together stake holders such as relevant departments of the Government of Sindh, including the Planning and Development Department, the Accelerated Action Plan Task Force Secretariat, and the Sindh Social Protection Authority. Moreover, representatives from the World Health Organization, PPHI Sindh, Nutrition International, HANDS, CSO networks such as the Scaling Up Nutrition Civil Society Alliance (SUNCSA) Pakistan and Sindh Climate Action Network (SCAN), and local organizations were also part of a concerted effort to combat malnutrition and address its severe impacts on the region.

There is a dire need to bridge the gap between public policies and their effective implementation at the grassroots level. With decades of learning, experience, and awareness of best

practices, there is ample potential to enhance developmental projects by adopting a more collaborative approach. By integrating insights from sector experts, local communities and embracing a more inclusive strategy, we can ensure the progress. The International Rescue Committee has been working in Pakistan for over four decades and among other projects across Sindh, is also implementing a European Union funded project to combat malnutrition in Sindh with its local partners and stake holders.

Through this event, 15 local Civil Society Organizations from across Sindh were also provided a platform to explore opportunities, build alliances, share knowledge, and enhance collaborative efforts. The proceeding of the event featured a contextual landscape of Malnutrition in Sindh, insights and reflections from local organizations, and

sharing and endorsing a provincial-level policy advocacy plan.

Dr. Nadeem Mir Bahar, Planning Officer at the Planning and Development Department Sindh, and Dr. Sahib Jan Badar, Nutrition Consultant at the AAP Task Force, appreciated the initiative and acknowledged the efforts of IRC and its partners in combating malnutrition through the support of the European Union. They highlighted the importance of multisectoral approach and assured support for the project interventions.

Dr. Ranomal Lohano, Program Coordinator at IRC, emphasized the need for networking and coordinated efforts in policy advocacy, social behavior change communication, outreach and facility-based nutrition care services, and capacity building to effectively address malnutrition in Sindh. SUNCSA and SCAN ensured support by working together with the 15 local or-

ganizations for positive policy outcomes.

The Provincial Networking Workshop is part of a larger two-year initiative to enhance local organizations capacities and building alliances for improved nutrition outcomes in Sindh. With the financial support of 5.5 million euros by the European Union in Pakistan, IRC alongside partner organizations, MERF and SPO, is enhancing the capacity of 15 local organizations and facilitating productive sectoral networking. The project also entails improving facility-based treatments, and increasing community outreach of nutrition programmes. These interventions are carried out in five adversely affected districts of Sindh, (Kashmore, Ghotki, Sukkur, Khairpur, and Naushahro Feroze) providing nutritional support to more than 245,000 women and 415,000 children.



ISLAMABAD : Chairperson Arab Monetary Fund Dr. Fahad M Alturki calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Traffic chaos undermine Capital idealized vision of life

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad, once revered as a sanctuary of serenity and peace, is now entangled in a web of daily strife. For its residents, the idealized vision of life in the capital has become an increasingly elusive dream. The city, previously a symbol of tranquillisers, is now marred by ceaseless political protests, religious demonstrations, and the ever-present specter of commuting chaos. What was once seen as a haven has transformed into a battleground where daily existence is overshadowed by unrest, making life for its citizens an ongoing struggle. Doctor Alina Nasir, a 42-year-old medical practitioner, who moved to Islamabad from Azad Kashmir ten years ago for its reputed calm and better employment opportunities, now finds herself grappling with a relentless cycle of stress. "I imagined a peaceful life here, but it's been anything but that," she shares, her frustration palpable. "Every day, I worry about my children's safety, especially when they travel to and from school. The political rallies and roadblocks are constant, making the daily commute a nerve-wracking ordeal." The city's infrastructure, once designed to accommodate its growing pop-

ulation, now buckles under the strain of frequent demonstrations and political unrest. The roads are often clogged with traffic as protesters stage rallies, leaving residents stuck for hours. This has led to a deteriorating quality of life, where every journey feels like a gamble. Ali Raza, a 45-year-old businessman, echoes Alina's sentiments. "I used to think of Islamabad as a place where I could grow old peacefully. Now, I'm not sure if I can even get to work on time. The protests that break out with little notice create havoc on our streets. It's not just inconvenient; it's dangerous." For families like Jaffrys, a school teacher who also relocated to Islamabad from Rawalpindi's far-flung village Kallar Sayedan to provide their children with better educational opportunities, the reality is far from ideal. "We moved here hoping for a safer environment for our kids," says Mrs. Riffat, her eyes reflecting concern. "But now, every day, we face the anxiety of whether they'll be able to get to school safely or if they'll be caught in a protest." Adding insult to injury are the frequent VIP movements, ongoing road construction projects, and high-profile cricket matches. —APP

Export of sports goods increases 12.51% in July 2024

ISLAMABAD: The export of sports goods from the country witnessed an increase of 12.51 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding last year. The country exported sports goods worth US\$ 29.358 million during July 2024 as opposed to the export of US\$ 26.093 million during July 2023, showing growth of 12.51 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the sports products, the exports of footballs rose by 14.20 percent, surging from US\$ 15.565 million to US\$ 17.775 million during the month under review. The gloves exports also increased 24.24 percent by going up from US\$ 3.707 million last year to US\$ 4.606 million, the PBS data revealed. —APP

Zong introduces high-speed network connectivity

This development has been a challenging job in such remote areas and harsh conditions and I commend all the hardworking people involved"

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading telecom operator has introduced high-speed network connectivity in more than 15 cities of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) making it the largest-ever network expansion in the region. brings its seamless and high-speed 4G services to Gilgit Baltistan and the network is live city-wide in Gilgit, Hunza and Skardu with further rollout ready for launch, said a news release. This initiative is Zong's commitment to providing connectivity across the country and top-notch affordable 4G services. This initiative aims to boost digitalization, promote livelihood, and accelerate the growth of data connectivity across Pakistan to the broader Gilgit-Baltistan region. As part of this initiative, 59 4G sites are being rolled out in over 15 cities throughout the Gilgit Baltistan region to ensure seamless network connectivity, with services already accessible to residents in key cities, including Gilgit, Astore, Skardu, and Hunza. The network expansion will not only serve the people of Gilgit Baltistan, but it will also be of great convenience for local and international tourists visiting every year. availability of Zong's 4G network coverage in Gilgit Baltistan is possible through Zong's strategic partnership with Special Communications Organization (SCO). Through this collaboration, Zong and SCO are sharing essential network resources to ensure that these services remain accessible and affordable for the people of Gilgit Baltistan. Sharing his insight on the project, the CEO of Zong said, "Ensuring 4G availability in GB marks a significant step in our mission to provide excellent products and services and enable digitalization in Pakistan. Zong 4G connectivity not only serves the connectivity needs of the local communities but also opens new opportunities for businesses, tourism, and education in these areas. This development has been a challenging job in such remote areas and harsh conditions and I commend all the hardworking people involved". —DNA

