

Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے بھیجیں صانع نے بیان کیا انہوں نے
کہا ہم سے کچھ نہیں سمجھا ہے بیان کیا انہوں
نے کہا ہم سے سعید بن طارق نے بیان کیا
انہوں نے عبد اللہ بن عمر سے سنا انہوں نے
کہا کیا لوگوں کو نذر سے منع نہیں کیا گیا ہے؟
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چیز کو نذر آگے کر سکتے ہیں۔ (حدیث صحیح)
ذریعہ: پتھال کمال ٹاکناسٹا ہے۔
(پتھال ذریعہ: حدیث نمبر 6692)
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New visa policy to boost tourism, trade activities: PM

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said the government had introduced significant visa reforms to facilitate foreign investors, business community and tourists. He said the step would help promoting tourism, boost foreign investment and increase trade activities in the country. (Details on Page 8)



Exploring Pakistan-Ethiopia Cooperative Ties

The cooperative ties between Islamabad and Addis Ababa have been refreshed by the Ethiopian government's decision to open the embassy in Islamabad on May 11, 2023, to strengthen the economic cooperation between the two states formally. The Ethiopian government is highly ambitious to join Pakistan's efforts to explore the untapped potential of African nations in the contemporary international system... (Details on Page 5)

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Media Talk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb addressing media persons at PTV Headquarters. APP



Photo: Online

President emphasises mass awareness, screening for a hepatitis-free Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Sunday called for carrying out awareness and large-scale screening for timely diagnosis of hepatitis to reduce the burden on the healthcare system and rid the country of the disease. The president, in a message to the nation on World Hepatitis Day, annually observed on July 28, said hepatitis, being a silent killer, was a great challenge for the world because the lack of symptoms increased the risk of its spread, thus leading to a huge number of deaths globally. He noted that Pakistan's public health sector faced serious threats from the disease as a huge number of patients put a serious burden on the healthcare system. President Zardari warned that any failure to take timely steps could multiply the hepatitis cases in the country, therefore decisive measures to protect the citizens' health were inevitable.



He called for public awareness on promoting precautionary measures to ensure prevention, large-scale screening and testing, besides highlighting the significance of treatment and increasing the number of facilities. The president also stressed the need for collective efforts for prevention and eradication of hepatitis and urged the media, educational institutions, teachers and civil society to educate people on hepatitis to achieve a hepatitis-free Pakistan.

PM for united efforts to ensure a hepatitis-free future; announces nationwide campaign

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: As the international community observed World Hepatitis Day on Sunday, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for united efforts to raise awareness and work towards a hepatitis-free future, also announcing a nationwide campaign to eradicate the disease.

"On this World Hepatitis Day, let us stand united in our efforts to raise awareness, support those affected by viral hepatitis, and work towards a future free from the burden of this disease.

Together, we can make a difference and build a healthier and more prosperous nation," the prime minister said in his message to the nation on the Day.

He said the Day was dedicated to raising awareness about hepatitis and its impact on individuals and communities worldwide.

He said this year's theme "It's time for action" was a reminder for urgent actions to prevent, diagnose, and treat hepatitis and emphasised necessary actions to help eliminate the disease and ensure a healthier future for all.

The prime minister said that

hepatitis was a silent epidemic that affected millions of people around the world, causing liver inflammation and potentially leading to severe complications if left untreated.

"Pakistan has a very high burden of Hepatitis C infection, having 10 million infected cases, out of 60 million hepatitis C cases globally. Our country is facing an epidemic of Hepatitis C and it is feared that we may also see an epidemic of liver cancer if necessary actions to prevent and eliminate Viral Hepatitis are not taken," he warned.

He highlighted that the country had made significant progress in combating viral hepatitis through awareness campaigns, vaccination programs, and improved access to testing and treatment. However, there is still much work to be done. We must continue to prioritize hepatitis prevention, ensure early diagnosis, and provide affordable and accessible treatment options for all, he added.

He recalled that during his tenure as Punjab Chief Minister, the Pakistan Kidney & Liver Transplant Institute project, a

milestone in the provision of state-of-the-art medical facilities to kidney and liver patients was established along with modern Hepatitis Filter Clinics that were set up in all the 36 districts of Punjab.

"We have done it before and we will do it again. The core objective remains to uplift the health and well-being of those afflicted with HCV, while simultaneously reducing the detrimental impact it has on work productivity, preventing liver cancer, and averting premature death," he added.

PTI's Raof Hasan physical remand extended by two days



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A local court in Islamabad has extended the physical remand of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Information Secretary Raof Hasan by two days in a case registered by the Federal Investigation Agency.

Last week, Hasan was arrested from the party's central secretariat in Islamabad by the federal capital police. The FIA's cybercrime wing booked Hasan and 11 others under Sections 9 (glorification of an offence), 10 (cyberterrorism) and 11 (electronic forgery) of the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act 2016 (Peca).

The FIA presented Hasan before Duty Judge Mureed Abbas. Hasan and other suspects were brought before the court today after their three-day physical remand expired. A case has been registered against them under the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

Separately, Syeda Arooba, a PTI social media activist, was also presented before the court for physical remand. Arooba was arrested by the FIA yesterday. PTI lawyer Ali Bukhari was also present in court. The FIA requested an eight-day physical remand for Hasan and the other suspects.

Govt announces release of detained JI supporters as first round of talks conclude

ISLAMABAD: The federal government announced on Sunday the release of Jamaat-e-Islami supporters, who were detained when the party staged the Rawalpindi sit-in on Friday, as the first round of talks between the two sides concluded.

A JI delegation led by party's deputy ameer Liaquat Baloch held talks with the government's team comprising Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and States and Frontier Regions Minister Amir Muqam at the Commissioner's Office in Rawalpindi.

The religiopolitical party's protest against exorbitant electricity bills and power agreements with independent power producers (IPPs) entered the third day on Sunday, with several of its supporters participating in the sit-in at Murree Road in Pindi.

The JI presented its 10 demands to the government.

"We have presented all the details to the government committee and the government will form a technical committee for all these issues and do its homework, then the second round of negotiations will take place,



but the sit-in will continue simultaneously," Baloch told reporters after the negotiations.

He claimed that the party has no personal agenda and their supporters have come out for the people worried due to inflation.

Baloch reiterated that it has become difficult for the people to pay the electricity bills and it was difficult to "make ends meet."

The JI deputy chief claimed that IPPs have become a "death warrant" for the national economy the government's negotiating committee has

told them that there were international agreements.

According to Baloch, a large number of the party's workers have been arrested. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has assured that such workers would be released soon.

"35 Jamaat-e-Islami workers have been sent to different jails and the government negotiating team has promised their early release," the JI leader said.

During the talks, the issue of taxes on exporters and mills was discussed.

Finance Minister Aurangzeb stresses 'rightsizing' of five ministers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb stressed the importance of rightsizing five ministries, including Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan, SAFRON, Industries and Production, IT and Telecom and Health have been short-listed in this regard.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will take the final decision on this effect.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad today, he said reforms are being done in the FBR and in this regard weekly meetings are held under the chair of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He said that putting less burden on lower income class is the government's top priority.

Expressing gratitude to the Chief Ministers of all four provinces for supporting government's tax reforms agenda, he expressed hope that they will introduce tax legislations for inclusion of Agricultural sector in the taxation regime.

He said without including untaxed and under tax community into tax regime, we cannot achieve certainty and ease

of collection that is vital for economic stability.

Regarding facilitation to the business community, Muhammad Aurangzeb said claims worth 68 billion rupees have so far been refunded.

The Minister said notices will be sent through a centralized system, while field formations will be authorized to collect taxes accordingly.

Mentioning the details of tax evasions and frauds, he said we have identified a tax potential worth 600 billion rupees that was not collected, out of which one billion rupees has been recovered so far. In customs, through misclassification, tax worth around 50 to 200 billion rupees has been identified.

He urged media to start a campaign against under tax and tax community.

The Minister said the government is also working on the simplification of the tax processes to facilitate the business and salaried persons. Through this simplified process, they will be able to respond to our system in a very simple and easy manner without the involvement of any tax consultant.

KP govt asks PHC to form judicial commission on May 9

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has formally requested the Chief Justice of Peshawar High Court to establish a judicial commission to investigate the May 9th incidents within the province.

The provincial cabinet had previously approved the formation of a judicial commission to probe the events, which saw widespread protests across Pakistan following the arrest of former Prime Minister Imran Khan in the Al-Qadir Trust case.

Provincial Law Minister Aftab Alam confirmed that a letter has been sent to the Chief Justice, requesting the estab-

lishment of the commission to ensure a transparent investigation. The Chief Justice will now appoint a judge to lead the commission, which can be single-member or multi-member. The terms of reference (ToRs) for the commission will be finalized subsequently.

On May 9, 2023, following Khan's arrest, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) supporters staged nationwide protests, resulting in violence in many places. In Lahore, the Muslim League (N) office was set ablaze, and military, civilian, and private installations were attacked. Public and private property suffered significant damage, and at least eight people were killed and 290 injured.

If the Parliament does not work, political resistance is only: Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman said that, if the Parliament does not work and is rubber-stamped, then peaceful political resistance is the only way. He addressed the Press Conference in Rawalpindi. He said dharna and negotiations will go together. Go, will take such a guarantee from the government. While giving a press conference on the third day of the sit-in in Rawalpindi, Amer-e-Jamaat-e-Islami said that no one wants to leave their homes and sit on the streets, when the ruling class closes all the roads for us, people will be forced to protest, now the power of the people will be the guarantee, the constitution of Pakistan allows sit-ins and gatherings. He expressed these views while talking to the participants and media representatives on the third day of the sit-in. Al-Azeem, Deputy Leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami Liaquat Baloch, Mian Muhammad Aslam, Dr. Osama Razi, Dr. Atta Rahman, Political Advi-

sor to Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Dr. Farid Ahmed Paracha, Deputy General Secretaries Azhar Iqbal Hasan, Syed Waqas Anjum, Sheikh Usman Farooq, Syed Farast Shah, Information Secretary Qaiser Sharif Amra North Punjab Province Dr. Tariq Salem, Central Punjab Javed Kasuri Sindh Province Mohammad Hussain Mukhnati and others were present.

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said that the electricity bills are falling like bombs on the houses, the minimum salary has been fixed at 37 thousand, the Prime Minister should make a budget for the poor in 37 thousand, what should a poor man do in such a situation, should he steal, commit robbery or become a drug addict. They may isolate themselves from the world or commit suicide, but these poor people have a way to play their part in the peaceful political resistance against Jamaat-e-Islami. The poor man should participate in the struggle of Jamaat-e-Islami. May they join us, who stand firm in every movement also ask the scholars who have a religious responsibility to inform people about resistance against atrocities, I appeal to the civil society, businessmen, industrialists that you all become a part of this movement.



Amir Jamaat said that we have presented basic demands, the increase in electricity bills should be removed, we will take such a guarantee from the government that it will not happen.

Everything will be fine, we wanted to go to D Chowk and we could have gone, but instead of confrontation, we have chosen the path of peaceful political resistance. Answering the questions

of journalists, he said that the strike will not end until the government takes steps. I will not tell you, I did not even tell you the plan, we will not talk about making the sit-in successful by fighting the workers and the police.

