

Harris overtakes Trump in key battleground states ahead of 2024 presidential showdown

US Vice President Kamala Harris leads Republican candidate Donald Trump in four key battleground states. The Democratic candidate has gained victory in Michigan by 11 points and by two points in Arizona, Wisconsin, and Nevada, Bloomberg reported. However, Trump is leading Pennsylvania by four points and by two points in North Carolina, while the pair are tied in Georgia.



Govt reduces petrol price by over Rs6 per litre for next fortnight

The federal government has reduced the price of petrol by Rs6.17 per litre for the next fortnight following a drop in rates of international petroleum products, according to a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office on Wednesday. The new prices will be effective from August 1. OGRA worked out the consumer prices for the upcoming fortnight, based on international prices and exchange rate variations, the notification read.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Asia Internet Coalition calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

Govt resolved for fast, uninterrupted internet connectivity, promotion of AI infrastructure: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the government was taking all-out measures to provide fast and uninterrupted internet connectivity to the people. The prime minister, in a meeting with a three-member delegation of Asia Internet

Coalition headed by Managing Director Jeff Paine, said that the government was implementing a strategy to attract foreign investment in the information technology infrastructure. The meeting featured the discussion on data security, code of ethics for internet content, and prevention of electronic crimes. Prime Minister Shehbaz told

the delegation that the government was working to promote a basic infrastructure based on artificial intelligence. He said the government was resolved to make Pakistan achieve a distinction in AI infrastructure in the region. He said under the Digital Pakistan Initiative, the whole system was being digitised and expressed the hope that the

digitisation of Federal Board of Revenue would prove to be a milestone towards economic digitisation and automation. During the briefing, it was told that consultation with all stakeholders on the draft of Personal Data Protection Bill was in progress. Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the services of Asia Internet Coalition in promoting

IT and internet infrastructure in the Asia Pacific Region. The delegation members apprised the prime minister of the Coalition's services in Pakistan's IT sector. Minister of State for Information Technology and Telecommunications Shaza Fatima Khawaja, IT expert Tania Aidrus and relevant senior officers attended the meeting.

FBR Chairman Amjad Zubair Tiwana seeks early retirement

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) Chairman Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana has sought an early retirement from service. Tiwana has sought retirement with effect from August 15th - six months ahead of reaching the age of superannuation. Sources said that FBR chief has dispatched the retirement request to the Prime Minister's Office and the finance minister on Monday evening. Sources revealed that the senior officers of FBR did not cooperate with Tiwana. Amjad Tiwana was appointed as FBR chief during the caretaker government. Shehbaz Sharif, soon after assuming PM office, had directed



immediate reforms in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and decided to oversee the process himself. Recently the prime minister took notice of the willful delay in tax cases and ordered for suspension of Commissioner Inland Revenue Islamabad and other relevant officials. The prime minister, while issuing directives for the suspension of all the relevant officials, directed for holding of inquiry against them.

IHC orders immediate reopening of PTI secretariat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) ordered the immediate reopening of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Central Secretariat. The court also directed the party to install fire safety measures at the Central Secretariat within a week. In its written order, the court declared the CDA's sealing of the PTI office as null and void. The IHC ruled that the PTI agreed with CDA to install fire extinguishing equipment, fire pumps on the roof and a separate water tank at the Central Secretariat. The PTI has also been directed by the IHC to install manual alarm system, gas detectors for kitchen safety, and paste emergency numbers to avert any untoward incident. The IHC also directed the PTI to carry out regular electrical wiring in the building.



The PTI challenged the decision of Municipal Corporation to seal its Islamabad office in the IHC. PTI Secretary General Omar Ayub approached the High Court against the sealing of the PTI office. Earlier, law enforcement agencies conducted a raid on the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Secretariat based on concrete evidence. The police stated that the PTI Secretariat had been operating as the hub of an international disinformation network through its digital media center. The raid was carried out following information provided by an international social media activist associated with the party.

إِسْمَائِيلُ هَانِيَهَ

Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh assassinated in Tehran

IRNA

TEHRAN: Ismail Haniyeh, the political bureau chief of the Palestinian resistance movement Hamas, and one of his bodyguards were assassinated in their residence in the Iranian capital early on Wednesday. They were killed after their residence was hit, the public relations office of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps said in a statement. The reasons behind the attack are under investigation



and the details will be released later, the statement read. Haniyeh was in Tehran to attend the inauguration ceremony of the new Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday (July 30).

Pakistan condemns assassination of Ismail Haniyeh

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday condemned the assassination of Hamas Political Bureau Chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran today. In a statement released today, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs spokesperson, stated: "Pakistan condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including extrajudicial and extraterritorial killings irrespective of the motives." "We are deeply shocked by

the timing of this reckless act, coinciding with the inauguration of the President of Iran, an event attended by several foreign dignitaries, including the Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan," the statement read," said the ministry. "Pakistan views with serious concern the growing Israeli adventurism in the region. Its latest acts constitute a dangerous escalation in an already volatile region and undermine efforts for peace," the spokesperson added.