Six vendors arrested in ICT for price gouging

ISLAMABAD: In a decisive move to ensure fair pricing, Islamabad's district administration has launched a crackdown on vendors overcharging customers in local markets and arrested six violators. In a recent operation led by Assistant Commissioner Pothohar, Aneeq Anwar, six traders were arrested for not adhering to the official price list in the vegetable market. The accused shopkeepers were found charging customers more than the rates prescribed by the government. During the inspection, it was discovered that many vendors had failed to display the official rate list, which is a mandatory requirement. The absence of this price list led to customers being charged higher rates, prompting immediate action from the authorities. Assistant Commissioner Anwar emphasized that all shopkeepers must prominently display the official price list to avoid legal consequences. The District Commissioner has appealed to the public to report any vendor who fails to display the rate list or charges more than the official prices. This action is part of a broader effort to regulate prices and protect consumers from unfair practices in the market. —APP

NCGSA to host Pakistan's first-ever workshop on Space Law and Policy

ISLAMABAD: The National Center of GIS and Space Applications (NCGSA), in collaboration with the Institute of Space Technology (IST), is set to host Pakistan's inaugural Workshop on 'Space Law and Policy' on September 03-04. According to the NCGSA, this groundbreaking event will be the first of its kind in the country, focusing on the critical and emerging domains of space law and policy. With the increasing relevance of space activities in global geopolitics and national security, this workshop aims to equip participants with the knowledge needed to navigate the complex legal and regulatory frameworks governing space. Resource persons from renowned organizations including Access Partnership, Singapore; Pakistan Space Activities Regulatory Board (PSARB); National Defence University (NDU), Pakistan; Asia-Pacific Space Cooperation Organization (APSCO), China; and the National Center for Cyber Security (NCCS), Pakistan, will share their expertise and insights during the two-day event. —APP

Tarar for providing opportunities to youth by correcting priorities in IT

DNA

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Thursday stressed the need to provide maximum opportunities to the youth by correcting the priorities in the fields of information technology (IT), agriculture, education, and sports arena. Addressing the National Youth Convention here he said Pakistan was a lucky country as its 60% population consisted of youth below 30 years of age who could change the destiny of the nation. "There is a need to correct the direction and economy of the country, bring IT revolution, and promote quality education to the new generation", the minister said. He urged the young generation to understand the vision behind the creation of a separate state for Muslims in the subcontinent. He remarked that Indian atrocities in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and on Indian Muslims across the border had vindicated the stance of Muslims for an independent state. He said that Kashmiris were still struggling to become part of Pakistan with great resolve, resilience, and determination despite the



brutality and oppression of Indian rulers. He told the participants of the convention that the Quaid-e-Azam was supported by a large number of youths in the Pakistan Movement. "The youth contributed to the creation of this country, and the youth will change the destiny of this country", the information minister remarked. He said that Muslim migration from Makkah to Madinah and from India to Pakistan had a lesson for everyone. He said that about 12,00,000 people sacrificed their lives during migration to Pakistan in 1947 as trains carrying Muslims were attacked and passengers butchered mercilessly. He said countless women and girls were raped and molested during the process of migration. He said the holy blood of tens of thousands

of martyrs was in the foundations of Pakistan which was created on the 27th of Ramazan. He said that Allah Almighty had created Pakistan on the holiest night of Laila Tul Qadr and he had the belief that this country would prosper, develop, and survive till eternity. He said now it was the responsibility and duty of the new generation to work hard to make Pakistan a strong, modern, developed nation. "Pakistanis are a determined and hardworking nation and Arshad Nadeem's success is a beacon and a source of inspiration for youth", he maintained. Referring to the determination and hard work of Arshad Nadeem, the minister said he made the first javelin by breaking a tree branch in his village near Mian Channu. He said overcoming all hardships Arshad Nadeem brought the entire nation together by winning the gold medal as the entire nation celebrated his historic victory in a befitting way. He said under the Prime Minister's Laptop scheme, free-of-cost laptops were given on merit to students of educational institutions. He said that laptops given to youth under the PM scheme played an important role in keeping the national economy stable during Covid 19. Similarly, he said that the PML-N government

launched the Danish School system in Punjab for deserving students in the most backward areas and this step paid dividends. Making long and alluring speeches was easier than doing something practical for the welfare of the people of the country, he opined. He said that unfortunately in this digital age, controversies and sensational things attract the attention of the users and constructive achievements fail to get proper coverage. He stressed the need to fight the tendency of despair and despondency through the creation of hope and providing opportunities to the youth so that their talent could be utilized in a better manner for nation building process. "Our IT exports have tripled within the last four months and that too at a time when the world is facing recession in the field of information technology", he informed. He said that a record number of start-ups were coming in Pakistan and IT experts were emerging which was a good omen. The minister said that Pakistan's youth had accomplished a lot on their own and it was the responsibility of the governments to provide them opportunities to further hone their talent. He said that the development of the nation depended on the development of the youth.



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Who wants a ceasefire

THE United States is aggressively attempting to broker a ceasefire in the war on Gaza, and has devoted immense diplomatic activity towards achieving this goal, with Antony Blinken having visited Tel Aviv numerous times. The administration is insisting that such a deal is "close", with Biden stating, "We are closer than we have ever been" despite the minimal evidence of such. There is, of course, one fundamental flaw in this claim: Benjamin Netanyahu's government has no desire for such a ceasefire, and it stands contrary to all his goals. First, it should be understood that the push for a ceasefire is strictly an American goal motivated by domestic political needs. Biden wants to try and freeze the war and kick the can down the road as he seeks to avoid criticism for his unconditional backing of Netanyahu. His strategy is to prevent politically damaging fallout for the Democratic Party in the run-up to the Presidential election. If he can do so, he can claim victory, deflect criticism, and have the issue sidelined for his successor Kamala Harris. America's need is therefore motivated by optics rather than seriously attempting to change Tel Aviv's behaviour, which it is unlikely to do under any circumstances. Secondly, the government of Benjamin Netanyahu sees a ceasefire as political suicide which can usher in the end of his political career. Netanyahu has shaped his war goals around sustaining the backing of the most hardline Zionists in his government, and thus has set the line at the total destruction of Hamas and the subsequent military occupation of the Gaza Strip. To relent to a ceasefire agreement at this stage would thwart his political goals, which are being sustained by resorting to perpetual conflict and escalation. It is for this reason that Netanyahu has sought to escalate with Hezbollah and Iran, which has also allowed him to leverage support from the USA. Netanyahu thus sees his political survival as contingent on changing the political status quo and has publicly issued promises to this end. Aiming to completely end the "two-state solution", he wants to bring the Gaza Strip under the same regime as the West Bank, whereby it becomes an occupied territory under illegal, but de-facto military control, and thus dispossessed of any real sovereignty. Herein, he will utilise "salami slicing" strategies to gradually increase illegal settlement building in the territory and gradually squeeze out and displace the local population over a long-term basis. In order to lay the grounds for this future trajectory, he must continually claim that "Israel" is under existential threat by its enemies, which allows him to sideline both his domestic and international critics. Thus, his goal has been to escalate and exacerbate the conflict, rather than seek its resolution. Although the US diplomatic effort is trying to restrain him, seeking primarily to avoid an all-out regional war, this allows Netanyahu to manipulate the situation to his advantage, thereby compelling a tacit acceptance of his objectives and altering the status quo. This has been evident through his deliberate efforts to provoke Iran, which are designed to provoke retaliations and force the US into the position of being obligated to protect Tel-Aviv, shutting down those opposed to him. Thus, while the US is engaging to try and prevent this worst-case scenario, Netanyahu has little appetite for a ceasefire. For him, to agree to such a solution would constitute working towards peace and thus affirm a return to the previous status quo in a compromise with other parties.

