

# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول  
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
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سَدَحَايَ هُوَ كَيْتَ چُوڑو اور ان کے ساتھ  
اللہ کا نام بھی لے لو پھر وہ کوئی شکر چڑھیں اور  
اسے کھائیں نہیں تو تم اسے کھا سکتے ہو اور جب  
شکر پڑے تو یہ بھی لکڑی سے کوئی  
شکر مارے لیکن وہ لوگ سے لگ کر جانور کا  
گوشت چیرے تو یہ شکر بھی کھانا  
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## PM expresses condolence to King Mohammed VI over death of his mother

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed condolence to King Mohammed VI of Morocco over the death of his mother Princess Lalla Latifa. "My heart goes out to the Royal Family and the people of Morocco in this moment of grief. May her soul rest in peace. Ameen!", the prime minister further posted on X account. APP



## Petrol price up by Rs7.45, diesel by Rs9.60 per litre

The Ministry of Finance issued a notification announcing an increase in prices for petroleum products effective immediately. According to the notification, the price of petrol has been raised by Rs 7.45 per litre, increasing from Rs 258.16 to Rs 265.61 per litre, while the price of high-speed diesel has been increased by Rs 9.60 per litre, jumping from Rs267.89 to Rs 277.49 per litre. The revised prices will come into effect from July 1 (Monday).

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Mourners react next to the bodies of Palestinians from Zurob family who were killed in an Israeli strike, at Nasser hospital in Khan Younis, in the southern Gaza Strip, on Sunday.



Photo: Reuters

## Election to be held in 2029: Info Minister

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attallah Tarar on Sunday said that the general election would only be held in 2029 upon completion of the constitutional tenure of the incumbent government.

While reacting to Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman's presser, he said the Parliament was an appropriate forum to do politics in the current circumstances. "Solution to all the problems in politics lies in negotiations and dialogue," the minister added.

Tarar termed Maulana a



"seasoned" and "respected" politician, urging him to appreciate the government's economic policies that drove an increase in the foreign exchange reserves, and took the stock exchange to historic highest level.

He lauded the government for strengthening the rupee and reducing trade deficit significantly. Agencies

## Gilani calls for working tirelessly towards fostering dialogue, promoting mutual respect

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Sunday called for working tirelessly towards fostering dialogue, promoting mutual respect, and advancing legislative agendas that benefit societies.

In his message on International Day of Parliamentarism, he said, "The day serves as an evocative reminder of the critical role that parliamentary institutions play in shaping democratic governance worldwide."

He said that the occasion also coincides with the anniversary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), extending warm greetings to all parliaments globally. He said that parliaments stand as the cornerstone of democracy, representing the voices and aspirations of the people they serve.

"They embody the principles of transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, ensuring that decision-making processes are both participatory and representative," Gilani said.

He stressed the importance of reaffirming the commitment to upholding the values of parliamentary democracy. He commended parliamentarians for their dedication and service, and said, "Your unwavering commitment to parli-



mentary excellence is instrumental in shaping a brighter future for generations to come."

The chairman highlighted the need for a collective approach to tackle common challenges such as climate change, terrorism, extremism, and conflicts. He called for unified action, and said, "Parliament of Pakistan joins legislatures across the globe in moving forward with hope to promote peace, development, and prosperity."

Gilani expressed his commitment to continue working with the IPU and parliaments worldwide to pursue and realize commonly cherished ideals of parliamentary excellence, democratic strengthening, mutual respect, dialogue, and parliamentary connectivity.

He stressed the need for addressing common challenges and exploiting mutually beneficial opportunities for the common good of all peoples. APP

## Finance Minister announces pragmatic reforms for economic growth

Work on digitization in FBR has been started and reforms in energy and petroleum sectors are also being introduced

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb says government is introducing pragmatic reforms in different sectors to accelerate economic growth and development.

Addressing a news conference in Islamabad on Sunday, he said work on digitization in FBR has been started and reforms in energy and petroleum sectors are also being introduced.

The Finance Minister said FBR has achieved eighty percent growth in revenue collections.

He said prudent policies and steps taken by the government have resulted in restoration of confidence of international institutions and improved economic



conditions. He said registration for retailers will be started tomorrow while sixty two thousand traders have already been registered.

The Finance Minister said World Bank has approved one billion dollars financing for Dasu

dam. He said tax to GDP ratio will be increased to thirteen percent in next three years to ensure sustainable economic growth.

The Finance Minister said government is encouraging public-private partnership to

reduce public expenditures and increase private sector participation.

He said there will be no delay in payment of the Sales Tax Refund claims of the exporters and all the payments will be cleared in next two or three days.

The finance minister, talking about the burden on the inflation-struck masses, said: "I completely understand the stress that people from different sectors feel about additional taxes; I completely empathise and sympathise, but we need to work for it."

The finance minister said he was clear-headed and would ensure that the government works to lessen the burden on the common people and busi-

## President gives assent to Finance Bill 2024-25

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has accorded his approval to Finance Bill 2024 on advice of the Prime Minister under Article 75 of the Constitution. The Finance Bill will be effective from today (Monday). On June 28, the National Assembly passed the Finance Bill, 2024 with certain amendments, adopting the financial proposals for the fiscal year beginning on July 01, 2024.

nesses in the coming days by curbing leakages and improving the management system.

## Mushahid acclaims China for spearheading 'alternative global order'

ISLAMABAD: Senator Mushahid Hussain has acclaimed China for laying the basis for an 'alternative new global order based on equality and justice'.

He made these remarks at the International Conference convened in Beijing by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to mark 70 years of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which was attended by over 200 political leaders, scholars, intellectuals, economists and journalists from over 50 countries, a news release said.

Senator Mushahid Hussain, who is Chairman of the Pakistan-China Institute & Co-Chairman, International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), the largest organisation of political parties in Asia, also thanked President Xi Jinping for bestowing on him the prestigious 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence Award, as he is the first and only Pakistani politician and parliamentarian to be given this honour by China. He was given this Award by President Xi Jinping at a special ceremony during the Chinese President's State Visit to Pakistan in April 2015.

Mushahid Hussain termed President

Xi Jinping's speech at the function as truly significant, having far-reaching historical significance, as China has taken political ownership of the 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which today are the foundation of the new emerging global order, as well as a 'Code of Conduct' for the Global South, that is now being led from the front by China.

Senator Mushahid Hussain, in his speech, said, "the Beijing Conference has a three-fold relevance for contemporary international politics. First, China's initiative for 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence as well as its continuity through President Xi Jinping's vision of a 'Community for Shared Future for Mankind' are visions rooted in Asian Wisdom which springs from centuries old civilisations. Second, this is the first non-Western vision of a new global order that rejects hegemony, militarism or diktat of any one power-based military might.

Third, today the Global South, comprising countries of Asia, Africa & Latin America, are the World's Majority, and given the international consensus



behind China's initiatives of 5 Principles of Peaceful Coexistence and 'Community of a Shared Future for Mankind', these are now the philosophical foundations for Global South, which will drive economic and political developments in the future". Giving examples from China's contribution to Asian wisdom, which is based on peace, harmony, equality and inclu-

sivity, he cited the Chinese philosophy of 'Seek Truth from Facts' and 'Socialism with Chinese characteristics', adding that China is the only country in history to rise peacefully, without conquest, colonisation, invasion, occupation or aggression. Appealing to the West to discard notions of a New Cold War or 'containment' of China, Senator

Mushahid Hussain concluded his speech with a famous quotation from the ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius: 'do not do to others what you do not want others to do to you'.

Earlier, Senator Mushahid Hussain was leader of a group of 30 prominent 'Friends of China' who were specially invited by the Chinese Peoples Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries for a friendly interaction by the Association's Chairman, Minister Wang Yanming and in this capacity, he addressed the special banquet referring to his 50-year plus relationship with China, when he first visited China as a 17-year old college student leading a youth friendship delegation in the early 1970s. APP

## JUI-F expresses 'serious reservations' on PTI

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said that the party's Majlis-e-Shura — top decision-making body — has decided against becoming part of any alliance for now, while expressing "serious reservations" over the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) amid reports that the two parties were on a verge of joining hands against the coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Fazl's party has been holding meetings with the former ruling party after they both termed the February 8 elections "rigged" and also voiced shared concerns about the federal government's policies on the economy and the menace of terrorism in the country.

The Imran Khan-founded party and JUI-F have jointly opposed the Centre's newly-announced anti-militancy operation, Azm-e-Istehkam, raising concerns that parliament was not taken into confidence on the matter.

In a meeting with senior PTI

leader Asad Qaiser last week, Fazl agreed that the military operation was not the solution to the problems.

They also agreed on fulfilling the role of opposition in the National Assembly together, and also constituting a political committee to address various issues between them and formulate a political strategy.

The two parties have also maintained a rigid stance on the February 8 general elections, demanding fresh and transparent elections to "restore" democracy in the country.

However, Fazl on Sunday announced that his party's top decision-making body has decided to continue the "struggle" exclusively from its own platform instead of waiting to become a part of any alliance.

"Our stance and reservations against PTI are very serious," he said adding that the decision-making body had reviewed JUI-F's meetings with other political parties and declared it nothing more than a "political process".



# Rs675.4m generated from auction of 'Premium Number Plates': Sharjeel

*Says to be utilized for flood victims*

**Our Correspondent**

KARACHI: The Sindh Excise Department has generated Rs 675.4 million from the auction of 40 'Premium Number Plates' for first time in the history of the country, Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said.

In the auction ceremony held at a local hotel on Sunday, the Premium No. 1 Plate was auctioned in Rs100 million, Premium No Plate 5 in Rs50.3 million, No. 7 in Rs40.6 million, No. 8 in Rs40.10 million and No. 9 in Rs40 millions.

On this occasion, Senior Minister Sharjeel said that the generated amount would be utilized in the construction of houses for the flood



affected people. He said that total of 2,251 houses would be constructed for the flood victims with generated amount. The Sindh government is continuously trying to help the flood affected people, he said.

The minister said that the second phase of auction of premium number plates would also be held very soon. He said that the next auction was expected to generate additional resources to further support ongoing reconstruction efforts.

A comprehensive approach of the government is not only towards the construction of new houses but also for the maintenance of necessary infrastructure, medical assistance and economic restoration, he added.

## Jam Kamal lauds CM Balochistan's for response on PSDP

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan On Sunday lauded Chief Minister of Balochistan's for prompt response on Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) Concerns.

Jam Kamal Khan took to Twitter to highlight disparities in the allocation of PSDP projects in Balochistan.

He criticized the significant funds allocated to non-elected individuals and those unaccountable to the public.

In his response, Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti assured that the issue would be investigated and welcomed feedback.

Appreciating Bugti's prompt response, Khan expressed his hope for corrective actions to benefit Balochistan's development. APP

## Governor KP urges for pivotal role of parliamentary democracy

**PESHAWAR:**

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday delivered a message on the occasion of World Parliamentary Day, emphasizing the pivotal role of parliamentary democracy in state progress and public welfare.



The Governor hailed the Parliament as a sacred institution and a cornerstone of democracy in Pakistan. He underscored the sacrifices made by leaders like Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto in strengthening the supremacy of the Parliament in the country.