Two organisations banned for involvement in terrorism

Web Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has formally declared two outfits as proscribed organisations, Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group and Majeed Brigade Group, for their involvement in terrorism. According to details, the two groups have been added to the list of proscribed organisations. Both organisations were under observation for two years before being banned. The decision to ban the groups was

made after concrete evidence of their involvement in terrorist activities was found. Hafiz Gul Bahadur was previously a government contractor whose outfit is now the strongest militant group in North Waziristan. Meanwhile, the Majeed Brigade, which was formed in 2011, is a particularly lethal guerilla cell of the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA). The so-called brigade mostly targets security forces and Chinese interests in Pakistan.

PM Shehbaz orders to ensure availability of polio vaccine in security risk areas

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressing concern over Pakistan being one of the two countries in the world facing the challenge of polio, directing the authorities concerned to ensure the availability of polio vaccine in security risk areas. The prime minister, in a meeting with a polio eradication team, said every child should be administered polio vaccine in the areas facing security challenge. PM Shehbaz said Pakistan

made a significant headway in polio eradication consequent to the dedication of the front-line workers, determination of the government and cooperation by the partners. In a briefing to the prime minister about the polio eradication, he was apprised of two, four and six-month plans. It was told that nine polio cases had been reported in 2024 and that countrywide polio vaccination drives would be launched in September, October and December this year. The prime minister was

OGRA cuts LNG price, hikes LPG rate

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) on Wednesday notified a reduction in price of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) by 8.50 per cent while increasing the rate of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG).

According to a notification, the regulatory authority announced reduction in the price of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) by 8.50pc for August. The notification revealed that the LNG price for Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has been reduced by \$1.23 per MMBTU, setting

the new price at \$13.39 per MMBTU. Similarly, the price of LNG for Sui Southern Gas Company Limited (SSGC) has been reduced by \$1.22 per MMBTU, making the new price \$13.15 per MMBTU. Meanwhile, OGRA increased the price of Liquefied Petroleum Gas

(LPG) by Rs2.27 per kilogram. The new price of LPG has been set at Rs 236.99 per kilogram. Additionally, the price of LPG for domestic cylinders has been increased by Rs26.90, making the new price Rs2796.56 per cylinder.

U. S. CG, Deputy Chief of Mission visit South Punjab Secretariat

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: US Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer and Consul General Kristin Hawkins visited South Punjab Secretariat and met Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab Fuad Hashim Rabbani. During the meeting, the Secretariat's role in regional development, the preservation of cultural heritage, and the promotion of tourism was discussed in the meeting.

Additional Chief Secretary Fuad Hashim Rabbani highlighted that the South Punjab Secretariat is instrumental in the region's development, with numerous mega projects completed in the health sector across various districts. He emphasized a focus on maternal and child health, with three major hospitals under construction. He also mentioned that Artificial Intelligence (AI) applications are being introduced for better governance in government institutions, initially targeting agricultural produc-



tivity and traffic control.

Fuad Hashim Rabbani acknowledged the challenge of poverty eradication in the region and outlined efforts to address it through agricultural

development. He said a model project of "Zero Out of School Children," has been launched in six union councils, which will be expanded across South Punjab upon its success. Furthermore,

he informed that economic conditions of skilled artisans will be enhanced by developing a cottage industry focused on blue pottery and embroidery.

He also spoke about the region's cultural attractions, highlighting the shrines of Multan, palaces of Bahawalpur and Fort Munro's beauty as tourist destinations. Rabbani revealed that there are 27 historical forts in Cholistan, including Derawar Fort, which require restoration to their original state.

Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer and Consul General Kristin Hawkins expressed a keen interest in cultural heritage conservation projects and discussed potential events to promote tourism in the region. They praised the architectural beauty of Multan's shrines.

On this occasion, they were presented with Multani Ajrak, shields, souvenirs, and seasonal gifts of mangoes and sohan halwa.



TMO Jehangira Ms Shahana Sikandar with TMA Staff on the occasion of Govt KPK Green Growth Strategy Monsoon Plantation Drive 2024 at Jehangira Nowshera

Alhaji Naseer expresses deep sorrow over martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Central Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan President Alhaji Naseer Yousuf Vohra expressed deep sorrow and regret over the martyrdom of Ismail Hania, head of the political wing of Hamas. The Muslim Ummah has lost a great leader whose void will not be filled for centuries. Ismail Haniyeh, the great leader of the first Qibla and the great leader of the movement for the freedom of the people of Palestine, was martyred in Tehran, the capital of Iran. More than fifty members of his family have been martyred before. Alhaji Naseer Yousuf Vohra, President of Central Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan, Secretary General Anjuman Tajran Punjab Mian Tanveer Riaz, Ameerwar Punjab Bar Council and former Senior Vice President District Bar Faisalabad Sarwar Butt Advocate, President Cloth Board Sheikh Usman Liaquat and General Secretary Asif Kamboh has said that we share the grief of Ismail Haniyeh's family and Palestinians equally. The martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh will not end the Palestinian freedom movement. In this hour of grief, the Central Cloth Board Pakistan is an equal partner with the political wing of Hamas. The whole nation, especially the business community, appeals to read the Quran in homes for the elevation of martyred leader Ismail Hania. Israeli aggression across the country on Friday will be protested against and tribute will be paid to the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh. The sacrifice of the people of Palestine, especially Ismail Haniyeh, will not be in vain. May the holy blood of Jerusalem and the people of Palestine see the dawn of freedom.