Evacuation orders, an oppressive policy

UNDER the fire of Israeli drones and artillery bombardment, thousands of Palestinian displaced people were forced to flee from their tents in the Mawasi al-Qarara area in Khan Yunis to endure a harsh night, after a series of Israeli forced displacement orders accompanied by intense bombardment. 65-year-old Mahmood Abdel Ghafour was unable to leave his tent where the Israeli shelling surprised him, injuring him and leaving him bleeding in place until he was martyred, joining his son who was martyred last November. Hamada Abdel Ghafour told the Palestinian Information Center (PIC) that a relative was martyred in the area where the occupation forces committed a bloody massacre last March, and he indicated that the occupation forces burned many of the tents that had become a refuge for the displaced families from the town of al-Qarara and Al-Satr Al-Gharbi. According to medical sources, at least 5 Palestinians were martyred as a result of the sudden targeting of the displaced in the Mawasi al-Qarara area, northwest of Khan Yunis, on Wednesday evening, while at least 15 were martyred over the past two days due to the targeting of the displaced civilians around the city of Hamad and the Mawasi al-Qarara. The occupation forces did not issue displacement orders from this area, but rather surprised the displaced with sudden bombardment and gunfire. Whenever the Israeli occupation forces advance suddenly towards an area under fire and bombardment, or issue evacuation orders for the residents of the Gaza Strip, they turn their lives into a real hell, as they are forced to leave their homes or what remains of them or their tents and flee to other areas where there is no adequate space. Between July 1 and August 21, the occupation forces issued at least 16 evacuation orders in the Gaza Strip, leading to the displacement of around 213,000 Palestinians since the beginning of August until August 16, according to Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders). Aziza Salem told the PIC, "We fled under gunfire, we took refuge in the sea shore, I and my children spent the night in the open like hundreds, there is nowhere for us to go, they forced us to displace towards Al-Mawasi and they are cutting it off and demanding the evacuation of part of it, where do we go?" According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, evacuation orders were imposed on 86% of Gaza (this is a statistic prior to the latest evacuation orders that targeted areas in Deir Al-Balah and Khan Yunis) since the start of the Israeli genocidal war, and around 2 million Palestinians suffered from it, most of whom were displaced multiple times. Evacuation orders start with calls to the residents and sending them messages, before an announcement is issued by the coordinator and the spokesman of the occupation army, accompanied by a map showing the neighborhoods and areas required to be evacuated. Khamis Amir, a radio operator with Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), who was displaced due to an evacuation order on August 21, says, "My family and I demount the tent and pack our belongings [to move]. My children gather their toys and belongings so they don't get lost. We don't know where to go. When will this war end?"



US strategy in middle eastern conflicts

Dr. Muhammad Akram Zaheer



The recent events in the Middle East suggest that the U.S. strategy of indirect intervention, seen in Ukraine, is becoming a standard approach for handling conflicts globally. Israel launched missiles at an Iranian diplomatic compound in Damascus on April 1, fearing an Iranian response to its war on Hamas. This attack killed two generals and five senior officers of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran retaliated with missile and drone strikes on Israeli targets over the weekend...

THE United States has developed and implemented a national strategy focused on exerting military power while minimizing the risk of casualties among its own forces. This approach has been particularly evident in the ongoing conflict in Ukraine. Rather than deploying American troops on the ground, the U.S. has chosen to play a significant and possibly decisive, role in the conflict through indirect means. This includes providing extensive military aid to Ukraine, particularly in the form of advanced weaponry and equipment. Additionally, the U.S. has employed political signals and the implicit threat of increasing its military presence in the region to influence Russian actions. By doing so, the U.S. has aimed to shape the course of the conflict without directly engaging in combat, thereby avoiding the potential loss of American lives. This strategy represents a clear departure from the approach the U.S. took during the Vietnam War. In Vietnam, the U.S. committed large numbers of troops, resulting in substantial American casualties. The high human cost of the Vietnam War had severe political repercussions within the United States, leading to widespread public opposition and significant domestic unrest. The war's unpopularity contributed to a shift in U.S. military strategy in subsequent conflicts. In the years following Vietnam, U.S. military policy evolved, particularly in its engagements in Iraq and Afghanistan. While these operations did involve the deployment of American troops, the strategies employed were distinct from the all-out military engagement seen in Vietnam. In Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. aimed to minimize

casualties through the use of advanced technology, precision strikes and efforts to build and support local forces capable of taking on the brunt of the fighting. The emphasis was on reducing American troop presence over time, relying more on airpower, intelligence and special operations forces to achieve strategic objectives. Despite these efforts, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan still resulted in significant American casualties and financial costs, though not on the scale seen in Vietnam. The experiences in these conflicts further refined U.S. military strategy, leading to an even greater emphasis on minimizing direct engagement and reducing the risk to American forces. The current approach in Ukraine is a continuation of this trend. By providing military support and employing political and diplomatic tools, the U.S. has sought to influence the outcome of the conflict without committing ground troops. This approach allows the U.S. to project power and defend its interests while avoiding the domestic political consequences associated with high casualty rates. The strategy also reflects a broader shift in U.S. foreign policy, where the focus is on leveraging alliances, technology and indirect means to achieve strategic goals without becoming embroiled in prolonged, costly conflicts. The recent events in the Middle East suggest that the U.S. strategy of indirect intervention, seen in Ukraine, is becoming a standard approach for handling conflicts globally. Israel launched missiles at an Iranian diplomatic compound in Damascus on April 1, fearing an Iranian response to its war on Hamas. This attack killed two generals and five senior officers of Iran's Islamic

Revolutionary Guard Corps. Iran retaliated with missile and drone strikes on Israeli targets over the weekend, but Israel's advanced missile defense systems intercepted most of the projectiles, minimizing damage. Despite Israel's ability to defend itself, the U.S. and the U.K. intervened by using naval assets to intercept Iranian missiles over Syria, Iraq and Jordan. This intervention was not about protecting U.S. or British interests directly, as there was no indication Iran targeted their assets. Instead, it was a strategic signal to Iran that any aggression against Israel could provoke broader international involvement, even without ground troops. The U.S. has a long history of tension with Iran, particularly concerning its nuclear ambitions and regional influence. The recent intervention is less about supporting Israel directly and more about curbing Iran's expansion in the region. This approach mirrors the U.S. strategy in Ukraine, where the focus is less on Ukraine itself and more on containing Russian influence. In both conflicts, the U.S. aims to strengthen its allies by providing advanced weaponry while avoiding direct military engagement and casualties. This strategy has become central to American foreign policy, reflecting a shift towards managing conflicts from a distance rather than committing troops on the ground. The success of this strategy depends on the enemy's strength and determination. Any misjudgment could force the U.S. to reconsider its approach or increase its involvement. This indirect intervention method appears to be the new normal for addressing not only minor conflicts but also broader, long-term challenges.