"Parliament holds the key to ensuring robust democracy and real development for the people," the Governor asserted, echoing the sentiments shared by President Asif Ali Zardari and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, who both championed the cause of parliamentary sovereignty and national unity.

Governor Kundi concluded by calling upon all political forces to unite in reaffirming their commitment to uphold the supremacy of the Parliament for a prosperous future of Pakistan.

The commemoration of World Parliamentary Day serves as a reminder of the enduring importance of parliamentary institutions in safeguarding the rights and aspirations of the populace towards genuine progress and democratic stability. Agencies

## Govt decides to recruit 30,000 schoolteachers

LAHORE: The Punjab government has decided to recruit 30,000 new schoolteachers, as students were facing shortage of teachers.

The Punjab Education Department official sources told APP on Sunday that in order to improve the quality of education and overcome shortage of teachers, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has recently given task to the Punjab education minister to recruit new teachers.

The recruitment process is being carried out after seven years, the sources said. The recruitment process will be carried out through the Punjab Public Service Commission (PPSC) in phases.

Sources said the recruitment process was likely to be completed during the summer vacation 2024. APP

## 15 attacks made on Polio teams this year: report

**Our Correspondent**

PESHAWAR: The Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) has issued a report confirming that there were 15 attacks on polio teams this year.

Giving details of the attack, the officials of the CTD said that there were 15 attacks on polio teams this year including 4 attacks in Bannu, three attacks each on Polio teams in Bajaur and Tank and one attack each on Polio teams were reported in Khyber, Lakki Marwat, Mardan, North Waziristan and South Waziristan.

During the campaign, 13 police personnel posted on security were martyred and 36 Police officers were injured during the campaign while 9 Police officials were injured in Bajaur and 30 officials were injured overall.

In Bannu Pool two personnel martyred, three injured with one official each were martyred in South Waziristan and Tank. One Police personnel was injured in Bannu, Khyber and Lakki Marwat and the Police have identified two extremist organizations involved in attacks on polio teams, the official concluded.

## Zhob-Dhanasar section of N-50 reopened for traffic

QUETTA: On the direction of Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, the blocked highway was restored and reopened by removing stones through heavy machinery at Dhanasar area.

The National Highway Authority (NHA) along with District Administration, Levies and Police personnel reopened the Zhob-Dhanasar section of Dera Ismail Khan-Quetta Highway (N-50) for all kinds of traffic which was affected due to landslides at Dhanasar.

Spokesperson of Balochistan government on said on Sunday that the NHA crew, district administration, Levies and Police personnel removed the heavy landslides and reopened the blocked road. Now the national highway N-50 Zhob - Dhanasar was open for all kinds of traffic. A heavy landslide occurred at the Zhob-Dhanasar section of N-50 which blocked the highway with large stones.

The Balochistan Chief Minister has congratulated the NHA team, district administration, levies and police personnel, the spokesperson said.

## Loadshedding

KARACHI: Protestors raising slogans against K-Electric during the protest rally organized under the "Leyari Bachao Tehreek" against severe loadshedding of electricity in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## PRGMEA stresses need for ease of doing business in country

**Staff Reporter**

LAHORE: Pakistan Ready-made Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PRGMEA) has stressing the need for ease of doing business and urged the policymakers to adopt a more comprehensive approach to address high economic growth agenda instead of focusing solely on raising wages, as it would be additional burden on the industry.

PRGMEA Central Chairman Mubashar Naseer Butt and Regional Chairman Ahmad Hanif, in a joint media statement, said the government should work on skills development and infrastructure, investing more in education as well as creating an enabling environment for business growth and job creation to enhance the living standard of the working class.

Mubashar Butt argued that the year-to-year rate of inflation, as measured by Consumer Price Index, had come down to only 11.8 per cent in May 2024, and was the lowest since November 2021, therefore the industries should be provided more facilities. He stressed the need to analyse the factors which have contributed to sharp decline of inflation, asserting that year-to-year rate of inflation has been falling steadily since December 2023, when it was 29.7 per cent. The rate of decline has averaged over 3.5 percentage points monthly. However, the decline was exceptionally large at 5.5 percentage points in May 2024, as compared to April 2024.

PRGMEA Regional Chairman Ahmad Hanif said that budget makers should have taken into consideration the whole textile

and garment industry and incorporated their proposals in the new budget for fiscal year 2024-25. He called for lowering cost of production, solution of liquidity crunch through early refunds payment, low energy tariff and relaxed import policy for industrial raw material so that industrialization can be promoted and exports can be enhanced.

He said that various provincial departments including Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI), Social Security, Women Welfare, Environment Department should facilitate the manufacturers and exporters in a more better way. He suggested the government to work on bringing around significant improvements in ease and cost of doing business for the export industry.

## CM grieves over deaths in bus accident near Maripur

**Our Correspondent**

KARACHI: The Sindh Chief Minister, Syed Murad Ali Shah, has expressed his grief and sorrow over the loss of lives in a bus accident near the Maripur area of the metropolis.

Seven people, including two women and four children, have died and many others were injured when a bus going on a picnic overturned due to high speed near Maripur.

The CM said that he was deeply saddened by the loss of human lives.

He directed the Civil Hospital, Trauma Center, and Jinnah Hospital administrations to provide the best medical treatment to the injured persons.

The Chief Minister directed the IG Police to prepare a detailed report on the Maripur traffic accident.

He said the traffic police should take strict measures to prevent accidents.

The license of drivers who run vehicles fast even on busy highways should be cancelled, he said, adding that the high speed had destroyed the houses in the accident.

# PIE releases National Achievement Test 2023 findings for Balochistan

ISLAMABAD: The National Achievement Test (NAT), in collaboration with Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE) here on Sunday has released the 2023 findings for Balochistan, revealing the significant insights into the students' learning, their progress growth in Maths, Sciences and languages across the province

According to the PIE, over 1,851 students from 106 public schools in Balochistan participated in the NAT 2023, providing a revealing snapshot of student learning across the province.

The findings offer valuable insights into the province's educational landscape that can inform targeted interventions to improve student learning outcomes.

Students belonging to Grade 4 and Grade 8 were assessed in subjects that include English, Urdu, Maths and Science. Balochistan's findings reveal

both areas of progress and subjects requiring focused attention.

Maths scores emerged as a key concern, with Grade 4 students averaging 40 percent and Grade 8 students averaging a concerning low 31 percent. Science performance, though slightly better, remained below the national benchmark, with Grade 8 students averaging 48 percent.

Positive developments were also observed.

Grade 4 English scores showed improvement compared to 2019, jumping from 38 percent to 51 percent. This upward trend suggests positive strides in early language acquisition skills.

In this result, the girls consistently outperformed boys in all subjects and grades except Math and Science, where scores were similar for both genders, hinting at potential progress in

narrowing the educational gender gap.

An interesting disparity emerged when examining performance by location. While Grade 4 students in urban areas scored higher in English, Maths, and Urdu, Grade 8 Science scores leaned slightly towards rural schools. Further analysis is needed to understand the factors behind this contrasting trend.

The NAT 2023 results provide a valuable roadmap for Balochistan's education department.

By pinpointing areas of strength and areas in need of improvement, the department can develop targeted interventions. This might involve strengthening Math and Science instruction through specialized programs and teacher training focused on identified content domains like Statistics and Probability, which proved challenging for students in both grades.



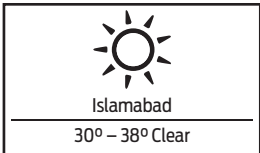
This collaborative effort between Balochistan Examination Commission

and Pakistan Institute of Education (PIE), with technical assistance from Cambridge Partnership for Education, underscores the importance of data-drive decision making in education reform.

Rahila Hameed Khan Durrani, Minister of Education for Balochistan, speaking at the event, remarked, "The findings of the NAT 2023 underscore the critical need for targeted educational reforms in Balochistan. While we celebrate the advancements in English language proficiency among Grade 4 students, the stark realities of Math and Science scores necessitate urgent intervention.

Our commitment is unwavering; we will collaborate closely with stakeholders to implement effective strategies that ensure every child in Balochistan receives a quality education. APP





**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:17 am
Zohr	12:12 pm
Asr	5:12 pm
Maghrib	7:22 pm
Isha	9:06 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

Edhi Ambulance	115
PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

**Crackdown against power pilferers intensified in DI Khan**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: The crackdown against power pilferers intensified in DI Khan as over 100 illegal direct connections were removed and Rs 5 million pending dues were recovered in Mandhran Sub-division during last four days.

According to details, a team of Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) led by Sub-division officer (SDO) Mandhran Engr. Naeem Uddin conducted operation against power theft in different areas following the directions of PESCO Superintendent Dera Fida Muhammad Mehsud.

During last four days, the team removed more than 100 illegal direct connections and as many as 35 cases were forwarded to police stations concerned for registration of cases against electricity thieves.

The PESCO team also recovered Rs Five million pending dues from the consumers. Moreover, the supply to five transformers and eight LT lines was also disconnected.

Talking to media, SE PESCO Fida Muhammad Mehsud has said the PESCO Dera Circle would continue the crackdown against illegal direct connections and recovery of pending dues.

**Measures underway to combat potential floods: Romina**

*Says these proactive efforts aim to minimize the impact of floods on vulnerable communities*

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam has said that comprehensive measures were being taken to prepare for potential floods ahead of the upcoming monsoon season.

In a statement on Sunday, she said, "These proactive efforts aim to minimize the impact of floods on vulnerable communities."

She said, "The ministry is serving as a collaborative platform for all relevant departments to assess flood vulnerability in prone areas and develop a unified strategy to mitigate the effects of potential floods on livelihoods."

She said, "This coordinated approach ensures a robust response to flood risks from the government departments."

"This proactive approach demonstrates the government's commitment to preparedness and resilience in the face of poten-



tial floods", she added.

She said, "The ministry has convened three weekly task force meetings focused on global warming and heat waves, bringing together representatives from key agencies in June."

She said, "These institutions like Ministry of Climate Change, National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Pakistan Meteorological Department, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are working together to support each other to achieve same goal."

"These meetings have facilitated the sharing of expertise and inputs on effective flood impact reduction measures," she stated. "Following the safety of affected individuals, the primary concern is ensuring the provision of essential amenities at relief camps, including shelter, food, portable drinking water, medical supplies, and animal care," the Coordinator emphasized.

logical Department, and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting are working together to support each other to achieve same goal."

"These meetings have facilitated the sharing of expertise and inputs on effective flood impact reduction measures," she stated. "Following the safety of affected individuals, the primary concern is ensuring the provision of essential amenities at relief camps, including shelter, food, portable drinking water, medical supplies, and animal care," the Coordinator emphasized.

"These relief camps will be strategically established in easily accessible locations and widely publicized through various communication channels, including regular, conventional, and digital media."

Romina Khurshid Alam also highlighted the critical importance of monitoring and addressing illegal tree cuttings, as forest ecosystems play a vital role in comprehensive flood risk management strategies.

**Enjoying holiday**

ISLAMABAD: People visiting Pakistan Museum of Natural History (PMNH) situated at Garden Avenue, Shakarparian, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**DC calls for emergency measures against dengue in ICT**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a weekly performance review meeting, which was attended by all Deputy Commissioners and Assistant Commissioners here.