Called on

ISLAMABAD: Mir Ali Hassan Zahri, Advisor to Chief Minister Balochistan on Trade and Industry met Senator Rubina Khalid Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme at BISP Headquarters, on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Our Pakistan Army is our pride: Rana Irshad

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Central Trade Association of Zakaria Town Market Bosaan Road organized the Pak Army Zindabad rally which was led by President Rana Irshad. Malik Nawaz Arain, Malik Munir Arain, Qasim Bugti, Pirzada Asif Shah, Malik Arif Mahar, Shakir Khan, Sheikh Imran, Haji Abdul Aziz, Bilal Khakhi, Tariq Aziz, Imran Khachi, Babar Sial, Imran Sial, Chaudhary Nasir Ali, Malik

Asad, Umair Sial, Malik Rashid, Shahzad Ali Shah, Shehri, Ajab Gul Khan, Akhri Khan, Chaudhry Rashid, Dr. Abdul Razzaq, Malik Asad were participants.

In the rally, the traders carried the Pakistani flag, placards and banners with pictures of the Pakistan Army in which slogans were written, Pakistan Zindabad, Pak Army Zindabad.

Addressing the rally, Speaker Rana Irshad said that our Pakistan Army is our pride and the protector of our borders. If there was no Pakistan Army, when would the enemy have conquered us. He further said that Pakistan Army has destroyed the internal and external enemies of the motherland. Businessman Rana Irshad said that the sacrifices of Pakistan's forces are eternal.



Modern computer lab activated in Women University Multan

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: The modern computer Lab has been activated in Women University Multan, according to the spokeswoman Dr Anum Zahra Said the modern computer lab has been activated in Women University Multan, this lab has been established in the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology. Vice Chancellor Women's University Multan Dr Kulsoom Pracha was present on this occasion while Registrar Dr. Maimona Khan, Director of Computer Sciences Dr. Khadija Kanwal and other chairpersons were also present on this occasion. It is aimed at enhancing research, learning and innovation within the university. Dr. Computer Sciences Dr. Khadija Kanwal highlighted the role of technology

and told about the latest computers developed for computational research and educational pursuits in the Computer Science Department.: 512 gigabytes The acquisition of these advanced computing systems is in line with the university's vision to enable students to experience programming, data analysis, and software development.

These labs will serve as a hub for collaborative projects, workshops and research initiatives. It has proved helpful in exploring new frontiers in computer science. Later, the Vice Chancellor inaugurated the lab.



General Public is advised to beware of those who deceive people by impersonating as high ranking NAB officials

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: General Public is hereby informed that some elements have been found impersonating themselves as Senior NAB officials

and coercing government officials and businessmen through phone calls/SMS/WhatsApp calls/fake letters and other tactics to extort money or obtain illegal concessions. NAB has no

direct or indirect association with these actions. NAB issues call up letters on official letterhead and does not make phone call/SMS/WhatsApp message for any correspondence.

General Public is hereby advised to be aware of such malicious acts. If anyone pretends to be NAB official and compels into illegal activities or blackmails for money, same may immediately be reported to the following contact number/email address.

Remember that legal action is already being taken against such culprits and many have been arrested.

Jubilee Life collaborates with Oladoc to expand healthcare (OPD) services



Commerce Desk

KARACHI -: Jubilee Life Insurance, Pakistan's leading life insurance company in the private sector has collaborated with oladoc, a leading telemedicine platform aiming to provide health care (OPD) services to all Jubilee Life employees, retail and corporate customers and Jubilee Active app users.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Farhan Faridi, Group Head - Retail Operations, Marketing and Administration at Jubilee Life Insurance, remarked, "oladoc has established itself as a prominent name in Pakistan's healthcare landscape, and our collaboration with them promises significant benefits for our employees, retail and corporate customers and Jubilee Active app users. Their remarkable success stems from their commitment to fulfilling their promises and making healthcare more convenient for everyone."

"oladoc's mission to make healthcare accessible, transparent, and affordable aligns perfectly with the goals of Jubilee Life Insurance and we are thrilled to partner with them," said Mr. Abid Alam, CEO of oladoc. "This partnership will allow us to extend our reach and provide our services to a broader audience, making quality healthcare more accessible to everyone in Pakistan."

Jubilee Life in Pakistan offers a uniquely designed range of life and health insurance plans, catering to various customer segments and needs. These include retirement, child education, marriage, saving & protection, wealth accumulation, life insurance plans for women, rural insurance plans and life and health insurance solutions for the less privileged of our country.