Hasina's ouster opens a window to reset Bangladesh-Pakistan ties

Amir Zia

Relations between the two countries also deteriorated as Hasina's government executed several pro-Islamabad Bangladeshi politicians who stood for a united Pakistan during Bangladesh's 1971 independence war. Pakistanis view 1971 as a tragic event, and there is a growing realisation that former East Pakistan was treated unfairly. From the Pakistani point-of-view, atrocities were committed from both sides during the war, including large-scale killing of non-Bengalis by militants. But allegations of mass rape and killings against the Pakistan Army remain exaggerated

BANGLADESH-Pakistan relations remained frosty throughout the 15-year rule of deposed premier Sheikh Hasina, but the change of guard in Dhaka has rekindled hopes in Islamabad for the potential normalisation of relations with its erstwhile eastern wing. With Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus now heading Bangladesh's interim government, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has expressed the desire to work with him to deepen cooperation between the two countries. During the Hasina era, such overtures of friendship were always greeted with suspicion and a cold shoulder. However, Pakistan needs some deft and subtle diplomacy as well as clear and attainable objectives while engaging with the new set-up in Dhaka, where the situation remains in flux after the massive student-led protests ended Hasina's rule on August 5, forcing her to flee to neighbouring India. As Bangladesh's interim government is trying to restore stability and order in the country, indications are that early elections are not on the table – at least for now. And whenever the next general elections are held, they will likely bring Hasina's rivals to power. Dhaka watchers in Pakistan say Hasina's departure has opened a window for a new push for improvement of relations between the two populous Muslim-majority nations, which share a lot in common and intertwined history. Sheikh Hasina was a hawk when it came to relations with Pakistan. According to a former Pakistani diplomat who served in Dhaka, Hasina and her Awami League carried the bitterness of the tragic events that led to Bangladesh's independence in 1971 after a bloody civil war and military intervention by India. Hasina's father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, emerged as the face of the independence movement in what was then East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh after India directly aided rebels challenging Islamabad's rule. Mujibur Rahman – anointed as the founder of Bangladesh – was assassinated in a bloody military coup on August 15, 1975, along with several family members. But Sheikh survived along with her husband and a sister as they were in Europe at that time. She and her family took asylum in India and returned to Bangladesh in 1981 to lead the Awami League. In Pakistan, Hasina is overwhelmingly viewed as a staunch Indian ally who spurned Islamabad's efforts to broaden ties between the two countries whenever she was in power – first between 1996-2001 and then 2009-2024. All through her rule, bilateral relations between Islamabad and Dhaka remained frozen, especially during her second stint as the prime minister. People-to-people contact remained at a

bare minimum because of the visa restrictions on Pakistanis. Frosty diplomatic relations even resulted in the suspension of direct flights between Dhaka and Karachi. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) stopped flying to Dhaka in 2018 due to alleged harassment of its crew, while Bangladesh's Biman Airlines wrapped up flight operations to Pakistan even earlier. There has also been no top government-level visit between the two countries for years now, and the foreign secretary consultations remain suspended since 2016. Similarly, the Joint Economic Commission between the two countries also remains inactive for years now. In regional diplomacy, Hasina-ruled Dhaka put its weight behind India. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation's (SAARC) summit – a biennial event – was last held in Nepal in 2014. The next summit, which was to be hosted by Pakistan in 2016 – could not take place after India pulled out of it in the wake of a militant attack in the India-administered Jammu and Kashmir region. Bangladesh, along with Afghanistan and Bhutan, also pulled out of the summit under the pretext of security concerns. Relations between the two countries also deteriorated as Hasina's government executed several pro-Islamabad Bangladeshi politicians who stood for a united Pakistan during Bangladesh's 1971 independence war. Pakistanis view 1971 as a tragic event, and there is a growing realisation that former East Pakistan was treated unfairly. From the Pakistani point-of-view, atrocities were committed from both sides during the war, including large-scale killing of non-Bengalis by militants. But allegations of mass rape and killings against the Pakistan Army remain exaggerated. However, Bangladesh accuses that millions of Bengalis were killed by the Pakistan Army – a charge fiercely disputed by Islamabad. Pakistani diplomats allege that Hasina's closeness with New Delhi and the overall Indian influence on Bangladesh prevented Dhaka from normalising relations with Pakistan over the years. Islamabad wants to bury the hatchet of the 1971 event and sees a huge reservoir of "love and friendship" for Pakistan in the hearts of many Bangladeshis – from the man on the street to leading businesspeople, experts, professionals and politicians. There are two distinct streams in Bangladeshi politics. One – represented mainly by the Awami League – remains pro-India, while the other stands bitterly opposed to the perceived Indian hegemony in their country. The anti-India sentiment was also reflected in the recent student-led protests. Bangladesh's nationalists, including the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) of Khaleida Zia and the rightwing

Jamaat-e-Islami, were at the forefront in criticising Hasina's government for its closeness with New Delhi. The BNP, being one of the key mainstream parties, not only remained critical of Indian interference in Bangladesh's internal affairs but also gave calls for the boycott of Indian products. After the ouster of Hasina's government, attacks on local Hindus, their businesses and places of worship can be seen in the context of the prevalent anti-India sentiment in Bangladesh, though the new government moved quickly to protect the minorities. The civil society also took the initiative, and many Muslims, including seminary students, protected Hindu neighbours and their property. While anti-India sentiment runs deep in Bangladesh politics, Pakistan's efforts to improve ties with Dhaka should not be based on its protracted rivalry with New Delhi. Instead, Pakistan should focus on the shared cultural and religious values and opportunities to boost trade, business and investment between the two countries. For Bangladesh, India would remain an important regional country and a business partner as the two countries share a more than 4,000 km-long border. Although India, under its Hindu nationalist leader Narendra Modi, has tried to isolate Pakistan in the region by exerting influence on all the SAARC member countries, including Bangladesh, this does not mean that Islamabad and Bangladesh cannot build ties on their own merit. Pakistan's diplomatic message should be simple: it remains a trusted friend of the people of Bangladesh and supports its unity, sovereignty and integrity at every forum. Islamabad should also unilaterally support Dhaka in its regional disputes, especially on the long-standing water-sharing issue with India. With the new military-backed popular political order in Bangladesh firmly in place, now there is room for Pakistan to initiate baby steps to build trust and improve relations with Dhaka. Pakistan's seasoned diplomats say that ease of access to visa services and the boost of people-to-people contacts should be the top priorities. At the same time, the resumption of direct flights between Karachi and Dhaka is also the need of the hour. Cultural and youth exchanges, joint film, television and other media ventures are all low-hanging fruits. Boosting trade and business relations provides a win-win situation for both countries. Yes, Pakistan and Bangladesh do not need to go the extra mile to normalise their relations. They have just to focus on the basics and aim to become equal friends and partners. For this, the two countries need not undermine their relations with another country.