The meeting focused on the anti-dengue campaign, following recent reports of dengue larvae in 53 locations and nine confirmed dengue cases in the city.

DC calls for emergency measures against dengue in ICT.

The concerned officers provided updates on their actions and the measures taken against business centers where dengue larvae were detected.

The DC emphasized the need for urgent steps to combat dengue, particularly with the forecast of upcoming rains, which could lead to an increase in dengue cases.

Addressing the participants, the DC expressed concern about the potential rise in cases due to the rains.

The DC directed that data on dengue cases should be collected from all hospitals and laboratories.



He directed to strengthen the efforts, and the administrations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad would collaborate on countermeasures. An anti-dengue working group would be established to target the boundary areas of the twin cities, he added.

Assistant Commissioners have been instructed to intensify anti-dengue operations in their respective areas, ensuring a comprehensive approach to control and prevent the spread of dengue.

**BEOE advises emigrants to reach out only valid OEPs**

ISLAMABAD: The officials of the Bureau of Emigration and Overseas Employment have advised foreign job-seekers to only reach out to valid Overseas Employment Promoters to avert any loss of time, money and their energies.

Talking to APP, official sources said that there were only 2,577 Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) licenses that were valid as more than 5048 licenses had been pronounced invalid. Out of the invalid OEPs, the licenses of some 670 were cancelled on various grounds while 805



were expired and the rest of them had surrendered, they added.

They said, "All foreign jobs-

seekers must visit the official webpage of BEOE regularly to get fresh and valid information and protect themselves from unauthorised OEPs." The officials said that the BEOE was mandated to regulate emigration under

the Emigration Ordinance, of 1979, promote the Emigration of Pakistani citizens and look after the interest and welfare of the emigrants.

Among other functions, the BEOE had been advising the Federal Government on emigration policies and procedures, monitoring and supervision of Overseas Employment Promoters through seven Protectorates of Emigrants Offices, processing Overseas Employment Promoters (OEP) Licences and giving pre-departure briefings to emigrants. APP

**Federal Ministry's academic coaching classes to commence in Islamabad**

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ministry of Education and Professional Training said on Sunday that it has launched academic coaching classes in public schools and colleges in Islamabad.

The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, in collaboration with the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE), is launching academic coaching classes in public schools and colleges of Islamabad. In a first-of-its-kind initiative, this initiative aims to provide additional support to students and help them excel in their academic pursuits.

In coaching classes, over 4000 students have registered for their classes, which will commence on Monday. The Ministry has selected and appointed the best teachers for these academic and coaching classes.

"Despite initial challenges, we have identified and placed the best talent and our team has worked tirelessly to manage logistics, including timetables and SOPs," the ministry added.

Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training said they are confident that this initiative will add another feather to the Ministry's and FDE's cap and contribute to the overall improvement of the education sector in Islamabad.

**PMDC to conduct NRE exam**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) is set to conduct the National Registration Examination (NRE) Step 2 Clinical Skills Examination (CSE) on July 20-21 and July 27-28, 2024.

This exam assesses the clinical skills and competencies of medical graduates, ensuring they meet the required standards for practice.

The NRE Step 2 CSE involves practical assessments, including patient interactions, clinical procedures, and decision-making processes.

This objectively structured clinical examination (OSCE), requiring candidates to pass both the theory and CSE components separately.

The CSE, will be three hours and 30 minutes, consisting of 20 stations across various disciplines, including Medicine, Surgery, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics, Ophthalmology, and ENT.

A 60% pass rate is required for both the theory and CSE components. President Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC), Prof. Dr. Rizwan Taj emphasized the exam's importance for foreign graduates with Pakistani nationality to register with PMDC.

He highlighted the significant improvements in medical and dental education, professionalism, and patient care due to PMDC's efforts.

The NRE Step 2 exam ensures that only competent professionals enter the medical and dental fields, maintaining high standards of medical education and practice in Pakistan.

The transparent and fair design of the exam reduces biases and ensures equal opportunities for all candidates.

It encourages continuous learning and professional development, promoting excellence in healthcare services.

The rigorous assessment process upholds public trust in the medical and dental professions and maintains the quality of healthcare services. APP

**First Early Childhood Education Centre ready for inauguration**

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training on Sunday has announced that the first Early Childhood Education Centre is complete and ready for inauguration by the Honorable Minister of Federal Education on Tuesday.

The spokesman of the Ministry said that this milestone marked a significant step forward in the Ministry's efforts to revolutionize early childhood education in Pakistan. The Centre, designed to provide a nurturing and stimulating environment for young children, sets a new standard for early childhood education in the country.

The spokesman added that it was pleased to announce that 100 more schools would be ready by August 1st, as part of its comprehensive plan to expand access to quality early childhood education. APP

**CDA retrieves over 3 kanal land in Sangjani**

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Sunday has retrieved over 3 kanal precious land from the land grabbers in the area of Sangjani.

Following the instructions of Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa, the Authority has launched operation in the area and successfully removed illegal structures.

Indiscriminate actions are being taken against illegal encroachments and constructions.

The anti-encroachment operation in Sangjani resulted in the demolition of several rooms constructed on government land.

The operation was conducted with the participation of CDA's Enforcement Directorate, Revenue staff, and other departments. APP

**PIA announces to reduce in Umrah fares**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan International Airlines has announced a reduction in Umrah fares. According to a PIA spokesperson, Umrah pilgrims going to Madinah would benefit of discounted fares.

The two-way fare from Lahore, Islamabad to Medina would be 86,000 rupees + tax, while the two-way fare from Karachi to Madinah Munawwarah would be 76,000 rupees + tax.

**Park Road Expansion project to be completed by July 14**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Muhammad Ali Randhawa Sunday said that the Park Road Expansion project should be completed without any delay by July 14.

During his visit to the Park Road Expansion project, he said that all sections of the project must proceed simultaneously.

Muhammad Ali directed the relevant officials to increase labor and machinery to expedite the development work of the project.

The CDA chief said that no further delays would be tolerated.

He said the project had previously faced delays due to various administrative issues.

It is pertinent to mention here that the CDA chairman is taking personal interest and supervising the previously stalled Park Road Expansion project. APP

**Two-day free eye camp inaugurated at Civil hospital Sanghar**

SANGHAR: The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Sanghar Imran ul Hassan Khuwaja and Chairman Hashmanis Hospital Dr Sharif Hashmani jointly inaugurated a two-day free eye camp at Civil Hospital.

They also visited the eye camp, met with the patients admitted for treatment and inquired about health facilities.

Talking to Media DC said that over 500 patients had been registered so far in eye camp and 56 eye operations have been conducted by eminent eye surgeons while 200 operations will be conducted and free medicines will be provided to patients.



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# Mounting costs of failing to address climate change

**Hafed Al-Ghwel**

Even the staunchest of naysayers have to admit that the reality of climate change has simply become impossible to ignore, as life-threatening heat waves around the globe test the very limits of the human capacity to survive.

Several regions have reported record-breaking temperatures recently, while others grapple with devastating heat indexes reaching upward of 52 degrees Celsius. Amid these unprecedented conditions, the world reached an alarming milestone last year as global temperatures hovered at an estimated 1.5 C above preindustrial levels, and as high as 1.8 C in September.

Elsewhere, we are likely to see more "heatflation," a phenomenon in which sharp increases in the costs of food production as a result of climate-related disruptions cause globe-spanning food price shocks. Elevated food prices exacerbate poverty levels among those least able to adjust or adapt, at the same time as incomes shrink as a result of the collapse of entire agricultural sectors.

The persistent climate-related emergencies we have witnessed offer irrefutable evidence that the window of opportunity for the application of more-moderate remedies has narrowed considerably in recent years.

The prognosis is increasingly grim as soaring heat indexes, growing carbon dioxide emissions, and the resulting threats to core pillars of survival, such as agriculture, paint a picture of a global threat that demands a unified and decisive response.

Factor in geopolitical tensions, conflicts and regional convulsions and the window for action narrows even further. As a

result, climate change interventions require not only urgent policy actions but a societal shift to confront what is the defining challenge of our time. Inaction is a luxury the world simply can no longer afford. One might assume that given the well-documented risks, the demonstrable effects, a wide range of proposed solutions, and almost global buy-in, decisive action to tackle climate change would be significant and universal.

However, the recent spate of record-breaking heat waves, prolonged droughts and intense floods are the clearest indictment yet of the slow, bumbling nature of the global response to the climate crisis.

Despite the looming threat and mounting evidence of the risks, decisive action on a global scale remains elusive, hindered by a fragmented approach to climate policy that borders on willful inaction.

Amid the growing crises and a continuing lack of effective responses, a troubling reality persists. Much-anticipated larger interventions deemed necessary to steer the planet away from catastrophic climate disasters remain on the distant horizon, their implementation obstructed by protracted negotiations and entrenched bureaucratic inertia.

Across the various international forums at which consensus on ambitious climate initiatives is sought, the discussions are frequently mired in painstaking deliberations that too often devolve into contentious debates over the minutiae of the language used in joint declarations.

This process underscores not only the complex nature of efforts to agree and implement uniform global action, but also the challenges that persist in attempting to align disparate national interests and priorities within an increasingly urgent timeline dictated by escalating tragedies.

The gulf between the rhetoric governments espouse regarding climate change

and the tangible policies they actually implement is widening. This gap is emblematic of the current state of international climate politics, in which stated intentions and actual outcomes seldom align. While the scientific community continues to issue increasingly dire warnings about the need to limit global temperature rises during this century, the pace of governmental responses remains glacial. The critical transformations necessary to address the worst effects of climate change, spanning economic, social and environmental dimensions, continue to be stalled by negotiations that focus more on form than substance.

While the UN's annual COP climate change conferences, and others like them, can successfully convene world leaders, scientists, and activists in an attempt to forge effective paths forward, very often the outcomes fall far short of expectations due to the delicate dance of diplomatic compromise.

The declarations and joint statements that emerge from these events, while symbolically important, frequently lack the means for enforcement, which is required to precipitate real change. The reliance on voluntary national contributions to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions epitomizes this challenge, creating a scenario in which predictive models of climate mitigation are based less on substance, science and sound deliberation than on political calculations.

Furthermore, glaring disparities between regions in their present vulnerability to climate-induced disasters, and their capacities to respond to them, is probably influencing some key decision-makers to kick decisions on commitments to a credible global plan of action further down the road. In their view, we have yet to reach a "crisis point" and so warnings from scientists and experts are simply dismissed as alarmist climate

"doomerism." However, there is no single "crisis point" that will eventually prompt a unified, global response and the delaying of critical decisions in anticipation of reaching it is already proving disastrous.

On a particularly morbid note, such a stance implies a tolerance for "acceptable losses." In other words certain countries or regions might have to become uninhabitable before the others decide it is time to take substantive action.