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said that the IPPs have a different business, the contracts made with them were hidden, the capacity chargers were collected manifold, and it is found that only the people of the ruling class are present in it. We are paying the money, the electricity of which we are not spending, how will the economy be fine in such a situation. He further said that the government says that we do not have any option but we have an option in IPPs. Those who are doing good work should be brought before the nation and their production should be ensured. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rahman has announced a large general meeting of women yesterday. He appealed to the people to fight for their rights. Please cooperate with Jamaat-e-Islami, we will give justice to the nation.

Amir Jamaat said that we have presented basic demands, the increase in electricity bills should be removed, we will take such a guarantee from the government that it will not happen.

Sit in protest against the country's rising inflation

RAWALPINDI: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami gathered during 3rd day of sit in protest (Dharna) against the country's rising inflation, at Murree Road, in the city.



Photo: Online

RPO awards officer for one year of exemplary work in Faisalabad



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: This picture marks the journey of one year in Regional Police Office Faisalabad. RPO Dr Muhammad Abid Khan awarded to Dr. Muhammad Rizwan Bhatti Commendation Certificate (CC II) along with cash reward in recognition of accomplished tasks that brought honour to Police department. It's definitely an occasion that jingles a beautiful rhyme of success and serenity. Rizwan Bhatti wish peace, crime control and enhanced public service delivery that will engender mutual police public trust. Police has multitude stories of courage, bravery, grit, determination, countless services and sacrifices that need to be appreciated at all levels.

Railway workers' union condemns dismissals of Peshawar TLA employees

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Central Chairman of Pakistan Railway Employees Premium Union CBA Ziauddin Ansari (Advocate Supreme Court), Central President Sheikh Muhammad Anwar, Central Secretary General Khair Muhammad Tanyu and Central Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry have said in a joint press statement that a On the other hand, the railway workers worked day and night for the first time in the history of Pakistan and earned a record income of more than 88 billion rupees. Instead of appreciating the services of railway employees, firing TLA employees is the worst example of indifference of railway management. The Prime Minister strongly condemns it.

In this era of inflation, while today mothers are forced to commit suicide with their children, the electricity bills have made life difficult for the people of Pakistan. The dismissal of the TLA employees of the Workshop Establishment Division in the first phase and the dismissal of the TLA employees of the Peshawar Division in the second phase seems to be an attempt to destroy industrial peace in the railways. Prime Union strongly demands the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, to examine this whole incident carefully so that if they cannot provide employment to the people in the country, then employment should not be taken away.

Tehreek-e-Insaf will not leave the people alone in their troubles: Dr. Rubina Akhtar



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Tehreek-e-Insaf candidate Dr. Rubina Akhtar, the candidate of constituency NA-148, has said that inflation and looting of IPPs have raised the cries of the people. Life has been ruined, now house rent is cheap and electricity bills are expensive, people are fighting and cutting each other's throats to pay the electricity bills, which is a very painful and untenable situation. Patience too, he said that now the measure of patience is running out, Jamaat-e-Islami is also staging a sit-in in this regard, so Tehreek-e-Insaf will not be left behind, even though there are many restrictions on the party, but despite them, we are with the people. They are standing and will not leave them alone in the face of this problem and will do as much as possible for their comfort. Discussed the problems of women and asked to try to solve them

One lakh trees are being planted in Multan City during the monsoon planting season: Mariam Khan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: For the reign of greenery on the land of the famous Saints, Commissioner Maryam Khan joined hands with the civil society, Walled City to make Multan green and green. While inaugurating the save campaign, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz said that under the vision of neat and Clean Punjab, the planting campaign is underway on a large scale. One lakh Plants Will Be instal in the city with the support of Walled City Multan. Civil Society, planted a tree along with the school children and appealed to the citizens to actively participate in the planting campaign. He said that

Climate change is an issue for all of us. Plantation is not just a campaign but a goal, everyone should actively participate. On this occasion, Assistant Director Marketing Umeer Ghazanfar said that under the direction of DG Walled City Kamran Lashari, plants are also being distributed from the platform of Walled City. All schools of thought must fulfill their responsibility to provide a clean environment to the new generation. On this occasion, civil society members planted saplings and prayed for the development and security of the country.



Christian delegation hails Faisalabad CPO for quick recovery of kidnapped girl

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: As an 11-year-old Christian girl was abducted 5 months ago and subjected to fake marriage and religious conversion, CPO Faisalabad Kamran Adil formed a special team for the recovery of the girl who played an important role in the recovery of the girl and bringing her to her parents. paid For recovery, CPO, Lala



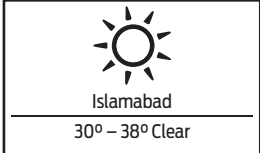
Rubin Daniel and the plaintiff in the case were in constant contact with Sohail Masih. The

Christian community of Pakistan, including Faisalabad, is extremely happy for the recovery

of the girl. The Christian delegation led by Lala Ruben Daniel, Madam Romana Bashir, Shazia George, Satiqa Rehmat, Shaheen Anthony, Parvez Iqbal Bhatti, Abrar Younis Sahotra, Patras Masih, Yeshua Bhatti, Inamullah, plaintiff Sohail Masih and family, CPO Faisalabad Kamran. Special thanks to Adil and offered flowers. The CPO assured that in Faisalabad, justice will be provided

to every color, race, religion, rich and poor on the basis of equality without prejudice, the culture of the police stations is being completely changed. He said that we want the societies to work together to establish peace and end crime.

The Christian delegation informed CPO Faisalabad Kamran Adil about their problems, on which he gave full assurance for their solution.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:41 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:08 pm
Maghrib 7:11 pm
Isha 8:47 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

A weekly meeting for reciting and reciting the Quran held

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said that the love of Ahl al-Bayt Bait Athar is the guarantee of salvation. The Holy Prophet left the Qur'an and his "Itra" for the guidance of the Ummah, and perfect commitment to both of them is the guarantee of success in this world and the hereafter.

A weekly meeting for reciting and reciting the Quran was held at the Institute of Islamic Education Khayaban Sir Syed Rawalpindi. A large number of scholars and Sadats participated. Addressing the session of Dars Qur'an, he said that the Prophet's children saved the Muhammadan Sharia by sacrificing their lives in Karbala. Today, it is necessary that we all follow Iswa Shabiri and make the Qur'an the constitution of our lives. It is possible to end the darkness of ignorance only by popularizing the teachings of the Qur'an. Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said that the dignity of humanity can be elevated only if they strengthen their relationship with the Qur'an and Sahib Qur'an. Sheikh Mohammad Qasim, Deputy Director of the Institute of Islamic Education, said that on Monday, August 5, a grand gathering is being held at the Institute of Islamic Education, Khayaban Sir Syed, to celebrate the completion of two volumes of commentary on the Holy Quran by Syed Riaz Hussain Shah. In which a large number of people from all over the country will participate, apart from well-known political and social figures, related to the Institute of Islamic Education.

NA Speaker inspires youth to work hard, respect and prioritize national interest

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Speaker National Assembly inspired the youth to hard work, dedication and the value of respect for all in every endeavour always focusing and prioritizing national interest. In a memorable address to jam packed auditorium at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, Islamabad, at the closing ceremony of the week long training program with over 200 student interns serving at the National Assembly and PIPS, he inculcated students from all over Pakistan to believe in themselves and concentrate in their studies to excel in their respective fields and prepare themselves to compete amongst the best in the world.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq shared the initiatives taken by the National Assembly where opposition were given appreciably much more time to debate during the last budget session to enable them critically put forth their recommendations to improve the economic outlook of the country. He also informed students of different initiatives his office took in his tenure between 2013-18 including establishment of the global first of its kind Parliamentary SDGs Taskforce in 2014-15 with assistance from PIPS that is



followed now as role model by other parliaments world over. He is one of the founding MP of the parliamentary steering committee that envisioned setting up the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services in 2008-09, which is now globally recognised seat of parliamentary learning.

MNA Nosheen Iftikhar, who is recently elected as the President of the Young Parliamentarians Forum at the National Parliament, also spoke with students on importance of vote and engagement in democratic

discourse to suggest viable recommendations for well being of the people to the elected representatives. She expressed her concern on negative trends of misinformation and disinformation aimed at spreading rumours and pessimism among the people. She ensured youth from Balochistan and Parachinar to take their issues for setting up of residential schools in Qila Saifullah and engaging with MPs from Parachinar for peaceful initiative aimed at creating harmony amongst all religious strata of society.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: People enjoy their leisure time at Chattar in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Governance way forward for economic progress: Haroon Sharif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Minister of State, Board of Investment (BOI), Haroon Sharif has said that the only way forward for economic progress is to embrace a structural transformation prevailing in the economic system of the country through an elite bargaining insulating the beneficiaries of the status quo with improved governance responding developing regional trends.

The former Chairman BOI explained that the country's prevailing structure, modalities and tools to improve GDP

demanding diversification in the market and business practices catering to the needs of both the regional nations, and the local masses, Haroon Sharif stated that in a talk organised by Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI).

"Elite bargain or political will is that elites of a country reconsider their models and bargain on shifting over new economic models and systems. We also need to include politicians and businessmen and beneficiaries of this system to change the structure," Haroon Sharif said.

Sharif elaborated the trans-

formational approach as a parallel system developed along the existing economic model on fast-track basis. However, the political milieu for decades is merely limited to rhetoric denying change in the system, he added.

The former lead BOI underlined that the second approach is that the government should give space to the private sector as there is mostly market oriented change in the system but the government in Pakistan is focused on government to government approach.

"We need island of excellence to embrace this change

as for sustainable, viable and progressive economy, the country will have to change this system on the priority basis otherwise the existing system will crack with the passage of time," he added.

Haroon Sharif suggested that the prudent approach is that the elites should settle together and understand the global change and demographic dimensions and also take beneficiaries on board for a new system and avoid making it public to avert retaliation as political populism has been rejected by the electorates.

Pakistani Child among the World's Youngest AI Expert

News Desk



KARACHI: Khawaja Muzammil Ahmed, a 13-year-old prodigy from Gulshan-e-Iqbal, Karachi, is making waves in the world of computer science with his exceptional achievements. Recently, Muzammil earned the distinguished Oracle Certification for "OCI Generative AI Certified Professional", marking him as Pakistan's youngest expert in Generative AI.

A self-taught programmer who started coding at 7, Muzammil is now proficient in Python, C++, Flutter, and Dart. He has independently developed numerous innovative projects leveraging Generative AI and the Internet of Things (IoT). Beyond coding, Muzammil has gained recognition as a sought-after speaker, delivering insightful talks at prestigious institutions such as the Institute of Business Administration (IBA) and the NED University of Engineering & Technology, Karachi.

Muzammil's remarkable ability to understand and simplify complex concepts has made him a favorite among students and professionals alike. He has shared his expertise globally through workshops and lectures at renowned universities, including Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), NED University of Engineering & Technology, and Mohammad Ali Jinnah University (MAJU). Having achieved many global certifications from prestigious institutions like Eastern Michigan University, Oracle, Google, DeepLearning, and Coursera, he has taught AI to students from the United States, Canada, and the UAE.

Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi pays tributes to renowned writer and poetess Fahmida Riaz

News Desk

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan, Karachi, organized an event to pay tribute to the renowned writer and poetess Fahmida Riaz at the Haseena Moin Hall. The event was presided over by the famous poetess Zehra Nigah. President Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi Muhammad Ahmed Shah, Noorul Huda Shah, Dr. Jaffer Ahmed, Afzal Ahmed Syed, Fazil Jamili, and others shared their insights. In her presidential address, the renowned poetess and writer Zehra Nigah said that we should remember Fahmida Riaz with joy and pride. Fahmida possessed a unique blend of qualities. In literature, whether poetry or prose, none of us had a mind as clear as hers. Fahmida was as innocent as a bird in making serious life decisions. I cherish every poet's first collection as dearly as a firstborn child. The first poem or ghazal in that collection often indicates the poet's future direction. Her pen had the power to draw roses from stone. Her poetry, like her life, is marked by highs and lows, as well as challenges. Her book's entire beauty and melody are hidden in the short-metered poems, whose youthful and tender words captivate you so much that you don't want to let go. Among her five books, this one has warmed hearts. "Choti Si Ladki, Chote Chote Dukh... Chote Chote Sukh" is such a true reflection of poetry that we are rarely blessed with. In this poem, Fahmida portrays a transparent mirror of a woman's nature. In a video message, the acclaimed poetess Kishwar Naheed spoke about Fahmida Riaz, acknowledging her as a younger but greater poet. She recounted Fahmida's journey from London, where she worked for the BBC, to Karachi, where she continued to write and teach. Naheed mentioned Fahmida's writings on the conditions of Biharis in Bengal and on the socio-political scenarios in India and Karachi.

Imran Khan Wants to See the Country Developed: Advocate Sara

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Imran Khan wants to see the country developed. The incoming government based on Form 47 is having its last gasps. The nation is still standing with Imran Khan by rejecting the government propaganda. PDM-2 has given the people only inflation, hunger, poverty, and death by suicide. These views were expressed by Senior Vice President insaf Lawyers Forum Punjab Advocate Sara Ali Syed in a statement. He said that by banning PTI, its popularity will increase more than before. The government has already removed the election symbol of PTI through the Election Commission, but the people chose the independent candidates of PTI. Voted. Currently PTI is the largest parliamentary party of Pakistan, the government is doing revenge politics and making false cases against PTI officials. He said that the government is also using threatening language along with making conspiracies against PTI. The labourers, the salaried class are grinding in the mill of inflation, a new storm of inflation has come after the increase in electricity bills and petrol prices. Free solar will not be given to the poor but to the preferred voters. Even the solar cheaters of free electricity will not give free electricity to any poor. Advocate Sara Ali Syed said that the people prioritized the agenda of PTI in the elections and made the party-backed candidates successful with the power of their votes, whose apparent victory was converted into a defeat through rigging and political instability in the country. was created We will take back our mandate anyway.

Addressing Domestic Violence in Pakistan

Sehrish Khan

Domestic violence remains a pervasive and deeply troubling issue in Pakistan, affecting individuals across the country and beyond. Despite considerable efforts to address the pressing issue, it persists due to entrenched cultural, social, and systemic challenges. The article aims to explore the multifaceted nature of domestic violence in Pakistan, examining its causes, impacts, and potential solutions.

Domestic violence includes physical, emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse occurring within the home. In Pakistan, this issue manifests in various forms such as physical assault, emotional manipulation, economic deprivation, and forced marriages. Alarming statistics indicate that domestic abuse is a pervasive issue in Pakistan, affecting women from all walks of life, regardless of age, location, or socioeconomic status.

Recent cases of domestic violence highlight the severe challenges and urgency for effective responses. Social media personality Qandeel Baloch was murdered by her brother in an honor killing. Her case exemplifies how societal and familial pressures can escalate to extreme violence. Seven-year-old Zainab Ansari was abducted, raped, and murdered in Kasur, Punjab. The brutality of her murder and the failure of authorities to prevent similar incidents captured national attention and led to widespread protests. Another victim Kainat Soomro, from Sindh, was gang-raped by influential men. Her case faced significant obstacles, including societal pressure and intimidation, highlighting the challenges faced by victims in seeking justice.

Perveen Bibi was attacked with acid by her husband in Punjab. Acid attacks are particularly a brutal form of domestic violence, causing severe physical and emotional harm. Noor Mukadam was brutally murdered by Zahir Jaffer in Islamabad. Her case received massive media attention and

public outrage, emphasizing issues of wealth and social influence in legal outcomes. Samia Shahid, a British-Pakistani woman, was found dead under suspicious circumstances. Further investigation revealed signs of domestic violence and potential honor-killing.

Amina, from Lahore, was severely beaten and tortured by her husband. Her abuse was documented and shared on social media, leading to widespread condemnation and calls for justice. Sara, a resident of Karachi, survived a horrific acid attack by her husband. The attack was allegedly motivated by marital disputes and her decision to leave the abusive relationship. Fatima, from Peshawar, endured severe physical abuse from her husband and in-laws. Her case gained attention when she sought help from an NGO and shared her story with the media.

Farida, from Multan, experienced prolonged domestic violence, including physical and psychological abuse. Her case became known after she publicly spoke out and sought legal help. Samia Zehra was subjected to severe phys-

ical abuse and torture by her husband and his family. The abuse, driven by marital disputes and family disagreements, drew significant attention.

The highlighted cases are just the tip of the iceberg as most of the domestic violence incidents go unnoticed because traditional gender roles place women in subordinate positions which leads to normalizing violence. Cultural norms and societal attitudes further contribute to the perpetuation of domestic violence in Pakistan. Patriarchal attitudes and the stigma associated with reporting abuse discourage victims from seeking help. Many people perceive domestic violence as a private matter rather than a criminal issue, reinforcing a cycle of silence and acceptance.

Although Pakistan has made progress with legislative measures such as the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Act 2012, which aims to protect and support victims. However, implementation has been inconsistent and questionable due to certain reasons. Many victims as well as

authorities are unaware of legal protections, hindering access to help. Also, there is a scarcity of shelters, counseling services, and legal aid, particularly in rural areas, making it difficult for victims to seek help and justice. Societal judgment and family pressure discourage victims from coming forward. Fear of ostracization and shame often forces victims into silence. Even with existing legal frameworks, enforcement is challenging due to corruption, lack of training, and biases within the judicial system.

Addressing domestic violence in Pakistan requires a multi-faceted approach including but not limited to enhancing and strictly implementing laws is essential, including better training for law enforcement and judicial officials. Public campaigns can educate communities about the unacceptability of domestic violence and available resources. Schools, media, and community leaders are crucial in changing societal attitudes.

Developing more shelters, counseling centers, and legal aid services

is necessary for comprehensive support. Collaborations with NGOs and human rights organizations can aid in expanding these resources. Economic and educational empowerment can reduce women's vulnerability to domestic violence. Providing opportunities for economic independence and education can help women escape abusive relationships.

Engaging communities in discussions about domestic violence can help shift cultural norms and attitudes, fostering environments where abuse is not tolerated, and victims are supported.

Domestic violence in Pakistan is a complex issue that requires a unified effort from all sectors of society. While progress has been made, significant challenges persist. By strengthening legal frameworks, increasing public awareness, expanding support services, empowering women, and involving communities, Pakistan can advance towards eliminating domestic violence and creating a safer, more equitable society.

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War of Narratives, Turns and U Turns

The entire nation is reeling from the onslaught of conflicting narratives and frequent U-turns from various political parties. The public has become increasingly aware of how original narratives have been manipulated and distorted over time. They are frustrated and disillusioned by the constant introduction of new narratives that discard the older ones without any justification, reason, or prudence. This perpetual cycle of shifting stories and changing stances has eroded trust in political discourse and left the people weary of the relentless political maneuvering.

Nawaz Sharif, after his unceremonious ouster in 2017, primarily for refusing to follow the establishment's lines on pressing national and international issues, invented and injected the narrative of "giving respect to the vote." This narrative resonated with the people, and the popularity of PML(N) soared to new heights. However, the narrative was mercilessly killed before and after the 2024 Election depriving the PML(N) from much needed political capital and also faced personal humiliation.

He was assured of winning a 2/3 majority but was miserably ditched. He lost his own seat in Manshra and was only able to save his seat in Lahore, allegedly due to brute interference from the establishment to give him some face-saving. PML(N) allegedly sold its soul and its brand narrative, "Give Respect to Vote" in exchange for forming the government despite being the minority party in the parliament.

We also saw how our poor Information Minister was forced to hold an emergency press conference where he announced the launch of Operation Azm-e-Istehkam forthwith. However, he had to take a sharp U-turn once his announcement faced stiff opposition from all political

parties, including his own. Later, we experienced another sharp U-turn when the Information Minister, once again without any preparation or homework, announced the government's intention to ban the PTI. He later had to take a U-turn after facing stiff resistance from all political parties, including some of the most loyal leaders of the PML(N). The PTI chairman, when ousted unceremoniously from power in 2022, adopted the narrative that all those who claimed to be neutral are akin to animals. He qualified his statement by arguing that only animals, who don't have minds or visions of their own, could be neutral. He was perhaps implying that the establishment should have supported his party when it was facing the no-confidence motion. However, since it chose not to do so, its claims of neutrality meant that it did not support PTI anymore and had instead shifted its blessings to other parties to bring them to power, for reasons best known only to them. The constant chastising of the establishment by the PTI chairman after his ouster, terming them traitors, conspirators, and aggressors, and accusing them of seeking direction from a foreign country, finally led to his arrest. This culminated in the May 9 incident, which sealed the possibility of any rapprochement with the establishment.

All of a sudden, after one year of constant incarceration and maintaining the narrative that "neutral" is equal to "animal," the PTI founder suddenly took an unexpected U-turn, demanding the establishment to become neutral. This U-turn not only amazed other parties and the people at large but also left the party

leaders at a loss for words, grappling for arguments to support the narrative they had been opposing since the ouster of the PTI from the government.

Mehr Bano, the newly emerged star spokesperson of PTI, who returned to Pakistan after participating in political advocacy in the UK Parliament, came up with a new set of arguments to support the new narrative. She gave many reasons, one of which was that this narrative was injected to unnerve PML(N) and PPP, putting them in a defensive position and causing them to make mistakes that PTI could exploit for further political mileage.

The set of arguments also included that what the founder meant was that the establishment should stand with the righteous path, stand with justice and truth, and play their role in ensuring the dispensation of justice and the establishment of the rule of law. This implied that, according to them, only PTI is on the righteous path; therefore, the establishment should stand with PTI, help it reclaim its alleged stolen narrative, and put it in power with Imran Khan as Prime Minister.

The Chief Minister of KP came up with his own logic. He argued that PML(N) and PPP are using the establishment to prolong their rule and are entangling the establishment in a trap, pushing it to directly deal with the PTI, enter into a war of narratives with PTI, deal with court cases, and use its influence and power to secure verdicts that directly or indirectly insulate PML(N) and PPP from direct confrontation with PTI, thus helping them to prolong their stay in power.

He warned that the people are holding the establishment responsible for all the

failures, incompetencies, inefficiencies, and lack of deliverance of the government, arguing that it was the establishment that brought this incompetent government to power; therefore, they are also responsible for its failure. He advised the establishment to withdraw its support from the government and let it fight its case alone.

Mr. Shibli Faraz, in reply to questions posed by inquisitive journalists, first tried to explain the new narrative of asking the establishment to become neutral but lost his temper in response to subsequent probing questions.