Briefs

Belgium bans smartphone use in secondary schools

BRUSSELS : The use of smartphones by students in primary and secondary schools in Belgium's French-speaking regions and the capital Brussels has been banned, local media said on Thursday. According to a decision taken by the Wallonia-Brussels Education Network (WBE), primary and secondary school students will be banned from bringing smartphones with them as of the 2024-2025 academic year, which is due to start next Monday in 373 French-language schools. The ban will cover 132,600 students. In the Flemish-speaking part of the country, the government is also expected to agree to such a ban. All schools in Belgium have their own rules, with some banning all electronic devices from school premises, while others have been flexible. The WBE reported that the decision was taken because students were taking images of each other with smartphones and sharing them on social media platforms, leading to a rising number of harassment offenses.—APP

Türkiye 'neutralizes' 38 PKK/YPG terrorists

ANKARA : Turkish security forces "neutralized" 38 PKK/YPG terrorists in northern Iraq and northern Syria over the past week, the country's National Defense Ministry said on Thursday. "Thirty-eight terrorists were neutralized in the past week. Thus, the total number of terrorists neutralized in northern Iraq and Syria since Jan. 1 has reached 1,763, with 868 in Iraq and 895 in northern Syria," Rear Admiral Zeki Akturk, the ministry's spokesman, said at a weekly news conference in the capital Ankara. Turkish authorities use the term "neutralize" to imply that the terrorists in question surrendered or were killed or captured. In its nearly 40-year terror campaign against Türkiye, the PKK-listed as a terrorist organization by Türkiye, the US, and the EU has been responsible for the deaths of more than 40,000 people, including women, children, and infants. The YPG is the PKK's Syrian offshoot. Akturk also said that 337 people, including eight members of terrorist groups, were nabbed while attempting to cross the border illegally over the past week, while 1,381 others were prevented from crossing.—APP

India factory blast kills 17

NEW DELHI : A blast in an Indian pharmaceutical factory has killed at least 17 people with chemicals burning the skin off several of the 34 injured, police said Thursday. The Hindu newspaper reported that the force of the blast had been so strong, it left severed body parts scattered around the site. The fire broke out on Wednesday afternoon at a pharmaceutical unit in Andhra Pradesh's Anakapalli district. District police superintendent M. Deepika said "rescue operations are over" and all were accounted for, with a final toll of "17 dead and 34 injured". She added that investigators believe the blast was caused by a "gas leak... which eventually hit an electrical panel". Local police official M. Buchaiah told the Indian Express daily that those caught in the blast suffered horrific chemical burns. "It was horrible, heartbreaking," he told the paper, describing the pain people suffered as those who survived were carried to ambulances. "They were screaming before they lost consciousness". Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said he was "pained by the loss of lives", in a post on social media, announcing compensation of \$2,380 to the families of those killed.—Agencies

Heydar Aliyev foundation enhances welfare in Pakistan

One of the notable initiatives by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Pakistan was the vaccination campaign against the hepatitis B virus in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces

DNA

ISLAMABAD : The Heydar Aliyev Foundation, under the leadership of Azerbaijan's First Lady Her Excellency Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva, has made significant contributions to the welfare and development of communities in need, not only in Azerbaijan but also in various friendly countries, including brotherly Pakistan. Through a wide range of projects and charity programs, the Foundation has played a crucial role in enhancing healthcare, education, and social services in Pakistan, thereby strengthening the bond between the two brotherly nations. One of the notable initiatives by the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Pakistan was the vaccination campaign against the hepatitis B virus in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab provinces, which aimed to improve public health and prevent the spread of infectious diseases. Additionally, the Foundation organized a free examination at the "Akbar Care" Cerebral Palsy Institute in Peshawar, demonstrating its commitment to supporting individuals with special needs and disabilities. Furthermore, the Foundation's support for medical facilities in Pakistan, such as the Kulsum Hospital in Islamabad, where open-heart sur-



geries were performed, has undoubtedly saved numerous lives and improved access to quality healthcare services. The donation of an ambulance equipped with modern blood transfusion equipment to the Hamza Charitable Fund highlights the Foundation's efforts to enhance emergency medical services and blood transfusion capabilities in the region. Education has also been a key focus of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation's initiatives in Pakistan. Projects like the construction of the Rara High School for Girls in Muzaffarabad in 2007 after the earthquake in Pakistan, have provided

children with better learning environments and educational opportunities. Moreover, the Foundation's support for the Thalassaemia Center in Islamabad and the Al-Parabi Special Education Centre for Physically Handicapped Children Home in Islamabad has had a positive impact on the lives of individuals with special needs. In addition to healthcare and education, the Heydar Aliyev Foundation has made significant contributions to infrastructure development in Pakistan. The construction of the Heydar Aliyev Water Supply System in the Dera Ismail Khan region, along with the provision

of electricity infrastructure, has improved access to clean water and reliable electricity for local communities, thereby enhancing their quality of life. The Foundation's humanitarian efforts have extended to various social welfare institutions in Pakistan, including orphanages and centers for individuals with disabilities. By providing financial assistance for the repair and equipment of the Anemia Center of Pakistan Bait-ul-Maal, as well as organizing events at the "Edhi Homes" orphanage in Lahore, the Foundation has demonstrated its commitment to supporting vulnerable populations and promoting social

inclusion. Overall, The Heydar Aliyev Foundation's extensive humanitarian work in Pakistan, spanning healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and social welfare, has had a profound impact on the lives of countless individuals and communities. Through its unwavering dedication to serving those in need, the Foundation has strengthened the ties between brotherly Azerbaijan and Pakistan. It should be noted that the exemplary above-mentioned work of the Heydar Aliyev Foundation in Pakistan have not gone unnoticed, earning accolades and recognition for its outstanding contributions to society. In 2013, H.E. Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva was honored with the "Martyr Benazir Bhutto Woman Perfection Prize - 2013," a testament to her unwavering commitment to humanitarian causes. Subsequently, in 2015, she was awarded the prestigious "Hilal-e-Pakistan" order, the state award of Pakistan, in recognition of her exceptional efforts to strengthen the bonds between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. This distinguished honor marked a significant milestone, as Her Excellency Mrs. Mehriban Aliyeva became the first-ever "First Lady" to receive this esteemed award, underscoring her remarkable dedication to fostering international cooperation and goodwill.