The implications of this are troubling. It means that willful inaction and delayed responses to climate change mitigation and adaptation are conscious decisions being taken by some as calculated risks. However, such thinking severely underestimates the threat-amplifying nature of the effects of climate change. Delayed action will not preserve the status quo for some, as they hope, but will rather intensify the future effects from which no region will be spared. The sweltering temperatures recorded this month are likely to be eclipsed in the coming weeks, setting new records and benchmarks, with tragic results. To see whether or not the toll of this finally leads to decisive global action, we will have to wait until November when the world gathers in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, for COP29.

If precedent is anything to go by, it is unlikely we will see anything significant or groundbreaking between now and then, or at the conference or future gatherings. Instead, the debilitating status quo will persist and, as always, it is the most vulnerable people in the most vulnerable regions that will pay the heaviest price. (Courtesy: Arab News)

*Hafed Al-Ghwel is a senior fellow and executive director of the North Africa Initiative at the Foreign Policy Institute of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, DC.*

## Political stability pivotal for economic prosperity

Political stability ensures a predictable environment where businesses can operate with confidence. When a government is stable, it is able to implement and maintain consistent policies, providing a reliable foundation for economic planning. Investors, both domestic and international, are more likely to commit their resources to stable countries, knowing that their investments are less likely to be jeopardized by abrupt policy shifts or political turmoil. This influx of investment is crucial for economic growth, as it leads to job creation, infrastructure development, and increased productivity.

It is a very positive gesture shown by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif by inviting the opposition to sit with the government to sort out the issues and take the country forward on the path of development. It is not for the first time when such offer was made in fact PM Shahbaz always remained very vocal about resolution of all issues by dialogue even when he was in opposition. He called for Charter of Economy amongst all political forces several times in past also. It is very important to understand that the political leadership must show some maturity and work together for achieve much-needed unity and cooperation to steer the country towards economic stability. The opposition parties especially Pakistan Tehrik e Insaf should take advantage of this offer and reciprocate it positively in the larger interest of country.

Investor confidence is a critical component of economic prosperity. Political instability breeds uncertainty, deterring investment and stymieing economic progress. Conversely, stable political conditions encourage long-term investments. For instance, multinational corporations are more inclined to establish operations in countries with predictable political environments, leading to technology transfer, skill development, and enhanced economic activity. Moreover, stable governance attracts aid and grants from international organizations, further bolstering economic development.

Moreover, Political stability is also instrumental in fostering social cohesion, which is essential for economic prosperity. A stable political environment reduces the likelihood of civil unrest, strikes, and protests, which can disrupt economic activities. Social cohesion promotes a sense of shared purpose and collective effort toward economic goals. When citizens have confidence in their government, they are more likely to participate in the economy, pay taxes, and support national development initiatives.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Awsat)

## Can we envision a world without nuclear weapons?

**Yossi Mekelberg**

During a week in which Russian President Vladimir Putin concluded a visit to North Korea with the signing of a mutual defense pact between Moscow and Pyongyang that is likely to make the latter's military nuclear program even more brazen, I happened to visit the Japanese city of Hiroshima, the first city to be hit by an atomic bomb.

It left me extremely moved but also contemplative about why on earth we still possess nuclear weapons. On Aug. 6, 1945, at 8:15 a.m., an American B-29 bomber, the Enola Gay, dropped an atomic bomb on the city, instantly killing at least 70,000 people. By the end of the year, the death toll had reached 140,000. The bomb vaporized people almost a kilometer from ground zero, and burned the exposed skin of people kilometers away as a result of the intense infrared energy that was unleashed.

Catastrophic fires ravaged a circular area with a radius of more than 3 km, as the city literally burned to the ground. The results would be similar three days later when the US bombed a second Japanese city, Nagasaki, this time causing 100,000 deaths directly attributable to the initial blast.

Can anyone guarantee that a world with nuclear weapons is truly a safe one? A world that is inherently unstable, as is the current state of international affairs, in which most countries in possession of nuclear weapons suffer from unreliable political systems, with leaders who are increasingly authoritarian and have scant respect for accountability and transparency?

The very concept of deterrence, and especially nuclear deterrence, represents a very pessimistic view of human nature. Perceptually and practically, it dictates that we live in a state of peace

— or, more accurately, that we decide not to go to war with one another — not because it is the right thing to do or out of concern about the immorality that accompanies war, and not even because it might serve our interests as individuals or societies.

Deterrence means that we avoid wars mainly because we fear their consequences, and the fear of nuclear annihilation is our ultimate source of dread. Our fears and predictions of global extinction have prevailed for thousands of years and have yet to be banished.

In recent times, experiments in collective security guided by international law, such as the UN, or globalization as a prevailing paradigm of worldwide cooperation have at best achieved only partial success.

Similarly, the model provided by the EU, which represents a direct challenge to the adversarial concept of the security dilemma and its inevitable outcome in the form of the arms race, is facing severe challenges and has yet to be emulated in other parts of the world.

Meanwhile, wars and conflicts persist and continue to claim hundreds of thousands of lives every year. And nuclear weapons are the ultimate tool of force which, if unleashed, could annihilate humanity altogether.

There is a stark contrast between the social contract that prevails in societies in which law, common values, and behavioral norms regulate relations between people and where trust and mutual respect are pillars of society, and the element of anarchy that continues to prevail in international affairs, in which a concept scholars call the "realist" approach still rules supreme. This approach views war as a mechanism to ensure stability, and the pursuit of gains by force as part and parcel of the kind of world affairs in which nuclear weapons have been a component for decades.

For a brief moment, in the immediate after-

math of the Cold War, nuclear disarmament seemed to be the ultimate outcome in a world with no more big power rivalry, and consequently the reduction in nuclear arsenals would be substantial.

This is no longer the case. According to the annual report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, the nine nuclear-armed states continue to modernize their nuclear weapon stockpiles as they deepen their reliance on deterrence. In a separate report, the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons calculated that these countries spent a combined total of \$91.4 billion on their nuclear arsenals in 2023. Meanwhile, Iran is regarded as being a "nuclear threshold" state.

A world of nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence is not a safer world but an accident waiting to happen, whether technically or politically.

After nearly 80 years of a nuclear era during which the bomb has not been used since Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we should not be lulled into a false sense of security and assume it will never be used.

In recent years a number of negative precedents have been set, including a permanent member of the UN Security Council invading a neighboring country without provocation and threatening to use nuclear weaponry in the process.

This, and the very existence in the world of about 12,100 nuclear warheads, should deeply concern all of us. After all, in Hiroshima and Nagasaki the world witnessed the horror that "only" two such weapons could unleash when launched, ultimately, on the orders of one person alone. (Courtesy: Arab News)

*Yossi Mekelberg is a professor of international relations and an associate fellow of the Middle East and North Africa Program at international affairs think tank Chatham House.*

## Macron 'rolls the dice' with a gigantic political gamble

**Andrew Hammond**

American writer Mark Twain is widely credited as the originator of the phrase: "History never repeats itself but it often rhymes." This alludes to the potential patterns that can be observed in certain events over time.

While the French political system is very different to that of the US, parallels were being drawn as early as 2017 between the careers of Presidents Emmanuel Macron and Barack Obama. Though their terms in office did not overlap, they share many similar personal characteristics, including charisma and the perceived status of "insurgent" in the ways they won control of their nations' top political offices.

In 2017, the dynamic, daring Macron upended the longstanding French political duopoly of the right-of-center Republicans and the left-of-center Socialists to win power. Obama also rocked the political boat in the US, yet even at the start of Macron's first presidential term, some commentators wondered whether there might be another, later parallel to be drawn between the two leaders: the "end game" of their respective presidencies.

Firstly, the president has lacked a parliamentary majority since the 2022 election and was heading for a no confidence motion later this year over the budget that would have probably seen his centrist government fall anyway. Macron previously said: "It is better to write history than to submit to it." From this perspective, his decision represents a bold, proactive choice to force a dissolution on his own terms.

A second probable reason why Macron decided to call an election is his belief that if the National Rally does win and forms a government with powers over domestic policy, including tax and spending, this could undercut the party's popularity as it faces the reality of wielding power in a tight fiscal context. This might reduce the possi-

bility of a Le Pen presidential victory in 2027.

Macron's calculations here might well have been that if National Rally remained outside of power, the party and Le Pen herself might continue to grow increasingly popular and win the presidency, possibly comfortably, in 2027. This would be a massive blow to his legacy, just as the election of Trump was to Obama's in the US. It might even potentially result in the collapse of "Macronism" as a centrist political project.

While Macron's success, or otherwise, in foiling Le Pen's presidential prospects will not be clear until 2027, his election gamble is already having not only political consequences but significant economic ones for France. Markets have been volatile and Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire has warned that a National Rally victory would spark a financial crisis in the eurozone's second-largest economy due to tens of billions of euros of proposed extra borrowing.

Specifically, Le Maire cited the possibility of a "Truss-style scenario." This referred to Liz Truss, the former UK prime minister, and the crisis in the bond markets that ultimately led to her departure from 10 Downing Street in October 2022, after only 50 days in office.

Meanwhile, the European Commission warned last week that France's economic plans imply spiraling debt levels that demonstrate "high risks over the medium term." According to its baseline 10-year projection, the EU expects France's debt ratio to rise to about 139 percent of gross domestic product by 2034, compared with about 110 percent now.

Macron's gamble is therefore a huge one, politically and economically. While the results on July 7 will give the first indication of whether he is vindicated for his roll of the dice or not, a full assessment of the outcomes of his decision might not be clear until the 2027 elections. (Courtesy: Arab News)

*Andrew Hammond is an associate at LSE IDEAS at the London School of Economics.*



# No progress in Gaza ceasefire negotiations with Israel: Hamas

*Hamas says deal must end war and bring full Israeli withdrawal while Israel says will accept only temporary pause*

CAIRO: A senior official of the militant Islamist group Hamas, Osama Hamdan, said on Saturday there has been no progress in ceasefire talks with Israel over the Gaza war.

The Palestinian group is still ready to "deal positively" with any ceasefire proposal that ends the war, Hamdan told a news conference in Beirut.

Arab mediators' efforts, backed by the United States, have so far failed to conclude a ceasefire, with both sides blaming each other for the impasse. Hamas says any deal must end the war and bring full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, while Israel says it will accept only temporary pauses in fighting until Hamas, which has ruled Gaza since 2007, is eradicated.

Hamdan also blamed the United States for applying pressure on Hamas to accept Israel's conditions.

"Once again, Hamas is ready to deal positively with any proposal that secures

a permanent ceasefire, a comprehensive withdrawal from Gaza Strip and a serious swap deal," said Hamdan, referring to a potential swap of hostages held in Gaza for Palestinians in Israeli prisons.

The Israeli offensive has so far killed nearly 38,000 people, according to the Gaza health ministry, and has left the heavily built-up coastal enclave in ruins.

The Gaza health ministry does not distinguish between combatants and non-combatants but officials say most of the dead are civilians. Israel has lost more than 300 soldiers in Gaza and says at least a third of the Palestinian dead are fighters.

Palestinian health officials said Israeli military strikes across the enclave had so far killed at least 35 people and wounded others on Saturday.

The Israeli military on Saturday announced the death of two soldiers

killed in combat in northern Gaza, as Israeli forces pressed on with an offensive in the Shejaia neighborhood in Gaza City.