Security Papers Limited (SPL) achieves highest-ever sales and 55pc increase in profit before tax

Commerce Desk

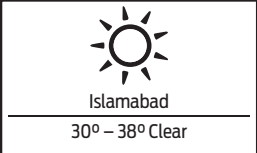
KARACHI: Security Papers Limited (SPL) delivered its highest-ever profit, sales and dividend performance, with a remarkable 55 per cent increase in profit before tax to PKR 2,392 million for the year ended June 30, 2024. This exceptional financial performance is a testament to the company's robust business strategy, operational efficiency, and commitment to excellence.

SPL achieved a record sales revenue of PKR 7,311 million, a significant increase from the previous year, driven by strong demand for its specialized paper products, particularly banknote paper, while the substantial increase in profit before tax is a result of SPL's focus on expanding its product base, improving productivity, and optimizing costs.

The company's net profit also reached an all-time high of PKR 1,489 million, demonstrating outstanding financial performance and growth momentum and it also achieved highest-ever dividend payout of PKR 10.00 per share, i.e. 100pc for the year ended June 30, 2024. This is in addition to the interim cash dividend already paid at the rate of PKR 2.50 per share i.e. 25pc making a total of Rs 12.50 per share i.e. 125pc.

SPL Chairman Aftab Manzoor expressed enthusiasm about the financial results, stating "We are delighted to report our highest-ever sales and profit performance, which is a result of our relentless efforts to drive growth, improve efficiency, and enhance our product offerings. This achievement is a testament to our team's dedication and hard work, and we are committed to sustaining this growth momentum and creating long-term value for our stakeholders."

SPL's impressive financial performance is a reflection of its position as the leading manufacturer of specialized paper products in Pakistan, including banknote paper and other security documents. The company remains committed to innovation, sustainability, and social responsibility, ensuring a bright future for the organization and its stakeholders.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:44 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:07 pm
Maghrib 7:09 pm
Isha 8:44 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 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 Enquiry 117
Railway Exchange 9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi 5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116

Ismail Haniyeh's Funeral Prayer Performed in Absentia

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rehman led the funeral prayer of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in absentia on Liaquat Road which was attended by thousands of people. On his appeal, absentee funeral prayers of Palestinian Mujahideen were offered across the country including Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta. The Ameer Jamaat on Wednesday announced the postponement of various activities and protest outside the Sindh Governor House on the sixth day of the sit-in on the martyrdom of Ismail Haniya, however, they reiterated their commitment that the sit-in in Rawalpindi will continue, talks are being held with the government. Yes, the rulers should know that there will be no compromise on public demands, if the demands are not accepted, they will expand the protest across the country, all options including shutdown strike, closure of highways, dharna in front of Parliament and D Chowk. Can be tried.

Addressing the participants before the funeral prayer of Ismail Haniya Shaheed, he said that the movement for the freedom of Al-Aqsa Mosque will continue, now no

one can stop the freedom of Palestine, 70 members of his family sacrificed themselves for this great freedom movement. Ismail Haniyeh got what he wanted, but he has left a message for all the righteous people of this land that they should take the path of honor. The martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh is blowing a spirit in us, America and Israel will not be able to stop this movement, 92 thousand Palestinians have been martyred, 85% of Gaza has become a pile of rubble, but despite this, Palestinians are stubborn, this war Israel has completely lost, Zionist forces are now frantically targeting children, women and refugee camps. He asked the Muslim rulers where are their forces? What happened to the Islamic army of forty countries? He said that the rulers of Islamic countries are asleep and are completely unable to interpret the sentiments of the Ummah.

Former Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Siraj-ul-Haq, Secretary General Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer-ul-Azeem, Deputy Commander-in-Chief Liaquat Baloch, Dr. Osama Razi, Dr. Attaur Rahman, Deputy Qaim Sheikh Usman Farooq, Central Information Secretary Qaiser Sharif, Amir Punjab Central Javed



Kasuri, Amir Punjab North Dr. Tariq Luqman Qazi, Rawalpindi District Amir and the Palestinian Embassy also participated. Saleem, Director of Foreign Affairs Asif Arif Shirazi and delegations from Hamas

Restaurant Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association held a meeting

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of Rawalpindi Restaurants Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry demanded to Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and Director General Islamabad Food Authority Irfan Nawaz Memon to withdraw the authority to issue food license from Municipal Corporation Islamabad after the establishment of Islamabad Food Authority.

On Wednesday, President Restaurant Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry along with Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed, Vice President Chaudhry Khalid Mehmood, Executive Members Shakir Sharif, Asad Rasheed, Raja Zulsham Riaz along with Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and Director General Islamabad Food Authority Irfan Nawaz Memon Had a meeting. In which, after the establishment of Islamabad Food Authority, it was demanded to withdraw the authority to issue food licenses from the Municipal Corporation of Islamabad.

On this occasion, President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry said that the food sector is already suffering due to the increase in the prices of electricity, gas and food items. However, after the establishment of Islamabad Food Authority, if there is a food authority related to the food sector, the license should also be issued by the food authority. Abolition of food license authority from municipal corporation. Obtaining licenses from two departments is equivalent to putting more burden on the food sector, so the authority to issue food licenses should be withdrawn from the Municipal Corporation and handed over to the Islamabad Food Authority so that the business community associated with the food sector can continue their business.