Analysts and commentators are of the view that the ice between PTI and the establishment is not going to melt anytime soon. They argue that the mistrust, bad blood, and animosity between the two have gone too far to be brought back on friendly terms. However, they also argue that the biggest threat faced by the establishment is its deteriorating image, not only among the people of Pakistan but also among most of the political parties in the opposition. They are especially worried about the erosion of their image among expatriate Pakistanis, particularly in the US, the UK, and the rest of the world.

They are also aware that as soon as it mends its fences with PTI, propaganda against it on all forms of social media will come to an end, giving it much-needed relief and improving its standing among the general public, which is pivotal for the performance of its duties within and outside the borders.

Analysts also believe that this war of narratives and frequent U-turns will continue to confuse the people even more, with no possibility of stopping anytime soon.

Writer is Former Press Secretary to the President, Former Press Minister to the Embassy of Pakistan to France and Former MD, SRBC

Progress in ending world hunger setback by global crisis

Fight against global hunger has been set back 15 years, leaving around 733 million people going hungry in 2023, equivalent to one in 11 people worldwide, according to a new report on the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World.

"The bottom line is that we are still far off-track towards the goal of ridding the world of hunger, food insecurity and malnutrition by 2030," said Maximo Torero, Chief Economist at the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), in reference to the anti-poverty Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and specifically SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

Torero noted that if current trends persist, around 582 million people will still face hunger in 2030, half of them in Africa.

Despite progress in combating stunting and in promoting breastfeeding, global hunger levels have remained stubbornly static for three consecutive years.

Between 713 million and 757 million people were undernourished in 2023, around 152 million more than in 2019, according to the report, a joint publication by FAO, the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), the UN World Food Programme (WFP), and the UN World Health Organization (WHO).

Regional trends show a stark contrast with hunger continuing to rise in Africa, affecting 20.4 per cent of the population, while remaining stable in Asia at 8.1 per cent. This is a significant concern given that the region houses more than half of those facing hunger worldwide.

Latin America has shown some progress with 6.2 per cent of its population facing hunger. However, from 2022 to 2023, hunger increased in Western Asia, the Caribbean, and most African subregions.

FAO's Torero highlighted that Africa faces a unique challenge as it is the only region where hunger has risen owing to all three major drivers: conflict, climate extremes and economic downturns.

Of them all, he emphasized that war remains "a major driver" of hunger, exacerbating the food crisis across countries.

The report's other key findings include that access to adequate food remains out of reach for billions. In 2023, approximately 2.33 billion people globally were moderately or severely food insecure, almost the same number as during the COVID pandemic.

Over 864 million people experienced severe food insecurity, meaning having to go for periods without food. While Latin America has seen some improvement in food security, in Africa, a full 58 per cent of the continent's people are moderately or severely food insecure.

The economic reasons for global remain a major issue, too: the report found 2.8 billion people couldn't afford a healthy diet in 2022. The contrast between high-income and low-income countries is stark, with just 6.3 per cent of people in the former unable to afford a healthy diet, compared to 71.5 per cent in poorer nations. And although Asia, North America and Europe saw improvements, the situation worsened in Africa.



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

China's strategic mediating in Middle East redefining the region's political landscape - I

This current activity of China as an intermediary between Palestinian factions and the formation of relations is an indication of China's growing diplomatic power and a direct threat to the US hegemony in international and Middle East affairs. The globe is gradually experiencing the new form of diplomacy whereby, there is a shift of power in many centers through multipolar diplomacy headed by China.

Hearings laid by anti-war demonstrators urging for the halt of weapons sales to Israel and the halt to bombings in Gaza while Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu is on a visit to the United States. Though the president Joe Biden is expected to sit with Netanyahu, the fulsome par of the visit is Netanyahu's meeting with the ex-president Donald Trump, the top headship of a presidential candidate that may provide robust backup to Israel. Traditionally, the United States sided with Israel; over the last decades, the US has given approximately 300 billion dollars in aid, mainly in military assistance. The recent violence includes a Hamas attack in October 7, 2023 and in the cases of violence the USA has supplied military assis-

tance and voted against ceasefire resolutions in the UN Security Council. However, by the end of the conflict, there were many critics over high number of death tolls of civilians in Gaza which put the US in a hard situations regarding issues to do with Israeli Palestine conflict.

These factors have resulted in changes within this context, and most notably China has come to play a major role. More recently, China managed to act as the mediator of the Palestinian factions which points to a shift in the diplomatic power dynamics. This has helped to strengthened China as a mediator in the Middle East region as against traditional mediator - United States.

China has also managed to foster the reconciliation of both Saudi Arabia and Iran and ironically erode more of America's influence in the area. US' concern is that Saudi Arabia is gradually moving closer to China which would decrease the influence of US in the Saudi Arabia. Moreover, China has remained an impartial player and has remained diplomatic enough to help in actualization of agreements that do not create a confrontation with the US.

Palestine is also recognized by other European countries, such as Spain,

Ireland, and Norway, thus changing the trends of the international solidarity that influence the US-Israel relations. China has emerged as a very instrumental country in the Middle East in solving disputes, besides being an Arsenal and diplomatic problem solver Middle East foe the US.

Speaking of Netanyahu's visit to the United States, protesters got into the Capitol Hill building and called for an end to the supplies of arms to Israel and the Gaza cease fire. American mainstream media sources indicate that Joe Biden has planned to sit down for a meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu, while Donald Trump is to do so with the same interlocutor tomorrow. As for the United Nations, the latter has applauded the peace deal that has been signed by China to solve conflicts within the Palestinian factions.

It is noteworthy that Netanyahu has chosen the time for the visit of the United States, presidential election campaign in which has begun at the moment. Getting an audience with US President Joe Biden should not prove to be much of an issue as he is no longer a contender in the presidential race. The focus of the visit is to see Donald Trump who, according to the poll, is a main contender for the presidency of the United States and, possibly, a main benefactor of Israel. Indeed, Israel has been a problematic partner for the USA for many years.

To be continued



Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

DG ISPR's Press Briefing and Unwavering Stance on Digital Terrorism - I

In our interconnected global society, misunderstandings can swiftly spread and deeply impact relationships, policies, and global stability. Whether arising from miscommunication, misinformation, or cultural disparities, these misunderstandings can foster distrust, conflict, and missed opportunities for collaboration. Therefore, it is essential for individuals, communities, and nations alike to actively address misunderstandings through clear communication, empathy, and a commitment to mutual understanding.

Whether in personal interactions, international diplomacy, or business engagements, misunderstandings strain relationships and diminish trust. Promptly and transparently addressing misunderstandings allows parties to prevent escalation and cultivate stronger, more resilient relationships rooted in mutual respect and comprehension.

Misunderstandings also pose obstacles to collaboration and cooperation, whether among colleagues in a workplace or between nations addressing global challenges. Effective teamwork and the achievement of common goals hinge on clear communication and a readiness to clarify misconceptions. Creating an environment where ideas are freely exchanged and comprehended preemptively averts misunderstandings, facilitating productive collaboration and innovation.

Trust forms the cornerstone of successful relationships, whether personal or professional. Misunderstandings corrode trust and breed skepticism, hindering the formation of meaningful connections. Proactively confronting misunderstandings and demonstrating honesty and transparency enable individuals and institutions to build trust and confidence. This trust underpins enduring partnerships and alliances, fostering collective progress and shared prosperity.

In international relations, misunderstandings can escalate into conflict if unchecked. Miscommunication or misinterpretation of intentions can unnecessarily strain relations and lead to diplomatic standoffs. Nations can mitigate misunderstandings

and reduce conflict risks by promoting clear communication channels, fostering dialogue, and seeking common ground. Diplomatic efforts aimed at clarifying intentions and resolving disputes diplomatically are crucial for global peace and stability.

Within the realm of global security and national defense, the military plays a crucial role not only in safeguarding borders and ensuring stability but also in countering misunderstandings that could provoke conflict. Intentional misinformation or unintended misinterpretations about military actions, intentions, or capabilities can escalate tensions and undermine efforts towards peace. Armed forces uphold national security by ensuring accurate and transparent communication to clarify objectives and operations, thereby reducing the risk of misperceptions and maintaining clarity in global perceptions.

Trust is an indispensable asset in both international relations and domestic governance. Misunderstandings weaken trust by fostering doubts, suspicions, and misconceptions. The military plays a crucial role in maintaining its credibility and fostering trust with civilian authorities, the public, and international partners through clear and factual communication. This trust is essential for effective cooperation in crises, joint military operations, and diplomatic negotiations. Public perception of military activities is heavily influenced by media coverage and public discourse. Misunderstandings fueled by misinformation or sensationalism can lead to skepticism or opposition towards military initiatives.

By actively addressing misunderstandings with accurate information and context, the military can cultivate public support and enhance understanding of its roles, responsibilities, and contributions to national security. This support is pivotal for bolstering troop morale and maintaining public confidence in defense policies. In regions marked by heightened tension or conflict, misunderstandings can exacerbate volatile situations and escalate risks.

To be continued



Abdul Basit Alvi

Exploring Pakistan-Ethiopia Cooperative Ties

The cooperative ties between Islamabad and Addis Ababa have been refreshed by the Ethiopian government's decision to open the embassy in Islamabad on May 11, 2023, to strengthen the economic cooperation between the two states formally.

The Ethiopian government is highly ambitious to join Pakistan's efforts to explore the untapped potential of African nations in the contemporary international system parallel to signing various bilateral cooperative agreements with different African nations.

During the inaugural ceremony of the embassy, the two-sided formal state authorities showed their commitment to working together in various areas of common interests, such as climate change, immigration, security and terrorism.

While appreciating the Addis Ababa's choice of formalizing the ambassadorial relations with Pakistan, and the government of Pakistan accepted the need for boosting multidimensional cooperative ties between Pakistan and African nations.

The Islamabad-based decision-makers also acknowledge that the Ethiopian and Pakistani governments have common economic and development problems in the contemporary global order.

In the welcoming remarks, Pakistan's state representatives dubbed the opening of the embassy in Islamabad as a new beginning in the bilateral cooperative interactions between the two states, and it has facilitated the two-sided leaderships in expanding the conventional patterns of their bilateral interactions in the diplomatic, political, economic, and social dimensions.

On a reciprocal basis, the representatives of Ethiopia showed a keen interest in their government in deepening bilateral cooperation with Islamabad, which would enable the leaders of both sides to diversify their formal ties.



H.E. Mr. Jemal Beker Abdulla
Special Envoy and
Ambassador Extraordinary
of Ethiopia to Pakistan

In this way, the decision to open an embassy in Pakistan has marked a significant development in the bilateral ties, and it exhibits the increasing values of diplomatic, trading, and cultural relations between the two nations.

In cultural terms, the common ideological foundations provide solid grounds for the growth of cultural ties, and the prominent role of Ethiopians in Islamic history creates solid connections between Islamabad and Addis Ababa.

The recent development of opening an embassy in Islamabad cannot be divorced from a comprehensive account of Pakistan-Ethiopia relations, which started in the 1950s when the leaders of both nations realized their shared values of mutual respect and bilateral cooperation in diverse directions.

The major turn in the bilateral ties occurred in 1973 with the formal opening of the Pakistan's Embassy in Addis Ababa under Islamabad's broader framework of Engage Africa Policy.