Residents said tanks advanced deeper into several districts including the area around the local market and there was heavy fire from the air and the ground.

The armed wing of Hamas and the allied Islamic Jihad reported fierce fighting, saying fighters fired anti-tank rockets and mortar bombs against the forces operating there.

The Israeli military said dozens of Palestinian gunmen were killed over the past two days in close quarters combat and airstrikes in Shejaia, after forces encircled what it described as a civilian area converted by Hamas into a militant compound.

"In the area, the troops located observation posts, weapons, enemy drones and a long-range rocket launcher near



the schools," the military said in a statement.

Hamas has denied assertions that it operates in civilian areas such as schools

and hospitals.

More than eight months into Israel's air and ground war in Gaza, militants continued to stage attacks on Israeli forces, operating in areas that the Israeli army said it had gained control over months ago.

Israeli leaders have said in the past week that the intense phase of the war is approaching its end, and that the next stage of the offensive will mainly be smaller-scale operations meant to stop Hamas from reassembling.

Meanwhile Israeli forces operating in several districts in Rafah, in the southern Gaza Strip, killed several Palestinians and forced families living in the far western edge of the city along the coastal areas to head northwards, according to Palestinian medical officials and residents.

Israel has said its military operations in Rafah are aimed at eradicating the last armed battalions of Hamas. Reuters

## Sudan facing crisis 'beyond imagination': UN

LONDON: Sudan is facing a humanitarian crisis "beyond imagination," according to Martin Griffiths, the UN's undersecretary-general for humanitarian affairs, with 750,000 people at imminent risk of famine and conditions set to deteriorate further.

In an interview with The Guardian, Griffiths contrasted the intense media coverage and diplomatic focus on Gaza with the unfolding and largely overlooked human-made tragedy in Sudan.

Statistics released by the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification on Tuesday reveal that 495,000 Palestinians in Gaza are facing catastrophic conditions, characterized by an "extreme lack of food, starvation, and exhaustion of coping capacities" over the next six months.

In Sudan, however, an estimated 755,262 people are facing similar "phase 5" catastrophic conditions, with an additional 8.5 million people in "phase 4" emergency conditions, marked by acute malnutrition, high disease levels, and a rapidly increasing risk of hunger-related deaths.

"These are staggering numbers. It's beyond imagination," Griffiths said. "I think historically it is a huge moment."

Griffiths concurred with US officials' estimates that, without improved access to humanitarian relief and increased international donations, the situation in Sudan could surpass the historic famine in Ethiopia, which resulted in the deaths



of 1 million people between 1983 and 1985, according to UN estimates.

"Sudan is comparable in horror, in potential tragedy, if not worse. But it's not moving in the right direction, and it's not getting international attention on the level it should," Griffith said.

"There was massive international attention (on the Ethiopian famine), and massive generosity ... whereas in Sudan, partly because journalists aren't given visas to get to places, it's very difficult to get the story out."

The 2024 Sudan humanitarian needs and response plan, launched late last year, called for \$2.7 billion to address the crisis. However, as of this week, only 17 percent of the required

funds had been raised, reflecting the average global response rate for humanitarian appeals.

"Tragically, it's not that unusual these days," he said. "It's partly because the needs have grown, but the funding hasn't."

A critical issue in western Sudan's Darfur region is the blockade of aid at the Adre crossing from Chad by Sudanese armed forces. Griffiths mentioned ongoing diplomatic efforts to resolve the blockade, potentially through an inspection regime to ensure no arms accompany the food aid. However, he cautioned that time is running out to prevent the worst-case scenarios.

"The worry is that we are not going

to get the seeds in to do the planting season, and it's going to get worse," he said.

In Gaza, Griffiths noted that the number of Palestinians facing catastrophic famine had halved since March, when over a million people were at risk. He attributed the improvement to the influx of humanitarian aid in March and April, demonstrating that "aid works" and can swiftly rescue people from famine, starvation, and disease.

However, since the limited opening of crossings into Gaza in early spring, Israel's offensive on Rafah has displaced over a million people into central Gaza, closed the main aid access point, and exacerbated gang violence and insecurity, now the primary obstacles to food distribution.

"We have now gone down to practically nothing," Griffiths said.

While acknowledging the issues of criminality and mob looting in Gaza, Griffiths insisted that Israel, as the occupying power, remains responsible for ensuring the security of humanitarian aid deliveries.

"The Israelis have an obligation under international laws to provide security for humanitarian aid, so it's not right to say they're not the problem," Griffiths said. "They are part of the process that is needed to ensure the security of humanitarian deliveries." Arab News

## Israeli FM threatens Iran saying it 'deserves to be destroyed'

JERUSALEM: Israeli Foreign Minister Israel Katz has said that Iran "is worthy of destruction due to its message of an 'obliterating war'."

"A regime that threatens destruction deserves to be destroyed," Katz said in a post on X on Saturday.

He also said Israel will act with full force against Hezbollah if it does not stop firing at Israel from Lebanon and move away from the border.

Iran's UN mission said on Friday that if Israel embarks on a "full-scale military aggression" in Lebanon, "an obliterating war will ensue."

The Iranian mission also said in the post on X, formerly known as Twitter, that in such an event "all options, incl. the full involvement of all resistance fronts, are on the table."

Israel has been waging a war on Gaza since the Hamas October 2023 attack that resulted in the deaths of 1,200 Israelis. The Israeli onslaught on the besieged territory has killed close to 38,000 Palestinians including women, children and babies and wounded at least 87,500 others.

During the same Israel was also engaged in skirmishes with Hezbollah on its border with Lebanon. At the same time, Israel has also been launching attacks on Syrian territory.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Defence Minister Yoav Gallant said this week they prefer a diplomatic path to resolving the situation. Though Katz is a member of Israel's security cabinet, war policy has largely been led by Netanyahu and a small circle of ministers that includes Gallant, who visited Washington this week for talks on Gaza and Lebanon. Agencies

## Russia claims two more east Ukrainian villages

MOSCOW: Russia on Sunday claimed two more east Ukrainian villages as its forces have had the upper hand over Kyiv on the battlefield for months.

Moscow has claimed new villages in the east of Ukraine regularly for weeks, as outgunned and outmanned Ukrainian forces struggle to hold them back.

Russia's defense ministry said its forces had "liberated the settlement" of Novooleksandrivka as the Russian army pushes further westwards into the Donetsk region.

The village — which lies north-west of occupied Ocheretyne — is now the most western point of the region that Moscow holds.

Moscow also said its forces captured the small village of Spirne, further north in the Donetsk region near the border with the neighboring Lugansk region.

Moscow's Ukraine offensive has dragged on for nearly two and a half years. AFP

## Hamas leader, Turkey's intelligence chief discuss Gaza truce talks

ANKARA: The head of the Turkish Intelligence Organization Ibrahim Kalin on Sunday met with Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the Hamas Political Bureau, the state-run TRT broadcaster reported.

They discussed the latest status of the ceasefire negotiations, the necessary measures to secure a lasting ceasefire, hostage exchange, and the delivery of humanitarian aid, the broadcaster reported.

Kalin expressed his condolences for the deaths of Haniyeh's sister, who was killed in a recent Israeli attack, and the Palestinian people killed in the ongoing offensive, saying that Türkiye will continue to stand by the Palestinian people, according to the report.

## Japan to unveil new banknotes

*In first redesign in 20 years, new bills to feature historical figures' 3D holographic portraits that seem to rotate*

ANKARA: Japan on Wednesday will start issuing new banknotes with the first-ever use of cutting-edge holographic technology.

Holographic portraits of historical figures appear to rotate in 3D on the bills, serving as an anti-counterfeit measure, Tokyo-based Kyodo News reported on Sunday.

In the first design change in 20 years, the 10,000-yen, 5,000-yen, and 1,000-yen bills will have larger face value numbers printed on them than the current versions for greater visibility.

Tactile marks for the visually impaired will also make them recognizable to touch.



Eiichi Shibusawa (1840-1931), known as "the father of Japanese capitalism" who helped establish around 500 companies, will be featured on the 10,000-yen note, while the 5,000-yen note will feature educator Umeko Tsuda (1864-1929), a staunch advocate of women rights.

The 1,000-yen note will use the portrait of microbiologist Shibusaburo Kitasato (1853-1931), dubbed "the father of modern Japanese medicine."

About 7.5 billion new banknotes will have been printed by the end of March next year. Existing banknotes will remain valid after the introduction of the new bills. Anadolu Agency

## Anger erupts after police fatally shoot 13-year-old holding replica gun in New York

*Police say the teen, a refugee from Myanmar, displayed what looked like a gun. It was later found to be a replica.*

NEW YORK: Locals in Utica staged a vigil while others protested against New York police after a 13-year-old boy was shot dead on Friday night.

Authorities said the teen, a Karen refugee from Myanmar, displayed what looked like a gun. It was later found to be a replica.

The police stated in a news release Saturday night that three officers had stopped two teenagers around 10 pm local time Friday.

This action was part of an investigation into several recent robberies. While the officers were questioning the teens, one fled on foot, according to police.

Utica Police Chief Mark Williams said during a Saturday morning news conference that as the teen ran, officers saw what appeared to be a handgun.

The community members at the conference frequently interrupted Williams, expressing their outrage.

One of the officers fired his weapon and struck the teen, who was described as an Asian male.

"A Utica police officer ultimately discharged his firearm once, striking the male, during a ground struggle," Williams said.

He stated that the teenager, identified as 13-year-old Nyah Mway, received immediate first aid from officers at the scene and was transported to Wynn Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

Williams mentioned that after the shooting, officers recovered a pellet gun that resembled a Glock 17 handgun with a detachable magazine.

"Ultimately, this replica handgun was determined to be a pellet gun," Williams revealed.

The officer responsible for the fatal shooting of Mway was named as Patrick Husnay, a six-year veteran of the Utica Police Department.

Police stated that two other officers, Bryce Patterson and Andrew Citriniti, were also part of the incident involving Mway.

According to a statement released Saturday night, police mentioned that the three officers were conducting patrols in the area following reports of at least two recent robberies.

Police stated that the three officers approached the two teens because they matched the descriptions of suspects involved in recent robberies and were in



the vicinity shortly after a robbery occurred.

On Saturday night, police also released footage from body cameras worn by all three officers,

along with a photo of the pellet gun that was recovered.

According to the footage, the teen identified as Mway fled immediately after being stopped

by officers. While running, he briefly pointed what police described as the pellet gun at the pursuing officers.

Within 15 to 20 seconds of the chase beginning, the footage shows Patterson tackling Mway on a sidewalk. During the struggle, Husnay approached and fired a single shot.

Police acknowledged the existence of a separate cell phone video of the incident circulating on social media, stating it does not capture the entire sequence of events.

The New York attorney general's office announced Saturday night that it has initiated an investigation into the shooting.

Utica police stated they are conducting their own investigation and have placed all three

officers on paid administrative leave. An interpreter was present at the tense news conference to translate for the victim's family and community members. Utica Mayor Michael Galime intervened, urging calm.

Galime emphasised the gravity of the situation and expressed a commitment to thorough understanding of every aspect.