World Ranger Day

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam gives away a certificate of recognition to a wildlife official in recognition of wildlife protection at the Pakistan Wildlife Protection Award ceremony 2024 at Pakistan National Council of Arts on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Romina Khurshid for collective resolve to preserve biodiversity, wildlife habitats

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam has underscored the collective resolve to protect and preserve Pakistan's rich biodiversity and wildlife habitats for future generations.

Addressing to an event organized to mark World Ranger Day here on Wednesday, she highlighted the indispensable role of wildlife guards, watchers, and rangers in safeguarding the country's natural heritage.

She emphasized the importance of their dedication and bravery in combating wildlife poaching and preserving ecosystems and added: We recognize six exemplary wildlife protectors from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and

Gilgit-Baltistan today.

The Coordinator noted that these individuals have shown extraordinary courage and dedication in protecting our precious wildlife and natural habitats. "Their efforts remind us of the crucial role that each of us plays in preserving the biodiversity that sustains our ecosystems", she added.

She said these awards are not merely tokens of appreciation, they symbolize our collective resolve to support and honor those who stand at the forefront of conservation.

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Romina Khurshid Alam was the chief guest. The guests of honour included Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari, Head of Climate Change at the

British High Commission in Pakistan Anna Balance, Ambassador of Norway to Pakistan Per Albert Isaacs, and Senator and Wildlife Ambassador Sardar Jamal Khan Leghari.

The Pakistan Wildlife Protection Awards honored to Sarmad Shafa, Range Forest Officer of the Gilgit-Baltistan, Faizan Dukhi, Sub-Divisional Forest Officer, and Kamal Ud Din, Wildlife Inspector, of the Gilgit-Baltistan, Syed Mussadiq Ali Shah, and the Deputy Ranger Wildlife Zaid Ahmad and Jan Muhammad Nasir, Game Watcher, AJK Wildlife Department.

The Wildlife Ambassador Sardar Muhammad Jamal Khan Leghari briefing about his photos said, "through my lens, I have brought to life the grace of the soaring raptors, the stealth of the prowling big cats, and the

vibrant colors of the endemic bird species that call Pakistan home".

The ambassador appreciated the awards initiative and reiterated the need for a collective and concerted effort of all segments of society in attainment of a collective national objective and fulfillment of a "national responsibility" which being "a thriving population of all wildlife species" to enlighten the generations to come.

The Snow Leopard Foundation's Director, Dr. Muhammad Ali Nawaz, emphasized, "The global illegal wildlife trade has surged to become the fourth-largest black market, with an estimated worth of at least US\$20 billion per year. This alarming trend poses a significant threat to biodiversity, alongside climate change and habitat degradation.

Pakistani Embassy in Brussels presents photo exhibition to highlight plight of Kashmiri people



Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: In observance of Yaum-e-Istehsaal Kashmir, the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels has organized a photo exhibition, to highlight the plight of the innocent people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK).

The photo exhibition provides a visual narrative of the struggles and hardships faced by the people of IIOJK under occupation. Through compelling images, the exhibition seeks to raise awareness about the human rights violations and the urgent need for international intervention to ensure justice and peace in the region.

Ambassador Anna Baloch, during her inaugural address, emphasized the significance of Yaum-e-Istehsaal Kashmir as a day of solidarity with the people of IIOJK. She reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people in their legitimate struggle for self-determination. "This exhibition is a testament to our commitment to bringing the plight of the Kashmiri people to the forefront of international attention. It is crucial that the world recognizes and acts upon the injustices being perpetrated in IIOJK," she stated.

The exhibition will run for a week and is open to the public. It serves as a poignant reminder of the ongoing conflict and the illegal action of India in complete contravention of the UNSC resolutions.

The Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels invites everyone to visit the exhibition and express solidarity with the people of IIOJK.

Summan Sheikh says Pakistan's entertainment industry can compete with Bollywood in real terms



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Summan Sheikh has said that if Pakistan's entertainment industry is properly managed at the government level, it can compete not only with Bollywood but also with Hollywood in a significant manner. In a statement, Summan Sheikh expressed regret that we have consistently overlooked art and artists. It is unfortunate that our responsible individuals have failed to understand that art and artists truly embody a country's balanced face. In response to a question, Summan Sheikh stated that Pakistani artists often forget that artists in neighboring countries are not only respected in government but also at the societal level. Summan Sheikh emphasized that there is significant talent among Pakistani artists, and it is essential to encourage them in real terms rather than just verbally. Summan Sheikh said it is time to give Pakistani art and artists their rightful place.

Minister Abdul Aleem Khan condoled the death of Ismail Hania

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Hamas leader Ismail Haniya in a missile attack at Tehran. He said that the Palestinian freedom movement leader Ismail Haniya martyred by a cowardly attack which is very sad and condemnable. He said that the martyrdom of Ismail Haniya is an irreparable loss for the entire Islamic world, especially the Arabs.