Europe's extreme heat wave deaths to surge

LONDON : A new study has warned that deaths from extreme heat in Europe are projected to rise sharply in the coming decades, potentially adding 55,000 deaths annually by the year 2100 if significant action to combat climate change is not taken. This increase would mark a 13.5% rise in temperature-related fatalities, a stark contrast to a predicted slowdown in cold-related deaths, showed the study published in The Lancet Public Health journal on Thursday. Currently, temperature extremes in Europe cause approximately 407,500 deaths annually, with cold weather being the primary culprit. Between 1991 and 2020, an average of 364,000 deaths per year were attributed to cold, while heat accounted for 44,000 deaths. Cold-related fatalities have historically been higher in eastern Europe, while southern Europe experiences more deaths from extreme heat. However, this trend is expected to reverse as the planet continues to warm. The study highlighted that southern Europe and regions with aging populations will be the most vulnerable to the increasing frequency of deadly heat waves.—DNA

Oil prices decline with demand concerns

ANKARA : Oil prices edged lower on Thursday as ongoing demand concerns in the US and China, the world's largest oil consumers, weighed on market sentiment. International benchmark Brent crude fell 0.13% to \$75.95 per barrel at 10.40 a.m. local time (0740 GMT), down from the previous session's close of \$76.05. US benchmark West Texas Intermediate (WTI) decreased by 0.29% to \$71.72 per barrel, after closing at \$71.93 in the prior session. Global markets remained mixed ahead of the Jackson Hole Economic Policy Symposium in the US, with uncertainty surrounding the Federal Reserve's next steps fueling caution. Investors are closely monitoring Fed Chair Jerome Powell's remarks on Friday for potential signals on the central bank's policy trajectory, which could drive volatility across asset classes. Minutes from the Fed's latest meeting, released Wednesday, revealed that most officials favored easing monetary policy in September, contingent on forthcoming data aligning with expectations. While the US Department of Labor revised non-agricultural employment data for the 12-month period until March 2024. According to the revision, employment in the US increased by 818,000 less than previously announced in the said period.—APP

Swift says she felt 'fear' over Vienna attack threat

LONDON : Taylor Swift says the cancellation of her Vienna tour dates over an attack threat filled her with "a new sense of fear". In a post on Instagram, she said she felt "a tremendous amount of guilt" because so many people had planned on travelling to the shows. Three concerts were cancelled in the Austrian capital earlier in August as three people were arrested in connection with allegedly planning attacks inspired by the Islamic State group. The 34-year-old singer-songwriter finished the European leg of her Eras Tour on Tuesday at Wembley Stadium in London. This article contains content provided by Instagram. We ask for your permission before anything is loaded, as they may be using cookies and other technologies. You may want to read Meta's cookie policy and privacy policy before accepting. To view this content choose 'accept and continue'. In a post on Instagram on Wednesday, the US singer wrote: "Having our Vienna shows cancelled was devastating. But I was also so grateful to the authorities because thanks to them, we were grieving concerts and not lives. I was heartened by the love and unity I saw in the fans who banded together."—APP

China asserts seeks no nuclear arms race with US

WEB DESK

BEIJING : China says it has no intention of engaging in a nuclear arms race with the United States, firmly rejecting Washington's fears of a growing Chinese threat as baseless. At a regular press conference on Wednesday, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning said Washington's fear-mongering over China's nuclear arsenal is completely unfounded. Her remarks followed a New York Times report from Tuesday revealing that US President Joe Biden had quietly revised the Nuclear Employment Guidance, refocusing it on China. Mao stressed that Beijing was "gravely concerned" with the report. "As we have seen over the past few years, the US has called

China a 'nuclear threat' and used it as a convenient pretext for the US to shirk its obligation of nuclear disarmament," she added. The Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman further said that China's nuclear arsenal is by no means comparable in size to that of the US. She further said that China adheres to a 'no first use' policy regarding nuclear weapons, maintains a nuclear strategy centered on self-defense, and keeps its capabilities at the minimum level necessary for national security. "We have no intention to engage in any form of arms race with other countries," Mao stressed. "In contrast, the US sits on the largest and most advanced nuclear arsenal in the world. Even so, it clings to a first-use nuclear deterrence policy, and has invested heavily to upgrade its nuclear triad and blatantly devised nu-

clear deterrence strategies against others. It is the US who is the primary source of nuclear threats and strategic risks in the world," she emphasized. Citing a classified document approved in March, the Times reported that Biden had directed US forces to be ready for potential coordinated nuclear conflicts with Russia, China, and North Korea. The American president approved a top-secret nuclear strategic plan for the US that, for the first time, shifts America's deterrent strategy to address China's purported swift growth in its nuclear arsenal, the report further said. Beijing says US arms sales to Taiwan were "seriously undermining the political atmosphere for continued arms control consultations." In 2023, the Pentagon projected that China would increase its operational nuclear warheads to over

1,000 by 2030. Currently, the US has 5,550 warheads, while Russia's arsenal is estimated at 6,255, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute. China urges the US to fulfill its special and primary obligation of nuclear disarmament by further making drastic and substantive cuts to its nuclear arsenal, and stopping nuclear sharing, extended deterrence, expanding nuclear alliance, and other negative moves that undermine global and regional peace and stability," Mao concluded. Chinese officials have criticized US concerns as an irrational and unfounded paranoia, asserting that such Sino-phobic sentiments only serve to escalate tensions. Beijing has time and again emphasized that its nuclear strategy is defensive in nature.

Saudi FM arrives in Iraq to boost relations

RİYADH : Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan arrived in Baghdad on Thursday for talks with Iraqi officials on ways of cementing bilateral relations. Bin Farhan was welcomed upon arrival by Iraqi Prime Minister Muhammad Shia al-Sudani. They discussed Iraqi-Saudi relations and "explored prospects for further development in various fields," the Iraqi premier's office said in a statement. The two sides also reviewed "key developments in the region, including the ongoing (Israeli) aggression on Gaza," the statement said, stressing the importance of joint Arab efforts and coordination of Arab and international action to halt the onslaught. A Saudi Foreign Ministry statement earlier said that bin Farhan will explore during his visit ways to strengthen relations between Saudi Arabia and Iraq in various areas. Israel has continued its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas last Oct. 7, despite a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. The onslaught has resulted in nearly 40,300 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, and over 93,000 injuries, according to local health authorities. In 2015, Saudi Arabia reopened its embassy in Baghdad after a 25-year rupture following the 1990 invasion of Kuwait by the Saddam Hussein regime. Since then, the countries have signed several pacts and exchanged diplomatic visits.—DNA

Antonio :Pacific territories face climate 'annihilation'

APIA : UN chief Antonio Guterres warned Thursday that some Pacific territories face "annihilation" from climate-induced cyclones, ocean heatwaves and rising sea levels. On a visit to Samoa, he said the fate of Pacific islands depended on limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. Nearly 200 nations agreed to strive for that target in the 2015 Paris climate agreement, but UN estimates indicate that the world is not on track to achieve it. "High and rising sea levels pose an enormous threat to Samoa, to the Pacific and to other small island developing states, and these challenges demand resolute international action," Guterres said. The Pacific region contributes just 0.02 percent of global carbon emissions, he noted. "Yet you are on the front lines of the climate crisis, dealing with extreme weather events from raging tropical cyclones to record ocean heatwaves," the UN secretary-general continued. "Sea levels are rising even faster than the global average, posing an existential threat to millions of Pacific Islanders," he added. "People are suffering. Economies are being shattered. And entire territories face annihilation." Guterres urged richer nations to live up to their commitments to help pay for the consequences of climate change in developing countries. He also called for international action to tackle the impact of climate change, overfishing and plastic pollution on the Pacific Ocean. Guterres said major powers' interest in the region was rising, an allusion to the jostling for power and influence in the Pacific between China and the United States and its allies. "The Pacific is best managed by Pacific islanders," the UN chief said. "It must never become a forum for geostrategic competition."—APP