The ethnicity of the victim's family was not disclosed, but Utica has resettled significant numbers of refugees in recent years, including many Asian refugees from Burma, such as the Karen ethnic group, as well as others like Vietnamese, Thai, and Cambodians. The city also hosts Bosnian and Dominican refugees, among others. Agencies



**JazzCash: Fueling financial inclusion**

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: JazzCash is not just about transactions; it's about transformation and the fintech platform is driving a shift from a cash-based economy to a digital one, contributing to the vision of the State Bank of Pakistan and the government in digitizing the economy.

Over a decade ago, JazzCash started with two simple products: utility bill payments and domestic remittances said a news release.

It has evolved into a comprehensive fintech platform offering services from nano-lending, savings to insurance, all while committed to expanding financial services to underserved segments of society these views were shared by Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz, addressing investors from around the world at the VEON Capital Markets Day 2024.

Aamir highlighted that Pakistan remains a predominantly cash-based society, presenting a significant digital opportunity. JazzCash currently has over 300,000 locations where QR codes are accepted, with an ambitious goal to increase this number to 1 million within the next two years.

Pakistan is home to approximately 3 million micros, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), and JazzCash aims to digitize their transactions. The platform processes over 100,000 micro loans daily, providing a crucial financial tool for MSMEs, which are the backbone of Pakistan's economy but have historically had limited access to formal financial sources. JazzCash's extensive network allows it to digitize over PKR 100 billion each month, serving a customer base of 44 million, with women making up 30% of this clientele.

To improve women's access to financial services, Aamir reiterated JazzCash's commitment to increase it to 50% in the next few years. The platform's initial success amongst females is due to convenience. They are less likely to visit banks in Pakistan, while JazzCash provides them with easy, quick, and secure digital financial services from the comfort of their homes," he added.

Another reason for JazzCash's success has been the vast agent network spread throughout cities, towns, and rural localities. "Our vast footprint, especially in areas without brick-and-mortar banks, allows us to provide the underserved with basic financial services, onboarding new customers and educating millions on the benefits of mobile money," he further said.

"We are also working to increase the number of female agents significantly. By inducting more female agents, we aim to foster a psychologically safe environment for females to transact conveniently. This will also open up new earning models for them as mobile money can be an attractive business for dedicated agents."

Beyond payments, JazzCash is a major force in financial inclusion, facilitating over 8 million digital loans in the first quarter of this year alone. These nano loans, typically between \$20 to \$30, are designed to be productive. Aamir illustrated the impact of JazzCash's digital lending with the story of a rickshaw driver who uses the ReadyCash service to secure small loans that keep his operations running smoothly. With fares collected, he easily repays these loans, ensuring a seamless cycle of financial empowerment.

Aamir also commended the collaborative efforts of the State Bank of Pakistan, the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, and the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan in balancing innovation and consumer protection, thus propelling digital and financial inclusion nationwide.

Looking ahead, JazzCash will focus on interoperability, tokenization, and B2B solutions over the next five years. "With a large unbanked population and a cash-dependent SME sector, we anticipate exponential growth," Aamir said. "Our roadmap involves leveraging data for risk assessment, venturing into Insurtech, and further integrating financial services into everyday transactions."

In his concluding remarks, Aamir discussed the expanding array of digital capabilities and services offered by VEON, the parent company of Jazz and Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited, aimed at accelerating digital and financial inclusion across its markets.

**PFC to participate in Rwanda International Trade Fair**

LAHORE, JUN 30 (APP): The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) will participate in the 27th Rwanda International Trade Fair (RITF), being organised from July 25 to August 15, 2024, at the Gikondo Expo ground in Kigali, Rwanda.

Talking to a delegation of exporters, led by Muhammad Aarib here on Sunday, Council Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq mentioned that ChenOne would collaborate with the PFC for this prestigious mega event that offers an excellent platform for the Council to showcase a wide range of products, including general merchandise, textiles, clothing and garments, leather, etc.

**FBR collects Rs 9,306b in FY 2023-24**

*The revenue is expected to further increase after reconciliation of figures*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has collected Rs 9,306 billion in financial year 2023-24 against the target of Rs 9,252 billion, showing an increase of Rs 54 billion in the yearly target.

The revenue is expected to further increase after reconciliation of figures, said a FBR news release issued here on Sunday.

The growth in revenue collection is 30% as compared to the last year. This was possible due to historic collection throughout the current financial year.

It is a striking fact that FBR has added Rs 2,142 billion during the year as compared to the last year collection of Rs 7,164 billion and Rs 1,183 billion in the month of June 2024 alone.

The target was achieved despite the fact that the imports were further compressed from \$ 55 billion to \$ 53 billion whereby all the shortfall was to be recovered from domestic taxes.

In addition to exceeding the annual target,



the Tax System of Pakistan saw significant structural improvements which were direct result of the interest of the prime minister and finance minister.

This is a direct consequence of policy shift with increased focus on domestic resource mobilization, more direct taxation from the rich and affluent and facilitating businesses and exporters by prompt issuance of refunds:

- Under the prime minister's directives, the FBR disbursed refunds amounting to Rs 469 billion during the FY 2023-24 as compared to Rs 331 billion during the FY 2022-23 which

is 42% more than last year.

- Due to focus on direct taxes of the government, the revenue collection target was achieved mainly due to growth in direct taxes which led the way by contributing 47% to the revenue collection.

- The domestic taxes also improved significantly and overall, FBR collected Rs 6,128 billion in domestic taxes and Rs 3,178 billion in import taxes thereby depicting a growth of 37% in domestic taxes and 18% in imports despite import compression from \$ 55 billion last year to \$ 53 billion during the current year.

- The composition of domestic taxes in total revenue collection is 65% which used to be less than 50% two years ago.

For the FY 2023-24, FBR collected income tax amounting to Rs 4,528 billion as compared to Rs 3,270 billion during the same period last year, depicting an increase of 38.4%.

Similarly, under the head sales tax Rs 3,098 billion was collected as compared to Rs 2,593 billion and under the head Federal Excise

Duty (FED) Rs 576 billion was collected as compared to Rs 370 billion.

The revenue collection under the head of Customs Duty was Rs 1,104 billion as compared to Rs 931 billion last year, press release added.

In spite of all odds and issues faced by the organization as a whole, the officers and officials of FBR have remained dedicated and committed to their primary role i.e. achievement of the assigned revenue targets under all circumstances.

The economic growth of Pakistan is intrinsically linked with the achievement of revenue collection targets, and the employees of FBR are fully determined and ready to cope with the challenges and depict further wins in the years to come.

It is also reiterated that for the assigned revenue collection target for the FY 2024-25 the team FBR is ready to deliver and put in their best efforts to achieve it and serve the nation, it added.

**Old books bazaar**

LAHORE: People are buying old books at Neela Gumbad area, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

**'Economic violence' against women, girls must stop: UN**

UNITED NATIONS: The UN human rights chief, Volker Turk, has told a Human Rights Council panel that it's time to eliminate laws and practices that contribute to "economic violence" against women and girls.

During his opening statement Friday to the all-day panel dedicated to women and human rights, Turk said there had been "extraordinary progress" thanks to the worldwide women's movement.

But the very fact that a separate panel needed to be convened on gender-based violence shows that progress has been "hard-won and fragile," he added.

The meeting's focus on so-called economic violence as a part of a wider pattern of gender-based violence occurs when a woman or girl is denied access to financial resources as a form of abuse or control.

Turk noted that one in three women have been subjected to some form of violence - physical, sexual, psychological or economic - at least once in their life.

"If one in three men globally were subject to such devastating and pervasive harm, an emergency summit would be convened," he said.

The High Commissioner said economic violence often goes unseen or unregulated but could be just as harmful as physical violence, as it usually includes forms of control, exploitation and sabotage.

"While economic violence most commonly occurred in the home, it could also be enabled and perpetrated by the State through discriminatory legal frameworks which restricted women's access to credit, employment, social protection, or property and land rights," he said.

Turk declared that so far, global efforts to deliver on gender equality have failed, pointing out that 3.9 billion women worldwide faced legal barriers affecting their economic participation and women earn only 77 cents

for every dollar paid to men, among other inequities.

He said there needed to be a thorough revision of discriminatory laws and practices to put a stop to economic violence.

"Gender equality needed to be positively fostered through laws governing all areas of life and there needed to be policy measures to ensure these laws were applied," he said.

Further, he said there needed to be a stronger effort to ensure survivors of economic violence could seek justice and assistance.

"There needed to be better complaint mechanisms, economic and social support systems, more widely available psychological assistance, and for perpetrators to be brought to justice," the High Commissioner said.

He emphasized that violence against women and girls was "abhorrent and inexcusable."

During the session, members of civil society also weighed in on the harm caused by economic violence.

Esther Waweru, Senior Legal Advisor at Equality Now, said inequality in the family was one of the main reasons for economic violence, paired with "retrogressive patriarchal gender norms."

She said that 1.4 billion women globally lived in countries where economic violence was not recognized and where there are no protections; a practice she believes could leave more women and girls vulnerable to exploitation.

Ms. Waweru recommends that Member States enact comprehensive laws to criminalize sexual and gender-based violence and intimate partner violence - along with economic violence.

She called for laws to "repeal and revoke marital power clauses designating husbands as the head of the households" to "ensure equitable sharing of the joint property deriving from marriage" and equal labour rights. APP

**IPPs have destroyed country's economy: Dr. Murtaza Mughal**

*Govt should get rid of problem by buying all IPPs*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: On Sunday, Dr. Murtaza Mughal, President of Pakistan Economy Watch (PEW), said that Independent Power Producers (IPPs) have destroyed the country's economy.

He said private power plants are a big threat to the country's economy and people, making national development impossible.

Dr Murtaza Mughal said in a statement today that the Government should buy all IPPs from their owners to eliminate this problem.

He said that at least five billion dollars would be required to purchase IPPs, which should be arranged by taking loans from international institutions.

The interest on the five billion-dollar loan will be nothing compared to the payments made to the IPPs. The country's people will be saved from a great punishment if these units are bought.

According to the United Nations, elites are given benefits worth seventeen and a half billion annually. Five billion dollars can be managed even by reducing these bene-



fits for one year.

In addition, government purchases of up to fifteen billion dollars annually and a good chunk of this money are embezzled. Capital can also be managed by reducing annual purchases.

Dr Mughal said that the energy sector's circular debt had reached 2310 billion rupees in May, while payments to IPPs had reached 1800 billion rupees. The Government had to pay a late payment surcharge

for the delay in payment.

He said that the role of private power producers is very significant among the factors responsible for the huge increase in electricity bills in Pakistan.

The IPP bill is the third largest debt owed to the Government after defence expenditures and foreign debt repayments. However, despite the payment of this amount, the circular mountain is increasing instead of decreasing.

He said that to reduce the debt, the Government repeatedly hikes electricity prices, which mainly benefits these companies. At the same time, the public is punished for nothing.

Dr. Mughal said that no political party speaks against IPPs because all the top leaders of political parties own these IPPs.

Seventeen percent of fixed profit is paid to these companies in dollars, and consumers must pay for this whether the companies generate electricity.

Apart from politicians, the power sector bureaucracy does not care about the plight of the public; all they care about is their privileges and facilities.