In his condolence message, Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said that Ismail Hania's whole life was adorned with the spirit of Jihad, he dedicated himself to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state while his martyrdom intensified the ongoing war in Gaza. Federal Minister further said that the martyrdoms in Gaza have already made the Muslim world in a state of sorrow and now the martyrdom of Ismail Haniya in the missile attack has deepened this sorrow. President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party, Abdul Aleem Khan while paying tribute to the martyrdom of Ismail Hania and prayed for Ismail



Hania and other martyrs of his family along with the martyrs of Gaza in eternal life.

Meanwhile, President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and the Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications

Abdul Aleem Khan expressed deep sorrow over the death of a well-known film, stage, TV actor and an artist Sardar Kamal who made an era his own with his wit. In his tweet, Abdul Aleem Khan termed the death of Sardar Kamal as an irreparable loss for his fans and said that the deceased was an artist who had good sense of humor and everyone felt joy with the clarity of his sentences on stage. He said that with his departure, a chapter of the art of elegance has been closed. Abdul Aleem Khan prayed that may Allah Almighty raise his ranks and grant him a high place in Jannat al-Firdous.

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Haniyeh Killed in Iran: What Next?

The martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, along with the earlier loss of his sons, nephews, and niece, is profoundly sad, worrisome, abhorrent, and unforgivable. The entire Muslim world and all those with any sense of humanity globally have condemned this horrendous attack and are mourning the heartless killing of Ismail Haniyeh, a prominent leader of the Gaza Strip who was waging a relentless struggle against Israeli occupation on both political and military fronts.

However, Iran and the rest of the Muslim world should not let their emotions drive them to impulsive decisions and actions. It is crucial to avoid giving any pretext to Israel, the USA, or the Western world to justify actions that could further harm Iran, similar to the devastation seen in Afghanistan.

It is widely speculated that the CIA of the USA, MI-5 of the UK, and Mossad of Israel have chosen the timing, event, and place to eliminate their sworn enemy with great intelligence. For the USA, Israel, and the rest of the Western world, Iran is considered an evil country governed by an evil regime. They are extremely wary of Iran's pursuit of nuclear enrichment, believing that Iran has achieved weapons-grade uranium. Consequently, making an atomic bomb would be a relatively straightforward task for Iran.

Moreover, Iran's national pride, the religious revolution that has persisted since 1979, and its support and influence over various militant factions have solidified its position as a formidable adversary to the USA, the West, and particularly Israel.

Iran's leverage extends to Hezbollah in Lebanon; in Iraq, the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF), including groups like Kata'ib Hezbollah, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq, and the Badr Organization; in Syria, Liwa Fatemiyoun and Liwa Zainebiyoun; in Yemen, the Houthi movement (Ansar Allah); and in Palestine, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). Additionally, in Bahrain, Iran supports various small militant groups involved in anti-government activities. This extensive network of influence and support has positioned Iran as the number one enemy to the USA, the West, and especially Israel, which views Iran's backing of these groups as a direct threat to its survival.

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

This theory resonates well with the Israeli's ruthless military onslaught on the Palestinians in Gaza which did not stop even after protests in all parts of the world against the killing of over 70,000 innocent

Palestinians including children, women, elderly and vulnerable groups with the declared objectives to eliminate Hamas completely from Gaza Strip no matter what ever is the cost. This theory also resonates well with Israel's declared intention to permanently resolve the Hezbollah prowess and prowess of Houthis in Yemen and other Iranian proxies elsewhere.

They also know that without reducing the military and economic might of Iran, no matter how seriously they inflict damage to these proxies they will re-emerge even stronger and better. Therefore, in all probability this attack was deliberately executed in Iran to infuriate Iran's leadership and bait them to launch an attack on Israeli and US interests. Let us build two hypothetical scenarios one in which Iran has attacked Israel and the US and second it seeks justice through diplomatic means.

If Iran decides to retaliate against Israel and the USA following the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the immediate consequences would likely involve extensive military strikes by Israel and the USA targeting Iranian nuclear facilities, military bases, and infrastructure. This would lead to significant casualties and destruction within Iran, further crippling its economy and military capabilities. The conflict would escalate rapidly, potentially drawing in regional allies and causing widespread instability. The global economy would also be impacted, with oil prices soaring due to instability in the Persian Gulf.

Conversely, if Iran opts for a diplomatic

resolution through the United Nations, it would seek international condemnation of the attack and justice for the violation of its sovereignty. This approach would garner support from several countries, leading to a formal UN inquiry and increased international attention. Diplomatic efforts might result in the easing of some sanctions on Iran, stabilizing its economy and enhancing domestic stability. By choosing diplomacy over conflict, Iran would maintain its regional influence through non-military means and improve its international standing. This path would prevent further destruction and loss of life, fostering gradual improvements in regional stability and potential economic recovery for Iran.

In this precarious situation where Pakistan could be directly affected, it is imperative for the country to resort to active and proactive diplomacy, leveraging its brotherly relations with Iran and its Non-NATO ally status with the USA. Pakistan should play a proactive yet balanced role in mediating tensions between Iran, Israel, and the USA by leveraging diplomatic channels and international platforms. With the support of like-minded countries, both Muslim and non-Muslim, and utilizing forums like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other regional and international bodies, Pakistan can work to calm heightened emotions and help sanity prevail. This approach, if successful, will save the region from imminent turmoil and instability, elevate Pakistan's status as a peace-pursuing nation, and safeguard its national interests.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Increased collaboration between the TTP and Afghan Taliban

A new United Nations Security Council report has underscored the grave threat to Pakistan's security posed by the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), saying there is an increased collaboration between the TTP and Afghan Taliban in the cross-border terrorist attacks mainly against Pakistani military posts.