ISLAMABAD : Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting a memento to Chairperson Arab Monteray Fund Dr. Fahad M Alturki at the inaugural ceremony of Buna-Raast Connectivity Project Implementation Phase.—DNA

Gaza Strip is no longer a place for children: UNRWA head

He stressed that "Gaza is no place for children anymore. They are the first casualty of this merciless war. We cannot let the unbearable become a new norm. Enough

FOREIGN DESK

GENEVA : The head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) said Wednesday that the Gaza Strip is no longer a place for children following an Israeli attack on a UN-run school in Gaza City. "Reports of another horrific attack today on one of our UNRWA schools in Gaza City," UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said following the Israeli military's targeting of Salah al-Din School, which killed two Palestinians and injured 15 others, including children. "Children reported killed and injured. Some were burnt to death," he added. "Is there any humanity left?" He stressed that "Gaza is no place for children anymore.

They are the first casualty of this merciless war. We cannot let the unbearable become a new norm. Enough." "A cease-fire is beyond overdue," he said. Earlier Wednesday, the UN warned that ongoing Israeli military evacuation orders threaten the people of the Gaza Strip with further forced displacement, raising concerns that essential services may soon be cut off. Eyewitnesses also confirmed to Anadolu that Israeli warplanes bombed Salah al-Din School, the ninth school to shelter displaced persons targeted by the Israeli military since early August. Israel has continued its brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip following an attack by the Palestinian resistance group Hamas last Oct. 7, despite

a UN Security Council resolution calling for an immediate cease-fire. The conflict has resulted in over 40,170 Palestinian deaths, mostly women and children, and more than 92,740 injuries, according to local health authorities. An ongoing blockade of Gaza has



led to severe shortages of food, clean water and medicine, leaving much of the region in ruins. Israel faces accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which has ordered a halt to military operations in the southern city of Rafah, where over one million Palestinians had sought refuge before the area was invaded on May 6. Meanwhile, Gaza's health authorities reported at least 42 more deaths from Israeli attacks on Thursday, bringing the overall death toll since last Oct. 7 to 40,265. A Health Ministry statement said that some 93,144 others have been injured in the ongoing assault. "Israeli forces killed 42 people and injured 163 others in four 'massacres' of families in the

last 24 hours," the ministry said. "Many people are still trapped under the rubble and on the roads as rescuers are unable to reach them," it added. Israel has continued a brutal offensive on the Gaza Strip since Oct. 7, 2023, following a Hamas attack despite a UN Security Council resolution demanding an immediate cease-fire. Over 10 months into the Israeli war, vast tracts of Gaza lie in ruins amid a crippling blockade of food, clean water, and medicine. Israel faces accusations of genocide at the International Court of Justice, which has ordered a halt to military operations in the southern city of Rafah, where over one million Palestinians had sought refuge before the area was invaded on May 6.

Briefs

Orya Maqbool sent on physical remand

DNA

LAHORE: A court on Thursday handed over senior columnist Orya Maqbool Jan to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on a four-day physical remand in a case related to remarks against institutions on social media. The senior journalist was produced in the court after he was arrested by the FIA Cybercrime Wing in an area of Lahore. He has been booked under the Cyber Terrorism Act for allegedly spreading hatred and giving remarks against institutions on social media. During the hearing, Orya Maqbool Jan's lawyer argued that the FIA had no evidence of accusations levelled against his client. He also called the allegations unfounded. An investigation officer of the FIA replied that there was strong evidence against the suspect for inciting hatred among people. After hearing the arguments, the court approved the four-day physical remand of the senior columnist in the case.

Court acquits Aliya Hamza in May 9 case

DNA

GUJRANWALA: The Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Gujranwala has acquitted former MNA Aliya Hamza in the case related to the May 9 incidents. During the court proceedings, neither Aliya Hamza nor her lawyers appeared in court. Subsequently, the court ruled in favour of Aliya Hamza, clearing her of charges in the May 9 case. It is noted that Aliya Hamza was arrested by Gujranwala police upon her release from Sargodha jail and was named an accused in a case registered at the Cantonment police station. She faced allegations of conspiring in the May 9 attacks.

Court orders blockage of assets, passport of Moonis

BUREAU REPORT

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has achieved a significant development in its money-laundering case. The Special Central Court in Lahore has ordered the blocking of identification cards and passports of six proclaimed offenders, including Moonis Elahi, son of former Punjab chief minister Chaudhry Parvez Elahi. Judge Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh presided over the hearing of the FIA's challan. The fugitives named in the case included Farasat Ali Chatha, Intiaz Ali Shah, Moonis Elahi, Aamir Sohail, and Aamir Fayyaz.

Asim Munir cautions against perils of misinformation

Urges students from Harvard Business School to navigate such landscape with discernment



STAFF REPORT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir has cautioned against the perils of misinformation and fake news in the digital age, according to the military's media wing. He said this during a meeting with a delegation of 44 students from Harvard Business School (HBS) Trek-2024, representing nine different countries, at the General Head-

quarters on Thursday. In a statement, the Inter-Services Public Relations said that the session provided a platform to share perspectives on Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and stability, its "unwavering efforts against terrorism, and its commitment to upholding democratic values." The army chief emphasised the significance of education, critical thinking, and innovation in addressing contemporary security challenges. He highlighted Pakistan's "vast" potential and

encouraged the attendants to form their opinions based on personal experiences. COAS Munir urged the students to navigate this landscape with discernment. The Harvard students expressed their gratitude to the army chief for facilitating a "constructive and enlightening" interaction. The engagement follows COAS Munir's earlier interaction with students from various universities at the GHQ on August 20, underscoring his commitment to "nurturing and inspiring the nation's

youth." On Wednesday, COAS Munir said that the state has a responsibility to protect its citizens from the harmful effects of social media. While addressing the youth convention, he urged the youth to learn from the struggles of people in Libya, Syria, Kashmir, and Gaza. The army chief went on to add that those who had predicted Pakistan's default were "silent." He urged the youth to remain optimistic, reminding them that as Muslims, they are forbidden from despair.