The Engage Africa approach focused

on various African states and preferred Ethiopia as one of the prominent nations appropriate for establishing collaborative connections with Islamabad in the areas of agriculture, education, and healthcare.

In this way, the governments of both nations witnessed a brief era of strong political coordination, diplomatic support, and economic cooperation throughout history. However, Addis Ababa's launching of formal ambassadorial services in Islamabad started facilitating the two-sided government in exploring new platforms for trading collaborations. The signing of the Bilateral Trade Agreement in May 2023 is important in this regard because it led the two-sided business communities to establish their partnerships.

The trading connections have already been established between both nations, and these relations made Pakistan a recipient of Ethiopian red kidney beans, chickpeas, pulses, hides and skins, tea, and coffee, whereas the Ethiopian government receives Pakistani healthcare products, chemicals, machinery, sugar, rice, and textiles.

In this way, a smooth trading connection based on a commendable volume of import-export enabled the Pakistani and Ethiopian governments to recognize their potential for working together for mutual trade benefits. It has widened the scope of trade and investment opportunities between their respective business communities while encouraging their mainstream leaders to consider each other as reliable business partners in the contemporary international system.

The quest to augment the existing level of people-to-people contact between the two nations has led Ethiopian and Pakistani formal state authorities to take several practical measures to deepen the two-sided societal acquaintances. To overcome the challenge of certain social disconnects, direct flights between Karachi and Addis Ababa have started recently, and it enabled Paki-



stan to receive four direct Ethiopian flights. The launching of direct flights plays a creditable role in promoting the mutual interests of two states to foster economic growth with the promotion of bilateral cultural ties. This step started leaving positive impacts on the shared interests of trade, tourism, and pleasant societal contacts between Islamabad and Ethiopia. Direct flights create easy chances for business professionals and potential investors to travel between both states while availing the benefits of reduced travel time and reasonable costs.

In this way, the Ethiopian government has proved that its wealth of precious natural resources needs appropriate welcoming destinations around the world, where Pakistan has become an exception due to the non-existence of major disagreements between Addis Ababa and Islamabad. The absence

of any political difference between two-sided governments provides additional support to the ongoing mutually collaborative patterns of bilateral relations between Pakistan and Ethiopia. Through developing special formats of regular interactions between Islamabad-based diplomatically community and leading circles of Pakistan's business communities, the government of Ethiopia has conveyed an explicit message for fostering commercial ties between Pakistan and Ethiopia with the support of regular cultural and social contact. Therefore, the ongoing designs of political communication, diplomatic support, economic cooperation, and social interaction validate the determination of Addis Ababa to work with Islamabad in various unexplored dimensions of their bilateral cooperation. This pattern of multidimensional cooperative bilateralism

contains substantial potential for convincing two-sided leadership to work on certain strategic extents. The strategic communication between both states has already witnessed teamwork in the training and capacity-building programs of United Nations international peacekeeping operations.

Addis Ababa and Islamabad have established a comprehensive framework to enhance their bilateral partnerships in various areas. The leadership of both nations is strongly committed to expanding their collaborative potential. Over the past two years, since the opening of ambassadorial services in Islamabad, significant progress has been made, indicating that the two nations could work towards a more stable and cooperative future. This cooperation aligns with their shared goals of social prosperity and economic development.

'City of Protests'

Navigating Chaos: The Impact of Protests on Islamabad's Daily Life



Amjad Mehmood

Islamabad, the nation's capital of Pakistan, is renowned for its meticulously planned infrastructure, tranquil ambience, and dynamic community life.

It hosts a variety of local enterprises, corporate headquarters, and governmental entities, including ministries, judicial bodies, and healthcare facilities. Furthermore, the city is adorned with numerous educational establishments, ranging from elementary schools to esteemed universities. However, in recent times, Islamabad has emerged as a focal point for political and religious demonstrations, profoundly affecting the everyday lives of its inhabitants and inflicting considerable economic and societal harm.

Since 2014, the frequency of political and religious protests in Islamabad has escalated, notably since the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) initiated a significant sit-in in the city. These demonstrations, frequently held on principal thoroughfares such as Faizabad, have paralyzed the capital, causing substantial inconvenience to its residents. A prime example is the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP)'s protest at Faizabad, which led to extensive road blockades and widespread disturbances. This prolonged protest underscored the grave repercussions of such gatherings, with major thoroughfares impassable, hindering commuting, and causing delays in essential services like healthcare. Educational institutions had to close, interrupting the education of countless students, and businesses suffered significant losses due to decreased accessibility and employee absence. TLP staged their protest a

couple of weeks before at Faizabad in the name of Palestine freedom allegedly through the support of old sponsors. In 2019, Azadi march was an 18-day long protest led by Maulana Fazl-ur-Rehman of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) in Islamabad against the PTI-Led government making Sri-Nagar Highway a picnic point. On July 26, the Jamaat-e-Islami started their protests against the huge utility bills and taxes and staged a sit-in at Liaquat-Bagh Rawalpindi by halting the life at Murree road and adjacent areas. Such sit-ins in the name of public, enveloped the public lives in turmoil and frustration.

Over the years, Islamabad has witnessed a concerning trend where government and city administration simply place the containers on major entry points of the capital—a seemingly childish and foolhardy measure to stop the protests. This tactic, while intended to restrict movement, actually amplify the message of the protesters and inadvertently made life increasingly difficult for ordinary citizens. The blockade of major roads led to severe traffic congestion, extending commute times exponentially and straining the patience of residents who rely on these routes for their daily routines. This approach not only undermines the quality of life for Islamabad's inhabitants but also raises serious questions about the wisdom and efficacy of such actions in achieving the desired outcomes.

The impacts of these protests are far-reaching, affecting both the social structure and the economy of Islamabad. Traffic disruptions are among the most immediate and apparent effects, with major routes and intersections often sealed off, resulting in lengthy traffic jams. This not only inconveniences commuters but also impedes emergency services, potentially endangering lives. Hospitals are particularly affected, with patients, especially those in critical condition, struggling to reach medical facilities on time. During the Faizabad protest, there were instances of ambulances being trapped in traffic for



extended periods, with some patients succumbing to their illnesses before reaching the hospital. The psychological strain on patients and their families is immense, compounding an already dire situation.

Educational institutions bear another brunt of the protests. Schools and universities often have to suspend operations, disrupting the education of thousands of students. Examinations are postponed, classes are cancelled, and academic schedules are disrupted, affecting student learning and adding to the administrative burdens on educational institutions. Fear, extra-precaution or wish, people employed in government, private offices and educational institutions throughout Islamabad have adopted the practice of abandoning their duties in the middle and rushing back to homes without truly considering the actual circumstances.

The economic fallout from protests is also considerable. Businesses, especially

those situated near protest sites, incur substantial losses. Reduced footfall, employee absences, and logistical difficulties contribute to revenue declines. Estimates suggest that the Faizabad protest alone led to millions of rupees in losses for local businesses. The long-term economic damage includes a loss of investor confidence, with potential investors deterred by the instability in the capital city.

Given the substantial social and economic costs of protests in Islamabad, there is an urgent need for a solution that harmonizes the right to protest with the necessity to preserve public order and safety. One feasible solution is the establishment of a designated protest zone on the periphery of the capital. This would enable protesters to exercise their democratic rights without disrupting the daily lives of Islamabad's residents. Numerous countries worldwide have successfully implemented designated protest zones.

For instance, the National Mall in Washington, D. C., serves as a common venue for large-scale demonstrations in the United States, and Hyde Park in London houses a designated area known as Speakers' Corner for public expression. These examples illustrate that accommodating protests in a manner that minimizes public disruption is achievable.

A designated protest area in Islamabad could be situated in a location that is easily accessible yet sufficiently distant from the city center to mitigate major disruptions. The area could be equipped with necessary amenities such as sanitation, first aid, and security to ensure the safety and comfort of protesters. This approach would offer several advantages, including reduced traffic congestion and disruptions to public services. Commuters would be able to travel without the fear of encountering road blockages, and emergency services would remain

unimpeded. A designated area would facilitate better crowd management and security measures, lowering the risk of violence and safeguarding the welfare of both protesters and the general public. Law enforcement agencies could concentrate their resources on maintaining order in a controlled setting. Protesters would still be able to exercise their democratic rights in a visible and impactful manner, without infringing upon the rights of other citizens. This strategy would uphold the principles of freedom of speech and assembly while ensuring that these rights do not compromise public order. Businesses would experience fewer disruptions, contributing to economic stability and investor confidence. The local economy would benefit from diminished losses and enhanced productivity.

The government bears the responsibility to safeguard the rights of all citizens, encompassing the right to protest and the right to live without undue disturbance. Implementing a policy that designates a specific area for protests would signify a commitment to balancing these rights. It would also represent a proactive stance towards managing civil unrest and ensuring public well-being. To realize this, the government could undertake several steps. Firstly, passing legislation that designates a specific area for protests and delineates the rules governing its usage would provide a clear legal framework for managing demonstrations. Additionally, the government could develop the designated protest area with the necessary infrastructure and facilities to ensure the safety and comfort of protesters, including sanitation, medical services, and security measures. To familiarize citizens with the legislation and protocol of protest, the government could launch a public awareness campaign to inform citizens about the new policy and the designated protest area. This would assist in ensuring compliance and mitigating confusion during the implementation phase. Engaging with political, religious, and other potential protesting groups to elucidate the benefits of the designated protest area and solicit their cooperation would help foster consensus and diminish resistance to the new policy.

The surge in protests in Islamabad underscores the need for a balanced approach to managing civil unrest. While the right to protest is a fundamental democratic principle, it should not supersede public order and safety. Establishing a designated protest area on the outskirts of Islamabad offers a viable solution, enabling citizens to exercise their rights without disrupting the daily lives of others. By proactively implementing this policy, the government can safeguard the well-being of Islamabad's residents, ensure the city's smooth operation, and uphold the principles of democracy. It is time for a shift that acknowledges the rights of all citizens and fosters a more stable and prosperous future for Islamabad.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,029.50	78,469.33
Day's High	Day's Low
78,569.88	77,921.47
Index Value	Change
6,677,560,882	-439.83
Percentage	Time
-0.56%	26 Jul, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,285.71	+99.36
Percentage	Time
+1.21%	26 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
40,749.11	+814.04
Percentage	Time
+2.04%	26 Jul, 1:28 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
37,667.41	-202.10
Percentage	Time
-0.53%	26 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.95	186.75
Bahrain Dinar	741.05	749.05
Canadian Dollar	203.85	205.85
China Yuan	38.4	38.8
Danish Krone	40.15	40.55
Euro	301.85	303.95
Hong Kong Dollar	35.65	36
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.43
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	908	917
Malaysian Ringgit	58.85	59.65
New Zealand \$	169.15	171.15
Norwegians Krone	26.04	26.34
Omani Riyal	722.87	730.89
Qatari Riyal	76.39	77.09
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.63
Singapore Dollar	202.5	204.5
Swedish Korona	26.6	26.9
Swiss Franc	309.05	311.55
Thai Bhat	7.55	7.7
U.A.E Dirham	76.85	77.6
UK Pound Sterling	356.25	360.5
US Dollar	278.50	280.15

Rupee expected to be in narrow range next week

KARACHI: The rupee is expected to remain in a narrow range over the next week as the market focuses on State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) interest rate decision, traders said.