**Sugar is one of the country's most influential industries: Dr Hanif Mughal**

*Sugar mafia exploits farmers as it has a free hand*

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Dr Muhammad Hanif Mughal, Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Shadbad, said on Sunday that the sugar industry is one of Pakistan's most influential industrial sectors.

The exploitation of the farmers and the masses continues due to the free hand given to the sugar mills mafia. At the same time, the country can never be self-sufficient in wheat production due to this mafia, he said.

Talking to the party workers, Dr Hanif Mughal said that the mafia-owned factories that exploit the public and steal billions of rupees in tax are always shown in the loss.

Despite the heavy losses claimed by many sugar millers, they do not close down the mills; instead, they keep trying to set up more factories, he added.

He said that despite the country's surplus sugar production, many more sugar mills have been set up, and the government has to spend heavily to keep them running.

He said that payment to farmers is delib-



erately delayed by the sugar mills so that most of the farmers sell their crops to their agents at throwaway prices.

There is also a delay in the purchase of sugarcane, which reduces its weight and causes huge losses to the farmers. The sugar mafia gains billions through illegal and unethical processes. He observed that the sugar mill mafia considers it their birthright to cheat farmers when sugarcane is being weighed, and there is no one to ask them.

Dr Hanif Mughal said that whenever sugarcane production is down, the market

rates increase, prompting this mafia to manage immediate sugar imports and make the sugarcane cheaper. And when the harvest is good, it earns dollars by exporting sugar while getting billions in subsidies.

Due to delayed payments to farmers, they cannot prepare for the next crop, wheat, affecting production and food security.

The influence of this mafia can be gauged from the fact that a few years ago when a federal finance minister refused to give them a subsidy, he was removed. Millers got the subsidy from the provinces instead of the centre.

It has become a routine that following protests by masse, a probe is initiated against the mafia, but never in the history of Pakistan any member of the mafia has been penalized, he said, adding that most of the time, the proceedings are halted due to interference of an invisible hand.

As long as this mafia is allowed to exploit farmers and masses and evade tax, the agriculture sector and masses will continue to suffer, he said.

**Shaza leaves for China to attend Digital Economy Conference 2024**

**Staff Reporter**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has left for China on Sunday on an official visit to represent Pakistan at Global Digital Economy Conference (GDEC) 2024 being held in Beijing from July 2-5.

Minister of State for IT will visit booths of Pakistani tech companies and meet their representatives said a news release.

She will also attend "Euro Asia Pakistan Digital Economy Forum".

She will also participate in the panel discussions.

Minister of State for IT will hold meetings with President China Academy of



Information and Communication Technology (CAICT), Global Vice President NXP Semiconductors, and Ali Baba Group.

The Global Digital Economy Conference 2024 to be held at China National Convention Center, Beijing, is aimed to expand global cooperation in the digital economy.



# Pakistan team to feature in AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025

For the first time, the women's team will compete in any premier futsal competition

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalization Committee (NC) has announced the participation of the Pakistan Women's Futsal team in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025. For the first time, the women's team will compete in any premier futsal competition under the umbrella of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC).

The qualification round is scheduled to begin at the start of 2025, with the round of 12 set to take place in May 2025.

To prepare for the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025, the PFF has successfully organized five Futsal National Cup (FNC) competitions in major cities across Pakistan, said a press release.

MRF clinched the title of the Women's Futsal National Cup in Lahore. In Quetta, Hazara remained the crowned champions of the Women's Futsal National Cup. Smuff emerged victorious in the Women's Futsal National Cup in Islamabad, while the Karachi City team secured the win in the Women's Futsal National Cup in Karachi. These competitions were a part of PFF's efforts to develop women's futsal in Pakistan.



Chairman of the Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, Haroon Malik, expressed his views, stating, "I am pleased to announce that the

PFF NC has confirmed the participation of the Women's Futsal team in the AFC Women's Futsal Asian Cup 2025. This participation highlights PFF's commit-

ment to developing women's futsal in Pakistan and providing our players with opportunities to compete at the international level," he said.

# Olympic Day celebration, HEC Intervarsity Games prize distribution ceremony held

Tahir Amin Malik

KARACHI: Iqra University celebrated International Olympic Day 2024 with a Prize Distribution Ceremony honoring the winners of the HEC Interuniversity Championship 2023-2024. The event also featured the Summer Sports Fiesta 2024, including competitions in Swimming, Table Tennis, and Tug of War at Iqra University Main Campus, Karachi.

This event was organized in collaboration with the Sports Society, HEC, and Pakistan Olympic Association. Professor Dr. Nassar Ikram, Vice Chancellor of Iqra University, warmly welcomed the Chief Guest, Jalaluddin Mahar, Secretary of the Ministry of Youth and Sports Affairs, along with Guests of Honour Shahzaib Khan, International Taekwondo Medalist for Pakistan, Javed Ali Memon, Director / In-charge Sports Higher Education



Commission (HEC), and Ahmed Ali Rajput, General Secretary of the Sindh Olympic Association.

The event was attended by District Sports Officers, Directors/Incharge of Sports from Universities and Colleges in Karachi, as well as students, staff, and faculty of Iqra University, gathered to celebrate sports, health, and unity. Dr. Syed Sheraz ul Hasan Mohani, Director of Sports, Iqra University,

delivered a welcoming address highlighting the Sports Department's achievements during the 2023-2024 academic year. He expressed gratitude to Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nassar Ikram and Javed Ali Memon for their unwavering support and dedication to both the university and the sports department. The distinguished guests commended Iqra University for its athlete-friendly policies, exceptional

campus sports facilities, and proactive promotion of sports activities. The Chief Guest presented trophies and medals to the winners of the Summer Sports Fiesta Tournament and awarded cash prizes of Rs. 35,000/-, Rs. 25,000/-, and Rs. 20,000/- to the medalists of the HEC Interuniversity Games 2023-2024. The event concluded with a vote of thanks and a group photograph.

## T20 World Cup 2024

# Shaheen Afridi opens up on Virat Kohli's retirement

Staff Reporter

KARACHI: Pakistan's star pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi has reacted to Indian batter Virat Kohli's decision to retire from the T20 format which he announced after winning the T20 World Cup 2024 against South Africa by seven runs on Saturday.

Kohli, who has been one of the leading run-scorers for India and has been a key asset to the Men in Blue in all three formats, bid farewell to the shortest format of the game after helping his side win their second T20 World Cup.

The 35-year-old scored 59-ball 76 and was instrumental in setting up the total of 177 which India defended.

"This was my last T20 World Cup, and this is what we wanted to achieve. One day you feel you can't get a run, then things happen. God is great, and I got the job done for the team on the day it mattered.

"Now or never, last T20 for India, wanted to make the most



of it. Wanted to lift the cup, wanted to respect the situation rather than force it. This was an open secret, it's time for the next generation to take over, some amazing players will take the team forward and keep the flag waving high," Kohli said while accepting the Player of the Match award.

His retirement also prompted a reaction from Shaheen as the duo have played several matches against each other featuring a healthy rivalry on the pitch.

"Memorable end to a remarkable T20I career [...], congratulations India on winning the T20 World Cup," Shaheen wrote on his Instagram account.

It is to be noted that Kohli was part of the team which lifted the U19 World Cup in 2008, the Cricket World Cup in 2011, the Champions Trophy in 2013 and now the T20 World Cup in 2024.

Kohli's glorious T20I career began in 2010 and the veteran batter went on to represent India in 125 T20Is scoring 4,188 runs

averaging 48.69.

Ironically, India won the U19 World Cup in 2008 by defeating South Africa, the same team they defeated in the T20 World Cup 2024 final.

Furthermore, Shaheen also congratulated Indian skipper Rohit Sharma who followed in his teammate's footsteps and also announced retiring from the T20 format.

The left-arm pacer also shares an on-pitch rivalry with Sharma and has dismissed him on multiple occasions.

For India, this is their second T20 World Cup title win. The country won their first T20 World Cup title in 2007 (the inaugural edition of the tournament) defeating Pakistan in the final.

This T20 World Cup 2024 also ends India's drought of trophies as they last won an ICC trophy back in 2013 when they won the Champions Trophy under the leadership of MS Dhoni.

## Asjad, Awaiz qualify for Asian Snooker C'ships pre-quarters



Spokesman Report

RIYADH: Pakistani cueists Asjad Iqbal and Awaiz Munir have qualified for pre-quarters of the ACBS Asian 15Red U21 & 6Red Men's Snooker Championship 2024 at Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

According to details, on Day 4, Awaiz Munir (Pak) beat Kritsanut Lertsattayathorn (Thai) 4-3 (0-58(58), 69-0(69), 21-33, 31-53, 35-20, 40-0, 45-07); Asjad Iqbal (Pak) beat Arman Dinarvand (Iran) 4-1 (40-0(40), 33-05, 02-43, 69-0(69), 65-0) and Asjad Iqbal (Pak) beat Ahmed Abul (Kuwait) 4-0 (71-0(71), 59-01(59), 42-04, 63-0).

In 6Red Men's pre-quarters, Asjad Iqbal (Pak) would face Ayman Alamri (Iran) while Awaiz Munir (Pak) will be up against Chau Hon Man (Hong Kong). In U21 15 Red, Both Pakistani players Ahsan Ramzan and Hasnain Akhtar have directly qualified for quarterfinals.

'Outstanding achievement'

## BCCI announces hefty prize money for India

NEW DELHI: After Rohit Sharma XI triumphed in the T20 World Cup 2024, Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) secretary Jay Shah announced 1.25 billion Indian rupees as prize money for Men in Blue who grabbed an astonishing 7-run victory over South Africa in a thrilling final.

"I am pleased to announce prize money of INR 125 Crores for Team India for winning the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024," Jay Shah wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

"The team has showcased exceptional talent, determination, and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. Congratulations to all the players, coaches, and support staff for this outstanding achievement," he added.

On the other hand, he also hailed the side saying they have "silenced" their critics.

"Under the exceptional leadership of Rohit Sharma, this team has shown remarkable resolve and resilience, becoming the first team in the history of the ICC T20 World Cup to win the tournament unbeaten," said Shah in a statement.

"They have faced and silenced their critics with stellar performances time and again. Their journey has been nothing short of inspirational, and today, they join the ranks of the greats," he added.

He also lauded the team's strong work ethic.

"This team has made us all proud with their dedication, hard work, and unyielding spirit. Led by Rohit Sharma, and ably assisted by Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and others they have fulfilled the dreams and aspirations of 1.4 billion Indians," he concluded. Agencies

T20 World Cup victory

## Suryakumar's match-winning catch stirs controversy

LAHORE: After India were crowned champions at the T20 World Cup 2024 with a seven-run victory over South Africa, the last-over catch by their player Suryakumar Yadav sparked a controversy.

The 33-year-old cricketer helped his side seal the victory at the Kensington Oval, Barbados, on Saturday night as he took a stunning catch in the final over, dismissing David Miller, when the Proteas needed 16 runs to win.

The batter hit a full toss for a six on a straight hit on Hardik Pandya's delivery but Suryakumar took a brilliant catch, which has also been regarded as the best grab of the entire tournament.