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

"TTP camps with Al-Qaeda and Taliban involvement focus on training local Afghan fighters and TTP operatives," it said, noting that TTP has 6,000 and 6,500 fighters who continue to use NATO weapons obtained in Afghanistan, while also emphasizing the role of night vision capability. "Al-Qaeda is funding purchases of weapons and suicide vests for TTP," the report added.

"The terrorist threat emanating from Afghanistan is causing heightened concern in many (UN) member states," according to the report.

Pakistan has consistently drawn the attention of the international community to the security threat it faces from the TTP terrorists who it says also have external support.

The report said, "There is heightened concern among member states about the terrorist threat emanating regionally from Afghanistan from ISIL-Khorassan and Tehrik-e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in particular; new inward travel to Afghanistan of some Al-Qaeda personnel and training, recruitment and reorganization activities."

It cites several UN member states as saying that the Al-Qaeda figure Abu Ikhlas-al Masri was actively collaborating with Jamaat-ul-Ahrar in providing suicide bomber training to TTP in Kunar Province, with two states holding TTP responsible for the March 26 attack against Chinese nationals working on a hydropower dam project near Besham in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"There is increased support and collaboration between TTP and the Taliban, sharing manpower and training camps in Afghanistan and conducting more lethal attacks under the banner of Tehrik-e Jihad Pakistan (TJP). Therefore, TTP could transform into an umbrella organization for other terrorist groups," the report said.

ISIL-K or Da'esh, it said, remains the most serious threat, projecting terror beyond Afghanistan, while Al-Qaeda exercises strategic patience, prioritizing its relationship with the Taliban.

"Some Member States estimate that ISIL-K has increased from 4,000 to 6,000 fighters, despite the loss of territory and attrition among leadership, while others assess its strength remaining at between 2,000 and 3,500 fighters," the report said, adding it was difficult to estimate an accurate figure.



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

Cult Politics - I

In the context of democratic governance, institutions form the foundational bedrock upon which a nation's stability, legitimacy, and operational efficacy rely. Beyond mere bureaucratic bodies, these institutions embody democratic principles, ensuring accountability, transparency, and the protection of rights for all citizens.

Democracy, at its essence, transcends mere governance; it represents a philosophy centered on empowering the people. However, achieving democratic ideals necessitates robust institutions capable of withstanding the test of time and political upheaval. Herein lies their critical significance. Institutions act as custodians of democracy by establishing the framework within which political processes operate. They encompass the judiciary, legislative bodies, electoral commissions, law enforcement agencies, and regulatory authorities. Each institution plays a distinct role in ensuring responsible exercise of power in accordance with the rule of law.

A fundamental tenet of democratic governance is the principle of checks and balances, whereby institutions are designed to counterbalance each other's power, preventing any individual or entity from amassing excessive authority. For instance, legislatures enact laws, which the judiciary interprets and applies, thereby preventing the dominance of any single branch of government and fostering consensus-building while averting authoritarianism.

Accountability is central to the functioning of democratic institutions. Elected officials and public servants are held accountable through mechanisms such as elections, audits, public hearings, and independent oversight bodies. These mechanisms ensure that decisions are made in the public interest and that those in positions of power are answerable to the populace they serve.

Moreover, institutions uphold transparency by making governmental actions and decision-making processes accessible to the public. Transparency cultivates trust between citizens and their government, encourages informed participation in civic life, and mitigates the risk of corruption and misuse of power.

In a democracy, safeguarding individual rights and freedoms is paramount. Institutions like constitutional courts and human rights commissions serve as guardians of these rights, ensuring they are upheld and defended against encroachments by the state or other entities. This protection is crucial for maintaining a just society where every individual can live with dignity and equality under the law.

Democracies frequently encounter challenges, from economic downturns to national emergencies and political turbulence. Strong institutions provide resilience during such times, serving as stabilizing forces that uphold democratic norms and principles. They facilitate orderly transitions of power, promote dialogue and negotiation, and reduce the risks associated with political instability.

In democratic governance, debates often revolve around the balance between strong institutions and charismatic personalities. While charismatic leaders can ignite and rally populations, the lasting success of democratic systems heavily relies on the robustness and integrity of institutional frameworks. A primary argument in favor of institutions over personalities is their role in maintaining stability. Institutions establish a framework that extends beyond individual leaders, ensuring governance remains continuous and predictable. Conversely, relying too much on charismatic figures can introduce volatility, as policies and priorities may undergo drastic shifts with changes in leadership.