"The range-bound movements in the rupee that have been present this week, in our opinion, will continue as the market waits for the SBP monetary policy announcement, which is scheduled on Monday," said a foreign exchange trader.

"If the SBP's monetary policy committee (MPC) lowers the policy rate by 100 basis points (bps) as is widely anticipated, we do not believe that the local currency will see any volatility," the trader added.

"Due to a deal with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a fresh \$7 billion loan, the market expects the rupee to stay range-bound in the short to medium term," he said.

In the interbank market on Monday, the rupee ended the day at 278.3 per dollar. On Wednesday, it lost ground and closed at 278.5 against the dollar; but, on Friday, it closed at 278.33.

Tresmark in a note said that despite the significant improvement in inflation, analysts are predicting only a 100-bps reduction in Monday's MPC meeting.

They argue that inflation, although lower, is still above average norms, deficits remain high, currency stability is crucial, and global interest rates, especially those set by the Fed, are expected to stay elevated. Larger-than-average fiscal deficits are skewing debt supply versus investor demand, leading to higher premiums. This noise causes discrepancies between actual and fair value.

"In our view, the primary reason policy rates remain elevated is due to a pronounced fear of another inflation surge and a need to maintain currency stability, which is a key performance metric for the government," it said.

Tresmark's note states that the rupee experienced some negative events, such as the SBP's foreign exchange reserves declining by a substantial \$397 million and Pakistan's programme agenda being left out of the IMF Board meeting. Despite these challenges, exporters continued to sell dollars forward up to the two-month tenor (but not beyond that), keeping the rupee essentially stable.

Kissan Ittehad chairman highlights food security issue in Pakistan

Bureau Report

MULTAN: Chairman Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI), Khalid Khokhar on Sunday highlighted that food security is currently the most pressing issue in Pakistan.

Addressing a press conference in Multan, Khokhar regretted that despite being an agricultural country, Pakistan is importing wheat and other commodities.

When our wheat was harvested, we were looted, he said, urging the Punjab government to refrain from increasing electricity bills until solar power is provided, Khokhar added.

He pointed out that in contrast to India, where electricity is free, Pakistani farmers cannot even pay their bills.

Chairman Pakistan Kissan Ittehad added that Pakistan's irrigation system has been destroyed, while Indian farmers receive urea at 900 rupees compared to 4700 rupees in



Pakistan. He also mentioned that a 17% GST has been imposed on buffalo feed, and the price of cotton per maund is between 6000 to 7000 rupees,

which is very low. He warned that wheat cultivation would decrease by 50% next year.

Khokhar questioned whether the government would save the 240 million people of Pakistan or merely 40 influential families.

He accused Independent Power Producers (IPPs) of looting the country and predicted that the five-kilometer-long queues for food today would extend to 20 kilometers next year.

Khalid Khokhar criticized the IPPs for hollowing out the country, noting that although 80% of IPPs are Pakistani, they still charge in dollars.

The chairman Kissan Ittehad announced plans to besiege the IPP owners and the government, highlighting that wheat farmers in Punjab have not been compensated and that rice prices are plummeting. He called for reducing production costs for farmers and stated that only the IPPs are being enriched in Pakistan.

Packing

MULTAN: Labourers are packing seasonal fruit mangoes in wooden boxes.

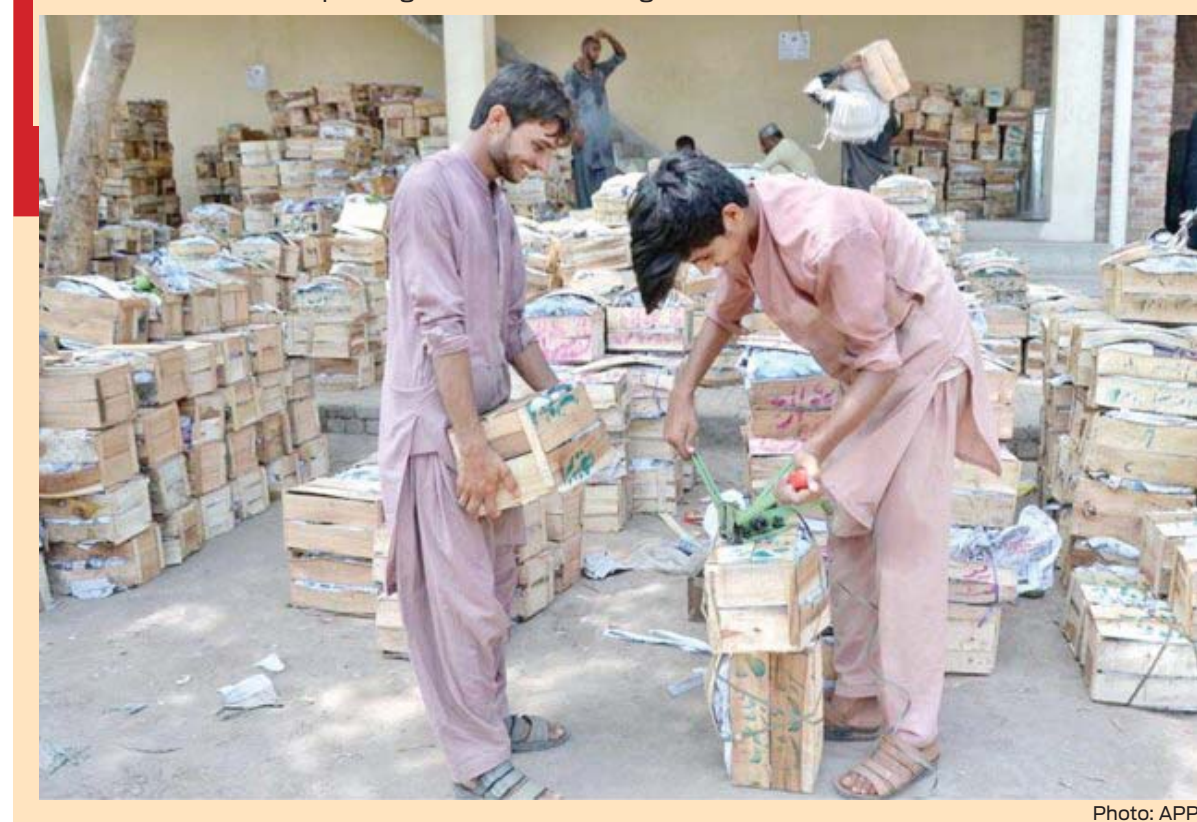


Photo: APP

Petrol and diesel prices to see massive decrease from Aug 1: sources



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is poised to experience a significant reduction in fuel prices, with a potential decrease of up to Rs11 per liter for petroleum products starting August 1, according to sources.

The anticipated price drop comes in response to a recent decline in global crude oil prices over the past 10 days.

Sources indicate that the price of petrol could decrease by up to Rs5.50 per liter for the next 15 days, while diesel prices may see a reduction of up to Rs11 per liter.

Kerosene is also expected to become cheaper, with a potential decrease of Rs5.84 per liter starting August 1. Light diesel prices are also expected to drop by up to Rs5 per liter.

Sources suggest that the new prices will be calculated based on the zero exchange rate for the next 15 days. However, the government may adjust or increase tax levels to maintain current prices.

The anticipated price reductions are expected to bring relief to consumers grappling with high fuel costs.

Saudi Arabia introduces seasonal markets system for date trading

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Center for Palms and Dates, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Water, and Agriculture, Saudi Arabia, has introduced the Seasonal Markets System, a mandatory electronic platform designed to streamline and regulate the trading of dates in seasonal markets.

This system aims to enhance the efficiency and quality of market data across all regions of the Kingdom, making registration mandatory for anyone looking to sell, buy, or market dates.

The new platform simplifies the process of completing sales and purchases, recording transactions, safeguarding financial dealings, and choosing marketing service providers. It also enables real-time



monitoring of sales, access to a broader range of markets, and viewing average prices in all wholesale date markets.

The center emphasized the system's importance in achieving its strategic goals by improving the efficiency of seasonal date markets and promoting sustainable development in the palm and date sector through a comprehensive range of agricultural and marketing services.

Targeting farmers, marketers (service providers), and buyers, the system offers

several benefits such as improving sales methods, promoting good selling practices, invigorating date markets, attracting buyers, increasing job opportunities, and creating financing solutions in cooperation with relevant entities.

Saudi Arabia is home to over 36 million palm trees, producing more than 1.6 million tons of dates annually, with exports amounting to SR1.462 billion to 119 countries worldwide.

It's important to note that access to seasonal date markets will only be granted after registration in the Seasonal Markets System, ensuring the protection of all parties involved and enhancing the sector's competitiveness both locally and internationally.

USAID launches program for sustainable action in Sindh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The USAID's flagship private sector health project, Frontier Health Markets (FHM) Engage, has launched the Youth Council for Sustainable Action in Sindh. The youth council aims to amplify youth voices and promote sustainable health practices, particularly in family planning services across Pakistan.

FHM Engage is a global cooperative agreement that provides technical assistance to support local actors to improve the ability of health markets to meet supply-side capacity gaps and consumer preferences, contributing to equitable provision of and access to high-quality family planning and other health services and products in mixed health systems.

As one of the core consortium partners of FHM Engage, Pathfinder International, renowned for its community-led health programs globally, brings expertise to ensure meaningful youth engagement in healthcare decision-making. "As the key implementer of the FHM Engage activity in Pakistan, Pathfinder International is proud to contribute to the launch of this initiative that empowers young people to actively shape interventions that enhance their health and overall well-being," stated Madiha Latif, Country Director at Pathfinder International, Pakistan.

Tackling inflation most serious challenge for govt, says FRIA

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industrial Association (FRIA) senior vice chairman Shahbaz Aslam has said that the most serious challenge to the economy for the government in the current fiscal year would be inflation, because it is already hitting economy due to continuous raise in oil prices and depreciation of local currency.

Shahbaz Aslam warned the high cost of doing business has been hurting the economic growth, as the inflation rate bounced back in concluding month, hurting the trade and industry the most, who faced the brunt of a staggering 520% increase in gas prices.

Quoting the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, he said that the Consumer Price Index surged to 21.2% last month compared to a year ago. The increase was more than market expectations and has lessened the prospects for a cut in the interest rates.

This reading, the first announced by the PBS after the recently concluded International Monetary Fund (IMF) talks, in which the global lender also cut the inflation forecast for Pakistan to 22.8%, may

strengthen the IMF's view of keeping the policy rate unchanged until core inflation starts easing out when the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meets.

The FRIA SVC predicted that inflation would remain high and may even increase further due to market frictions caused by relative demand and supply gap of essential items, exchange rate depreciation and



recent upward adjustment of administered prices of petrol and diesel.

The trader leader called for keeping check on government expenditure and high cost of debt servicing to contain budget deficit, as the Pakistan's federal budget deficit projection has been revised to history's highest to over Rs6 trillion, highlighting the unending fiscal woes that have pushed the country into a debt trap despite putting additional burden of billions of rupees on industry in the current fiscal year.

RCCI to organize business opportunities and investment conference in Chicago USA

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Under the aegis of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry the 6th Pakistan America Business and Investment Conference will be held on July 30 in Chicago, USA. President of Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce Saqib Rafiq has said that the Pakistan America Business Opportunities Conference will be held under the auspices of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce.