Taliban appoint ambassador to UAE first time since takeover

Official says newly appointed ambassador Badreddin Haqqani will soon present his credentials to Emir of UAE

FOREIGN DESK

DYBAI: Afghanistan's Taliban-led foreign ministry said it has appointed its first accredited ambassador to the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the second country to accept an envoy at that level after China. The UAE foreign ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The Taliban's government has not been officially recognised by any foreign capital and only Beijing has formally accepted the credentials of an ambassador. The Taliban have also sent envoys to several countries including neighbouring Pakistan to head missions as "charge d'affaires". The Taliban-run foreign ministry said in a statement late on Wednesday that Mawlawi Badreddin Haqqani had been nominated as its ambassador and presented his credentials to the UAE's foreign ministry's assistant undersecretary for protocol affairs. "The newly accredited Ambassador of Afghanistan will soon formally present his credentials to the Emir of the UAE during (an) official ceremony," the ministry said. The Taliban share economic ties with the UAE, which won contracts to run operations at Kabul airport in 2022. Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani met UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in Abu Dhabi in June. The Taliban entered the Afghan capital on August 15, 2021, as the Afghan security forces, set up with years of Western support, disintegrated and US-backed President Ashraf Ghani fled. Though China and the UAE have not formally recognised the Taliban administration or confirmed any official change in relations, diplomats and international analysts say formally accepting an ambassador is a grey area of international diplomacy that could constitute upgraded ties. Many governments, especially western nations including Washington, have said the path to any formal recognition of the Taliban will be stuck until they change course on women's rights and re-open high schools and universities to girls and women. The Taliban say they respect rights in accordance with their interpretation of Islamic law and that restrictions on its banking sector and a lack of recognition are hindering its economy.

Economic indicators showing positive trends: Fin. Minister

KHAYAM ABBASI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the countries achieved micro-economic stability and all the economic indicators showing positive trends. He said that currently, the country is going through a phase of economic stability and the government will be led on the path of sustainable economic growth with a good economic foundation. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said this while addressing the Inaugural Ceremony of Buna-Raast Connectivity Project Implementation Phase here. He said that all economic indicators, including foreign reserves, workers remittances, policy rates, exchange rate, revenue collection and twins deficits including Current Account are going positive, leading towards growth and adding that foreign investors are showing confidence on the Pakistan economy. Aurangzeb said that "We have two months import cover and the exchange rate is also stable." He said that during the last two months, foreign companies and potential investors are showing their interest to make investment in the different sectors of the economy. The minister said that the government is working on the digital economy and through the digitization of the economy, "We prioritize documenting the local economy." He said that because of prudent economic policies of the government and through reforms and administrative measures the country received the \$3 billion workers' remittances in the last month of July 2024. He said the government prioritized the tax and energy reforms and over all structural reforms also in cards to achieve the sustainable economic growth in the country. The minister said that "Buna-Raast Connectivity Project" project is an exemplary project between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), which is also a huge source for legal transaction of money and an evolved digital economy in the country. He said that Pakistan also endorsed the KSA's government vision 2030 and learnt a lesson from this economic vision for sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. Buna is the cross-border payment system operated by the Arab Regional Payments Clearing and Settlement Organization "ARPCSO," which is owned by The Arab Monetary Fund "AMF." Buna aim to enable financial institutions and central banks in the Arab region and beyond to send and receive payments in local currencies as well as key international currencies in a safe, cost-effective, risk-controlled, and transparent environment. Buna offers participants modern payment solutions that comply with international standards, principles, and compliance requirements. The Raast SBP 'Raast' Instant Payment System is a transformational initiative that is built on state-of-the-art international standard ISO 20022 and promises to be simple, free, fast, interoperable, and a secure payment option for customers. The SBP launched the second use case of Raast i.e. Person-to-Person (P2P) payments in February 2022. Till date, around 34 million RAAST IDs have been created by customers having performed more than 270 million transactions amounting to around PKR 5.5 trillion (around USD 19 billion).

Cannot block VPN usage, admits PTA

VPNs needed for some services in Pakistan, and blocking them would harm businesses, PTA officials say

MEHTAB PIRZADA

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) officials have stated that the regulatory body was unable to block Virtual Private Networks (VPNs). The disclosure was made during a meeting of the Senate Committee on Information Technology, chaired by Senator Palwasha Mohammadzai Khan held in Islamabad on Thursday. During the briefing, officials from the Pakistan Software Export Board revealed that Pakistan's share in the global IT market is less than 0.04%. Despite this, the country experienced a 20% growth in IT last year. The IT sector's exports are primarily directed to the USA (54%), Europe (21%), and Gulf countries (10%). Additionally, the board announced the launch of the iRozgar programme, aimed at creating job opportunities at a cost of one billion rupees. The PTA's Enforcement Member reported on disruptions to internet traffic caused by a cut in the SMW4 optical fibre cable near Karachi on June 18, 2024. The issue has yet to be fully resolved, with ongoing work to repair it. The AA-E1 submarine cable has also experienced problems, with repairs expected to be completed by August 27. The PTA operates seven cables with an average capacity of 3.5 terabytes, which can reach 7.5 terabytes at night.

Aleem support to Turkish businesses in Pakistan

ADIL SHAHEEN

ISLAMABAD: A delegation comprising Turkish investors and businessmen, accompanied by Turkish Ambassador Dr. Mehmet PakkaKaya, called on the various ministers of Pakistan including Federal Ministers Abdul Aleem Khan, Musadik Malik, Jam Kamal, and Rana Tanveer. The main objective of the talks was to enhance commercial connections and back Turkish investments in Pakistan. The federal minister for board of investment, communication, and privatisation assured all possible support to the delegation. Abdul Aleem Khan underlined Pakistan's dedication to creating a welcoming business atmosphere for foreign investors, especially those from Turkey. The Board of Investment would provide 24-hour services to the Turkish businessmen, and his offices are always open for them. "Our relations with Turkey are based on love and bilateral fraternity and it's our top priority to facilitate foreign investors," he said.

Two children killed, 5 injured after gunmen attack school van

Ages of children injured in gun attack range between five and 12 years old, as per rescue officials

NEWS DESK

ATTOCK: At least two children have been killed and five were injured after gunmen opened fire at a school van in Dheri Kot, Attock, rescue officials told Geo News on Thursday. The ages of the children injured in the gun attack are between five and 12 years old, they added. They have been shifted to the hospital, said the rescue officials. The children killed in the attack included a nine-year-old and a 10-year-old, while the five injured included two eight-year-olds, one was seven, one was 12 and one child is four years old. The two children — both girls named Arwa Fatima and Rameen Shafiq — died on the spot. The rescue officials, who reached the site after the attack, shifted the injured children and dead bodies to the Asfandiyar Bukhari District Hospital Attock. In the wake of the attack, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has sought a report from Rawalpindi Commissioner Abdul Aamer Khattak. The chief minister has also expressed deep sorrow over the death of the two children in the attack. CM Maryam also directed relevant authorities to provide the best treatment facilities to the children who have sustained

injuries. Attock Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza, in conversation with Geo News, said that the gun attack on the school van was a result of the driver's personal enmity. He added that a forest official and his friend were killed due to this enmity last month and the van driver — Afzaal — was attacked to avenge the murder. The DC explained that the driver was injured in the attack, but the children were also attacked. According to the DC, two girls — seated in the passenger seat with the driver — were killed in the attack, while the driver himself is injured. He added that the police and administration are busy in search operation for the gunmen who fled the scene after indiscriminately targeting the van. DC said that the report of the incident has been sent to the Rawalpindi commissioner. President Asif Ali Zardari has condemned the "cruel" attack on children in Attock. In a statement, the president said targeting innocent children is a very cruel and shameful act, directing authorities to take strict action against those responsible. Condemning the unfortunate incident, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the attack on innocent children is extremely "cruel and barbaric". He has directed the authorities to take strict action against those responsible.

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