The ball looked certain to cross the boundary ropes but Suryakumar grabbed it while running. He juggled the ball and went over the ropes to avoid his feet touching the ropes, jumped back again and held on to the ball, which ultimately won the match for India.

The decision went to the third umpire, Richard Kettleborough, who had a quick view at it and declared the catch legal, which ended Miller's innings and eventually the Proteas' hopes of lifting their maiden title.

Soon after India's victory a debate started on social media with some arguing that Surykumar's shoe flicked the boundary ropes while grabbing the catch.

Not just that, the boundary ropes also looked out of position before the Indian took the match-winning catch.

As per the ICC's playing conditions, the cushion is considered the boundary and not the white line which can be seen in the pictures. Section 19.3 states: "If a solid object used to mark the boundary is disturbed for any reason, then the boundary shall be considered to be in its original position."

It was further argued that the boundary rope should've been moved back into its original position. Section 19.3.2 states: "If a solid object used to mark the boundary is disturbed for any reason, the object shall be returned to its original position as soon as is practicable; if play is taking place, this shall be as soon as the ball is dead." Agencies

## Ronaldo's ex-teammate defends his controversial reaction to substitution

LONDON: Cristiano Ronaldo's ex-Manchester United teammate Wes Brown came to his defence after he gave a controversial reaction to his substitution in the 66th minute of Portugal's Euro 2024 qualifier against Georgia.

Earlier this week, Georgia beat Portugal 2-0 in a match where Ronaldo, 39, drew another blank at the tournament after being unable to score a goal so far, which added to his frustration which he did not hide during the game, the Mirror UK reported.

The Al Nassr star expressed his frustration by kicking a water bottle as he approached his seat after receiving a yellow card and being substituted for Goncalo Ramos.

This action was misinterpreted by viewers as Ronaldo's frustration aimed at teammates but Brown asserted that it was self-directed instead.

On Reach's latest podcast episode of Euro Thrash, the English player told host Nubaid Haroon: "That's normal. He's come off, he wants to score. I've said this in previous ones. His attitude's so good. People might think he's snapping at other people but he's not."

# Juventus sign Douglas Luiz from Aston Villa

Brazil star agreed to a five-year contract with the Italian club

LONDON: Juventus signed Brazil midfielder Douglas Luiz from Aston Villa in a deal worth a reported £42.3 million (\$53.5 million) on Sunday.

Luiz agreed a five-year contract with the Italian club as he became the latest player to leave Villa Park due to the Premier League club's financial fair-play cost-cutting.

Signed from Manchester City in 2019, the 26-year-old spent five years with Villa and was a key player in their surprise fourth-place finish in the Premier League last season.

Luiz, who scored 22 goals in 204 appearances for Villa, completed his medical ahead of the Juventus move while on international duty with Brazil at the Copa America.

"I'm really happy to be a Bianconero. I can't wait to play in the Allianz Stadium. See you soon and Forza Juve!" Luiz said



in a social media video.

The Premier League club announced

Luiz's departure on their website, saying: "Aston Villa can confirm that Douglas

Luiz has joined Juventus."

Luiz, who helped Brazil win a gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics, was voted Villa's Player of the Year in 2022-23.

But Villa's need to comply with the Premier League's Profit and Sustainability Rules (PSR) forced boss Unai Emery to agree to Luiz's sale.

PSR rules permit losses of up to £105 million over three years.

Villa have already sold Tim Iroegbunam to Everton for £9 million during the close-season, while Chelsea paid £19 million for Omari Kellyman.

Tottenham have been linked with Villa midfielder Jacob Ramsey, while Emery has signed Chelsea's Ian Maatsen and Everton's Lewis Dobbin.

Luiz will be joining a Juventus side that finished third in Serie A last season, 24 points behind champions Inter Milan. AFP



## Meeting

Representatives of Afghanistan's Taliban government began meetings on Sunday with UN officials as they attended talks in Doha with special envoys to the Central Asian country for the first time.



## Taliban govt meets UN officials, Afghanistan envoys in Doha talks

*Two-day meeting to discuss increasing engagement with Afghanistan and a more coordinated response to the country*

DOHA: Representatives of Afghanistan's Taliban government began meetings on Sunday with UN officials as they attended talks in Doha with special envoys to the Central Asian country for the first time, a UN spokesperson said.

The two-day, UN-hosted meeting in Qatar is the third of its kind in the gas-rich emirate in just over a year but the first to include Taliban

authorities who seized power in Afghanistan in 2021.

"Preparatory discussions have begun with the UN meeting separately with many of the special envoys in attendance and with the Taliban representatives," the UN spokesperson, who asked not to be named, told AFP.

UN officials and over 20 envoys, including the US special representative to Afghanistan, were expected

to meet with the Taliban government's delegation led by spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

The talks in Doha were due to discuss increasing engagement with Afghanistan and a more coordinated response to the country, including economic issues and counter-narcotics efforts.

In the aftermath of the Taliban's return to power, the international community has

grappled with its approach to Afghanistan's new rulers.

The Taliban government in Kabul has not been officially recognised by any other government since it took power and the administration has imposed a strict interpretation of Islam, with women subjected to laws characterised by the UN as "gender apartheid".

The Taliban authorities had been excluded from the

first round of UN talks in May 2023 and declined to attend the second round in February, demanding that their delegation be the only Afghan representatives.

In a push to include Taliban government representatives, that condition has been met with the exclusion of civil society groups which will meet with representatives on Tuesday instead. APP

## Belarus to strengthen ties with Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Belarus, Andrei Metelitsa has said his country is keen to strengthen a sustainable friendly partnership with Pakistan in all spheres of mutual interest.

In an interview, the Ambassador said diplomatic, economic and cultural relations between the two countries have strength and during the last three decades.

He said both the countries should enhance cooperation in trade and other economic sectors.

He said, Minsk will continue to support Pakistan in different times. APP



## Indian Sikh yatrees conclude pilgrimage



LAHORE: After completing a 10-day pilgrimage marking the 185th death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Indian Sikh yatrees departed for their homeland on Sunday via the Wagah border crossing.

The pilgrims were escorted to the border crossing under tight security, with dignitaries including the Additional Secretary Shrinies and members of the Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee bidding them farewell.

During the farewell, the Sikh group leader highlighted the deep affection and respect they received

in Pakistan, calling it a cherished memory. Pilgrims expressed gratitude for the warm hospitality, which included excellent security, accommodation, and medical facilities. They were particularly impressed with the well-organized accommodations and the beautifully decorated Gurdwaras.

The group conveyed their thanks to the Government of Pakistan, the Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and the Evacuee Trust Property Board for the impeccable arrangements, emphasizing the profound sense of welcome and care they experienced throughout their stay. APP

## 6 dead as heavy rains batter Balochistan

*N-70 highway connecting Balochistan to KP closed for traffic*

QUETTA: The death toll due to heavy rains which have been battering Balochistan for the last five days has risen to six leaving 25 others wounded in various incidents across the province, a private TV channel reported on Sunday.

The N-70 highway which connects the province to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been closed off for traffic, said the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA).

The PDMA further revealed that a large number of vehicles are stranded at Dhana Sar due to landsliding due to heavy rains in eastern Balochistan's Koh-e-Suleman mountain range.

Traffic from Peshawar, Swat, Islamabad and Pindi have been instructed to stop at Dera Ismail Khan the PMD said, adding that the Zhob-DI



Khan Road has been blocked at Dhana Sar due to rains in Zhob and Sherani.

Meanwhile, the administration at Zhob and Qilla Saifullah administrations have

been directed to stop the flow of traffic.

Furthermore, the PDMA has said that teams have been dispatched for rescue and relief operations regarding

the stranded travellers.

The downpour comes as several areas across the country namely Islamabad, Murree, Guliat, Gujranwala, Narowal, Sialkot, Balakot, Mansehra,

Abbottabad and Swat are likely to witness rains today as per the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

Moreover, several areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, KP along with Balochistan's Khuzdar, Awaran and Lasbela are likely to witness downpour as well.

Earlier this week, the Met Office had said that moist currents from the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal are penetrating southern and eastern parts of the country with thundershowers with gusty winds are making their way in parts of Sindh and other provinces.

This is not the first time in 2024 that Balochistan has reported heavy rains resulting in loss of life and landsliding as April earlier this year, a rain and flood emergency was declared by the provin-

## ECC approves summary proposals present by Petroleum Division



ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet on Sunday approved the summary proposals presented by the Petroleum Division related to natural gas sale pricing.

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presided over a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) at the Finance Division, said a press release issued

here.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Petroleum Musadik Masood Malik, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Ali Pervez Malik, representatives from Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority, Federal Secretaries, and other senior officers of the relevant ministries. APP

## UN chief lauds 'strong' new recommendations to limit proliferation of small arms

UNITED NATIONS: UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres praised the adoption of a "strong outcome document" at the end of a conference dedicated to combating illicit small arms and light weapons worldwide, saying it was an important sign of progress.

"The proliferation, diversion and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to undermine peace, security and sustainable development around the world - fueling conflict and armed violence and causing devastating human costs", the UN chief said in a statement.

He congratulated member states on successfully concluding the Fourth Review Conference, welcoming the setting up of an open-ended technical expert group to address developments in small arms and light weapons manufacturing, technology and design.

The secretary-general also recognized the commitments States have

made to strengthen international cooperation and assistance and to implement gender-responsive policies.

Guterres said he "strongly believes that the progress made...will help strengthen our collective and national efforts to combat illicit small arms and light weapons until the next review conference in 2030".

The UN chief added that he hoped the commitments regarding small arms would inform discussions at the Summit of the Future in September "to find forward-looking and action-oriented solutions for a more peaceful future."

Earlier in the month in a statement to delegates, Guterres noted that the conference was happening at a "difficult and dangerous moment for humanity" with new conflicts placing millions of people in the line of fire, where light weapons play a major role.

Small arms are the leading cause of

violent deaths and are the weapon of choice in nearly half of all global homicides, according to UN figures.

The illicit spread of light weapons is accelerating due to new developments in the manufacturing, technology and design of small arms - including 3D printing.

The Secretary-General's New Agenda for Peace policy brief recognizes the importance of small arms control in preventing conflict and building peace. It makes recommendations to strengthen regional, national, and global control efforts on both the supply and demand side.

During the debate, Pakistan's UN Ambassador Munir Akram voiced serious concern at the acquisition and use of modern and sophisticated small arms by terrorist groups such as TTP - a UN-listed terrorist organization - which reportedly uses safe havens in Afghanistan to launch deadly cross-border attacks inside Pakistan.

"Terrorists and criminals do not manufacture these arms," the Pakistani envoy told delegates, pointing out they acquire them from illicit arms markets or receive them from entities that want to destabilize a particular region or country.

"It is essential to investigate how terrorist groups and criminal organizations acquire such sophisticated weapons," Ambassador Akram said. "It is the responsibility of all States and the UN to take measures to prevent illicit trade, transfer and diversion of these arms."

He also said that the illicit proliferation, excessive accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to exacerbate conflicts, fuel terrorism, threaten peace and security and erode sustainable development, with hundreds of thousands of human lives lost each year, terrible suffering inflicted on civilians, and economies and societies devastated. APP