The purpose of the conference was to promote Pakistani products. The United

States is an important trading partner. Also, the BOC will provide an opportunity to exchange the views and identify the hurdles in trade ties between the two business communities. He further added that, the conference will also help us to enhance cooperation with key organizations in both countries to ensure cohesive and coordinated strategies in promoting U.S. private sector interests in Pakistan, he added.

This will be the 6th Pak-America Business Conference during which B2B meetings will also be organized.

Pakistan needs sound economic management amidst instability: APBF

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum has warned that a bailout from the IMF alone was unlikely to speed up economic growth, as the political instability and lack of reforms would further deteriorate the financial situation in the country.

The APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood observed that amidst continuous of hike in cost of production in the country, what the Pakistan's economy really needs is persistent and sound economic management. He asked the authorities for undertaking economic reforms and improving the regulatory environment to

boost foreign investment so that financial stability can be achieved in the long-run. The APBF President stressed the need for reducing cost of doing business, besides evolving a new price control mechanism, as huge taxation, rising oil prices and constant jump in electricity and gas tariffs have lifted the inflation to high level.

APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi warned the authorities that inflation above 6 percent can hurt economic growth and a careful policy is required to keep it in control. He said that the pace of inflation is skyrocketing at a time when the economic activity is slowing down.

Ali's six-fer, Sahibzada's brisk half-century headline eventful third-day for Shaheens

Spokesman Report

DARWIN: Fast bowler Mohammad Ali had a field day against Bangladesh 'A' as he bagged a six-fer restricting them to 216 in second innings as Pakistan Shaheens were set a 296-run target on day three of the second four-day match at the DXC Arena in Darwin.

Shaheens require 160 more runs to win after they finished the day three with 136-4 in 37 overs. Skipper Sahibzada Farhan chipped in with a brisk 70-ball 68 hitting 10 fours and two sixes before getting out. He also shared a 96-run opening partnership with Haseebullah (44 not out, 98b, 6x4s).

Bangladesh 'A' bowlers further removed Kamran Ghulam and Umar Amin for ducks to reduce Shaheens 100-3. Mohammad Irfan Khan (15, 31b, 3x4s) was the last wicket to fall on the day before Tayyab Tahir (4 not out, 14b) joined Haseeb on the crease. The duo will resume the batting for Shaheens on last day with an uphill task of chasing 295 runs.

Rejaur Rehman Raja picked up two wickets while Hasan Murad and Mahmudul Hasan Joy dismissed one batter each.

Earlier, Bangladesh 'A' could only



muster 132 more runs in 43.1 overs after continuing from their overnight total of 84-3 as they were bundled out for 216 in 70.1 overs with a 295-run lead. Mahmudul (65, 118b, 11x4s) and Aich Mollah (58, 123b, 9x4s) registered half-centuries.

Mahmudul was cleaned up by Ali in 37th over breaking a 39-run fourth-wicket stand while Shadman Islam

too fell prey to the Test fast bowler for eight-ball duck three overs later. With half the side back in the hut, Mollah and Shahadat Hossain (33, 55b, 6x4s) put on a vital 63-run sixth-wicket stand to help their team extend the lead.

Khurram Shahzad struck to remove Shahadat reducing Bangladesh 'A' to 180-6 in 59.2 overs. The remaining four wickets were poached by Ali in a mara-

thon seven-over spell which began in the 59th over and culminated with his figures reading 6-63 in 24.1 overs.

The assault included double strike in 64th over claiming, Rejaur Rehman Raja (4, 4b, 1x4) and Mahidul Islam (13, 26b, 2x4s) followed by the dismissal of well-set Mollah in 69th over and Ripon Mondol in 71st. Among other bowlers, Khurram bagged three wickets while Faisal Akram had a solitary scalp to his name.

Scores in brief: Pakistan Shaheens require 160 runs to win. Bangladesh A 258 all out, 67.3 overs (Mahmudul Hasan Joy 69, Aich Mollah 55, Mahidul Islam Ankon 31, Parvez Hossain Emon 30; Khurram Shahzad 3-69, Kamran Ghulam 2-6, Kashif Ali 2-21, Faisal Akram 2-87) and 216 all out, 70.1 overs (Mahmudul Hasan Joy 65, Aich Mollah 58, Shahadat Hossain 33; Mohammad Ali 6-63, Khurram Shahzad 3-67, Faisal Akram 1-51).

Pakistan Shaheens 179 all out, 67.2 overs (Kamran Ghulam 48, Tayyab Tahir 30, Umar Amin 25; Ripon Mondol 4-71, Rejaur Rehman Raja 3-33, Hasan Murad 2-32) and 136-4, 37 overs (Sahibzada Farhan 68, Haseebullah 44 not out, Muhammad Irfan Khan 15; Rejaur Rehman Raja 2-47, Mahmudul Hasan Joy 1-4, Hasan Murad 1-25).

Olympics | Chinese athletes' flying start hailed

Xinhua

PARIS: After taking two golds and one bronze on the opening day of Paris 2024, Zhang Xin, secretary-general of China's Olympic delegation, told Xinhua on Saturday that the Chinese Olympians had made a good start to the tournament and met expectations.

The honor of winning the first gold medal of Paris 2024 went to Chinese shooters Sheng Lihao and Huang Yuting, who claimed a 16-12 win over South Korea in the final of the 10m air rifle mixed team.

"The two teenagers showed superb competitive strength and great mental power, which helped them bring the gold medal to China. Especially in the last



few shots of the final round, when their opponents kept cutting the deficit, they stopped their rivals from turning the event around. They deserve to be praised," said Zhang.

Discussing the victory of divers Chang Yani and Chen Yiwen in the women's

synchronized 3m springboard final, Zhang said that Chang and Chen showed the power of China's diving team.

"In the swimming event, we knew that compared with us, the Australian and American swimmers are more competitive at the

4x100m women's freestyle relay. However, we reached the podium and broke the Asian record. It's a precious bronze for our delegation," Zhang added.

Zhang spoke highly of many Chinese athletes, including the men's swimming team who took the fourth place in the 4x100m freestyle relay, along with Tang Xin, who finished 32nd in the women's individual trials in the cycling road event, the table tennis team, the badminton team and the men's artistic gymnastics team.

"On Saturday, Chinese State Councilor Shen Yi Qin sent a congratulatory message to the Chinese Olympic delegation after we took the first gold of the Paris Games," Zhang said.

Pak Street Child Football team secures first victory in Norway Cup

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Street Child Football team of Pakistan has achieved its first victory in the Norway Cup, defeating the Norwegian Club, Astor, by a convincing score of 6-1.

According to details, Norway took an early lead with a goal against the Pakistani team in the first half.

However, the national team quickly equalized, setting the stage for a thrilling match.

In the second half, the Pakistani team dominated the game, scoring five goals against Norway. For Pakistan Abdul Ghani scored two goals while Essa, Junaid, Awais, and Muhammad Khan hit one goal each, respectively.

This victory marks a significant milestone for the National Street Child Football team, who will play their second match against the Verdanset Football Club on July 29.



Sri Lanka thump India to clinch maiden Women's Asia Cup title

Spokesman Report

DAMBULLA: Chamari Athapaththu and Harshitha Samarawickrama showcased their exceptional batting prowess, guiding Sri Lanka to a resounding eight-wicket triumph over India in the final of the ACC Women's Asia Cup 2024.

India posted 165-6 while batting first courtesy of Smriti Mandhana's half-century, however, Athapaththu and Samarawickrama's half-centuries helped Sri Lanka to lift their maiden Women's Asia Cup title.

After opting to bat first, Shafali Verma and Mandhana gave a decent start with a 44-run opening stand before Kavisha Dilhari removed Verma.

Mandhana remained firm on her end while India lost two more wickets on the other end before Jemimah Rodrigues joined the settled batter.

Jemimah Rodrigues scored a quick 29 off 16 during the 41-run partner-



ship with Mandhana, however, both batters fell in the same over, leaving their team reeling at 133-5.

Mandhana top-scored with a 47-ball

60, which featured ten boundaries.

Richa Ghosh then struck a brilliant 30 from 14 balls with the help of four boundaries and one six to give a late

push to India's total as they scored 165-6 in 20 overs.

For Sri Lanka, Dilhari took two wickets while Athapaththu, Udeshika Prabodhani and Sachini Nisansala bagged one each.

While chasing, Sri Lanka lost Vishmi Gunaratne in the second over courtesy of a mix-up with Athapaththu.

However, the early blow did not matter much as Athapaththu and Samarawickrama raised a partnership of 87 for the second wicket.

Athapaththu played a 61-run knock from 43 balls with the help of nine boundaries and two sixes before Deepti Sharma castled her with 94 runs on the board.

Dilhari joined Samarawickrama and together they steered Sri Lanka to a comfortable victory with an unbeaten stand of 73 runs from 40 balls.

Samarawickrama top-scored with a 51-ball 69, which included six boundaries and two sixes, while Dilhari struck 30 off 16.

Paris Olympics: Pakistan swimmers Ahmed Durrani, Jehanara Nabi fail to qualify for next round

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Pakistan athletes continued their disappointing performance at the Paris Olympics 2024, as swimmers Ahmed Durrani and Jehanara Nabi failed to qualify for the next round in their respective events.

Ahmed Durrani participated in the men's 200-meter freestyle swimming event and unfortunately finished last in his heat.

In the initial 200-meter heat, he ranked fourth out of four swimmers, completing the race in 1 minute and 58.67 seconds. He was unable to match his previous best time of 1 minute and 55 seconds.

Later, he ended up in 25th place out of 25 swimmers. His time was 11 seconds slower than the swimmer who secured the final spot for the semifinals.

In the women's 200-meter freestyle swimming competition, Jehanara Nabi finished in 26th place out of 30 swimmers. Despite putting up a strong effort, she was unable to break into the top 16.

Prior to swimmers, Pakistan's shooters Gulfam Joseph and Kishmala Talat also failed to qualify for the 10m air pistol finals of the Paris Olympics 2024.

Joseph, one of seven Pakistan athletes competing in the games, had to finish in the top eight to make it into the next round.

But he was left far behind the other competing shooters and could finish 22nd out of 33 with 571 points out of 600.

Meanwhile, Serbia's Damir Mikec topped the leaderboard of the Paris Olympics' Men's 10m air pistol competition with 584 points while Italy's Federico Nilo Maldini and Christian Reitz were the other shooters in the top three.

Notably, Indian shooters Sarabjot Singh and Arjun Singh Cheema also failed to qualify for the next round.

Meanwhile, Kishmala Talat also suffered the same fate as she failed to qualify for the 10m women's air pistol final after finishing 31st out of the 44 shooters. She scored a total of 567 points out of across six series.

Pakistan women's head coach 'satisfied' with performance in Asia Cup



Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The head coach of the Pakistan women's cricket team Muhammad Wasim has expressed satisfaction over the team's performance in the ACC Asia Cup 2024.

Pakistan women were knocked out of the tournament as Sri Lanka defeated them by four wickets in the semi-final courtesy of skipper Chamari Athapaththu's half-century.

Wasim, who was appointed as the coach ahead of the Women's Asia Cup, shared his disappointment over not reaching the final. However, he was satisfied with team's overall performance.

"The overall performance of the team has been good but it is disappointing not to reach the finals. The team has played good cricket throughout the tournament," said Muhammad Wasim.

Pakistan faced their arch-rivals India in the opening game, where they suffered a heavy seven-wicket defeat. India comfortably chased down 109 runs, losing only three wickets with 35 balls to spare.

However, Pakistan bounced back in the tournament as they registered two dominant victories against Nepal and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

"After the first match, the performance of the team improved," Wasim added.

He also praised top-order batters Gull Feroza and Muneeba Ali, who played key roles in Pakistan's victories against Nepal and UAE. "In batting, we gave freedom to the batters which resulted in the performance of Gul Feroza and Muneeba Ali," he further added.

Gull Feroza scored 149 runs in four games at an average of 49.66, while Muneeba Ali scored 131 runs in as many matches at 65.50.

Key Pakistan pacer unlikely to feature in Bangladesh Test series

Pakistan fast bowler Hasan Ali is unlikely to take part in the upcoming two-match Test series against Bangladesh at home next month due to an injury, according to sources.

The first Test of the two-match series between Pakistan and Bangladesh is scheduled to be played from 21 to 25 August in Rawalpindi, while the second match will be played from August 30 to September 3 in Karachi.

The right-arm pacer is currently nursing an elbow injury, which he suffered during his stint with English county side Warwickshire. He could only play a mere three first-class and five T20 matches for Warwickshire due to the injury. He is scheduled to undergo full treatment for his elbow injury.

Hasan Ali was part of Pakistan's last Test squad during the away series against Australia. He played two Tests in the three-match series and took only two wickets.

Overall, the 30-year-old bowler has taken 80 wickets in 24 Test matches since his debut in 2017.

Andy McBrine shines as Ireland come from behind to beat Zimbabwe

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Andy McBrine starred with both bat and ball as Ireland beat Zimbabwe by four wickets in a one-off Test in Belfast on Sunday after recovering from a dramatic top-order collapse.

Set just 158 to win in the shadow of Stormont Castle, Ireland had slumped to 33-5 at the close of Saturday's third day, with Zimbabwe left-arm quick Richard Nagarava doing the bulk of the damage in a sensational burst of 4-12 in four overs.

But in the first Test to be played in

Northern Ireland, the home side lost just one more wicket on Sunday.

Lorcan Tucker (56) and Andy McBrine, who completed a fine all-round match to be 55 not out, turned the tide after coming together when Ireland had collapsed to 21-5.

They added 96 for the sixth wicket before Tucker chopped on from Blessing Muzarabani with Ireland still 41 runs short of victory.

Mark Adair, however, who was born in nearby Holywood, settled quickly making 24 not out and hitting the winning boundary as Ireland finished on 158-6 to triumph with more than

a day to spare.

Off-spinner McBrine was named player of the match after the 31-year-old took a combined 7-75 across Zimbabwe's two innings.

"McBrine is the guy you want to put in your cricket bag and take everywhere. Exceptionally skillful and deserved the award today," said Ireland captain Andy Balbirnie.

The victory gave Ireland, who lost their opening seven Tests, a first home win in the format and back-to-back successes after they had beaten Afghanistan for their Test first win in March.

Stormont became the second Test venue in Ireland after Malahide and the 123rd in the history of Test cricket.

"Probably didn't think growing up that there'd be a Test here," said McBrine, who comes from the Northern Ireland village of Done-mana.

McBrine said he had been "working hard behind the scenes" on his bowling before paying tribute to Ireland's quacks.

"It was not an easy wicket to bowl on but the way they rotated allowed me to take wickets as well."

Zimbabwe captain Craig Ervine



was left thinking of what might have been had they been able to continue on Saturday night when Ireland were on the ropes at 33-5.

"We'd have liked five, six more overs last night," he said. "Our games against have Ireland have always been competitive."

Israeli aggression

Druze women mourn by a coffin during a funeral of a person killed in a rocket strike from Lebanon a day earlier in the Israel-annexed Golan Heights.



Photo: AFP

Israel launches devastating raids on Lebanon's south and Bekaa

Agencies

BEIRUT: Lebanon on Sunday called for an international investigation into a strike that killed 12 people, including children, in the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights, warning against a large-scale retaliation.

Hezbollah rejected Israel's accusation of bombing Majdal Shams on Saturday, saying in a statement that "the Islamic Resistance has nothing to do with the incident at all, and we categorically deny all the false claims in this regard."

After Hezbollah's statement, Walid Jumblatt, former head of the Progressive Socialist Party — the most powerful Druze leader in Lebanon — warned against "what the Israeli enemy is doing to ignite strife, fragment the region, and target its various communities."

His warning came as Israel on

Sunday morning carried out intense raids on the villages of Al-Abbasieh and Burj Al-Shamali near Tyre, southern Lebanon, causing widespread destruction.

It also raided the border villages of Tayr Harfa and Khiam, and targeted a residential building in Taraya, central Bekaa, with two missiles, destroying the building but causing no casualties.

The attack in Majdal Shams came hours after a raid by Israel on the southern border village of Kfarkila, in which four Hezbollah members were killed.

In a statement, the Lebanese government condemned "all acts of violence and attacks against all civilians," adding that "targeting civilians is a flagrant violation of international law and contradicts the principles of humanity."

It called for an "immediate cessation of hostilities on all fronts."

PM-Visa

New visa policy to boost tourism, trade activities: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday said the government had introduced significant visa reforms to facilitate foreign investors, business community and tourists.

He said the step would help promoting tourism, boost foreign investment and increase trade activities in the country.

In a statement, the prime minister, terming the initiative a highly positive develop-



ment, said the government had approved visa-free entry for businessmen from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, which will increase invest-

ment and business opportunities from these countries.

The businessmen, investors and tourists of 126 countries will be issued visas within

24 hours through an online system, he said.

Additionally, he said the traders and tourists from these countries will be exempted from visa fees.

The visa policy reforms will make Pakistan an attractive destination for foreign individuals in terms of business and tourism.

The prime minister highlighted that special arrangements had also been made for Sikh pilgrims having passports of a third country to obtain visas on arrival.

Electronic gates will be installed at Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad airports to facilitate travelers, he said and added that a dashboard would be established at the Ministry of Interior to monitor the implementation of the new visa regime, including visa-free entry, business visa list and tourist visa on arrival.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif commended the performance of the Ministry of Interior, relevant ministries and institutions in implementing the new visa regime.

Iran's Khamenei formally grants Pezeshkian presidential powers

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei gave Sunday his official endorsement of reformist Masoud Pezeshkian as the Islamic republic's ninth president, following snap elections that had concluded earlier this month.

In a message read by the director of Khamenei's office, he said: "I endorse the vote (for) the wise, honest, popular and scholarly Mr. Pezeshkian, and I am appointing him as the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran."

The new president is due to be sworn in before parliament on Tuesday.

The endorsement ceremony was held in the capital Tehran in the presence of senior Iranian officials and foreign diplomats, and broad-



cast on state TV.

Pezeshkian won a runoff election on July 5 against the ultraconservative Saeed Jalili

to replace president Ebrahim Raisi who died in a helicopter crash in May.

The 69-year-old reformist

secured more than 16 million votes, or about 54 percent of the roughly 30 million ballots cast.

Turnout in the runoff election stood at 49.8 percent, up from a record low of about 40 percent in the first round, according to Iran's electoral authority.

Jalili attended Sunday's ceremony, as did former moderate president Hassan Rouhani who had backed Pezeshkian's presidential bid along with Iran's main reformist coalition.

Pezeshkian was the only candidate representing Iran's reformist camp allowed to stand in the election, for which all contenders were approved by the conservative-dominated Guardian Council.

Iran's president is not head of state, and the ultimate authority rests with the supreme leader — a post held by Khamenei for the last 35 years.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to facilitate applicants seeking apostille attestation in Peshawar and surrounding areas, the ministry of Foreign Affairs liaison office in Peshawar will provide facility of document attestation received through courier companies from July 29 (Monday).

As part of this initiative, designated courier companies will collect

documents from applicants, which will then be attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The courier companies authorized to collect documents for apostille attestation in Peshawar include TCS, M&P, Gerry's, Leopard, and ECS.

According to a Foreign Office statement, the courier companies are authorized to accept all documents except Power of Attorney.

People must know who bring IPPs in country: Barrister Saif



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were introduced by the PML-N and the People's Party, KP government's information adviser said on Sunday.

"The IPPs are licking the country like termites," Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's adviser Barrister Saif stated. "The people must know who brought the IPPs in the country and who mint money from renewal of these agreements," he said. "The names of Sharif and Zardari families and their stooges would come to surface if an inquiry conducted," he claimed.

He also claimed that not a single

time audit of these power plants conducted in last 30 years.

Barrister Saif said that the IPPs have now become symbol of the economic destruction.

He demanded an immediate cancellation of contracts with the IPPs. "There mandate was to end the power load shedding from the country. The load shedding was not ended but massive amounts being paid to the IPPs," he added.

"Who ordered renewal of contracts with IPPs that were lapsed," he questioned.

He said, people suffering from overbilling and unannounced load shedding due to the misconceived policies.

AJK Inf Minister inspects development projects in Neelam district

Abdul Majeed Tahir

NEELAM: Information Minister of Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Maulana Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah has said that the government is working for the welfare of the backward class.

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir's social protection program will help the backward sections of the state to meet the basic needs of life. For the development of backward areas, the government will spend development funds on the basis of need.

The Public Service Commission has been fully empowered to ensure merit and transparency.

These views were expressed by Information Minister Maulana Pir Muhammad Mazhar Saeed Shah during his visit to Balai Neelam to the citizens/public delegations in Union Council Lawat, Dawarian and Dudh-



nial. He met the citizens and heard their problems.

Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah inspected the fitness, safety, overloading and overcharging of the vehicles plying on the Neelam

highway and the connecting roads, and instructed the drivers to follow the SOPs issued by the Transport Authority on the spot.

He inspected the various development projects and reviewed the speed and quality of the work. He inspected the Bela Muhammad Khan landslide and issued orders for rehabilitation on the spot.

He also inspected the work of Dudhaniyal Jamia Masjid and Jamia Masjid Khatamul-Nabiien Sheikh Bela.

Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah reached the house of Irshad Beg son of Qalandar Beg, a resident of Union Council Dudhniyal Kals, who drowned in the Neelum river last week.

Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah recited Fatihah for the repose of the deceased and prayed for patience for the bereaved and also expressed sympathy with the bereaved.

Muftah Ismail to file petition against K-Electric



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Miftah Ismail, the former finance minister, has announced his intention to file a petition against K-Electric, criticizing the company's billing practices and the government's

handling of electricity tariffs.

Speaking to the media, Miftah Ismail announced his intention to file a petition against K-Electric, urging the company to stop overbilling and questioned about the inflated bills.

In a recent statement, Miftah Ismail highlighted several key issues, starting with the government has increased a total of 350 percent in electricity tariff from 2015 till today.

The Awam Pakistan Party leader submitted a memorandum at the electrical office, criticizing the government's policies.

He argued that if the government stopped taxing electricity bills, there would be a difference of Rs 50 billion.

Ismail condemned the 12-hour load shedding in lower class areas, emphasized equality for all Pakistanis, and called for the abolition of electricity taxes without providing free electricity to anyone.