Stable institutions, such as independent judici-

aries, a free press, and impartial electoral bodies, form the bedrock of democratic processes. They foster long-term stability by upholding the rule of law and ensuring accountability. They establish clear rules and procedures that apply universally, preventing arbitrary exercises of power. For example, an independent judiciary ensures citizens' rights are protected and resolves disputes impartially, reinforcing confidence in the legal system. Similarly, legislative bodies and regulatory agencies hold governments accountable through oversight and scrutiny, promoting transparency and mitigating corruption risks. Democratic institutions safeguard individual rights and freedoms from potential abuses of power. Constitutions and human rights commissions enshrine fundamental freedoms like speech, assembly, and religion, safeguarding them against temporary political agendas. These protections are essential for nurturing an inclusive society where diverse viewpoints are respected, and citizens engage in civic life without fear of repression.

History illustrates that institutions play a critical role in defending democracies against authoritarian tendencies. Robust institutions act as barriers against efforts to consolidate power or undermine democratic norms. They provide avenues for peaceful power transitions and resolving political disputes through dialogue and legal channels. Conversely, an excessive focus on charismatic personalities can weaken institutional checks and balances, potentially paving the way for authoritarian or populist movements that erode democratic principles.

Institutions support long-term vision and policy consistency by institutionalizing decision-making processes that transcend individual administrations. While leaders may change, institutions provide a framework for sustained development and governance continuity. This continuity is crucial for effective policy implementation, economic stability, and societal progress, enabling the pursuit of sustainable development goals independent of political cycles.

To be continued

A Turning Point for Pakistan: The Jamat-e-Islami Sit-In and Its Significance

Islamabad has become the epicenter of a significant political movement led by Jamat-e-Islami, which commenced its sit-in on July 26. Today marks the fourth day of this protest, now extending to Liaquat Bagh in Rawalpindi, with thousands of participants rallying behind their cause. More than 20,000 participants from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, led by Dr. Ataul Rahman, Naib Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan, and Abdul Wasi, General Secretary of Jamat-e-Islami KP, joined the sit-in with remarkable zeal and enthusiasm. These dedicated individuals removed all obstacles and hurdles placed by the police, demonstrating their unwavering commitment to the cause. The passion among the participants was palpable, reflecting their strong resolve for change.

The party has presented ten critical demands to the government, sparking negotiations between the authorities and Jamat-e-Islami leadership.

- The demands are comprehensive and reflect the pressing issues facing the nation:
1. Electricity Subsidy: A 50% discount for consumers using up to 500 units of electricity.
 2. Petroleum Prices: Abolition of the petroleum levy and a rollback of the recent increase in petroleum product prices.
 3. Essential Goods: A 20% reduction in the prices of essential goods.
 4. Stationery Taxes: Immediate removal of taxes on stationery items.
 5. Government Expenditures: A 35% cut in non-development expenditures to reduce government spending.

6. Capacity Charges: Termination of the agreement to pay capacity charges and Independent Power Producers (IPPs) in dollars.

7. IPP Agreements: A thorough review of all agreements made with IPPs.

8. Agriculture and Industry Taxes: Abolition of unjust taxes on agriculture and industry, reducing the burden by 50%.

9. Employment: Ensuring industry, trade, and investment to provide employment opportunities for the youth.

10. Taxation: Abolition of taxes on the salaried class and bringing the privileged class into the tax net.

The sit-in, named "Haq Do Awam Ko," has garnered substantial support, positioning Engr. Hafiz Naem Ul Rahman, the Ameer of Jamat-e-Islami Pakistan, as a beacon of hope for the youth and the oppressed. This protest is more than a demonstration; it is a clarion call for systemic change and justice for the Pakistani people. It highlights the dire need for the government to address the economic challenges and provide relief to the citizens. Thousands of women and children have also joined the sit-in, adding to the strength and diversity of the movement.

Pakistan's economic situation is dire, with the government having paid 8,500 billion rupees to IPPs and facing an external debt of \$135 billion. These figures underscore the urgency of Jamat-e-Islami demands. The government must prioritize reducing luxurious expenditures and focus on alleviating the plight of the poor.

To be continued



Analysis

Sohail Ahmad Baber



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Israel to soon see result of its cowardly action: Iran president

IRNA

Tehran: Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has issued a message on the martyrdom of the Palestinian Resistance Movement Hamas' head of politburo Ismail Haniyeh, saying that the Zionist regime of Israel will soon see the result of its cowardly assassination of Haniyeh in Iran's capital Tehran.

"The Islamic Republic of Iran will not give up on (efforts) to protect its territorial integrity, sovereignty, dignity and reputation and the Zionist regime will soon see the results of its cowardly terrorist act," said Pezeshkian in the message which was published on Wednesday afternoon.

The Iranian president offered his condolences to Resistance fighters, the Palestinian nation and the Muslim Ummah on the martyrdom of Haniyeh and his companion in the attack earlier in the day in northern Tehran.

He said Martyr Haniyeh was an official guest of the Iranian president and



the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran and was in Tehran to attend a presidential inauguration ceremony before he was assassinated.

The president said the Israeli regime's assassination of Haniyeh

was a desperate move to come out of an impasse in Gaza, where it has been waging a brutal war against the Palestinians for more than nine months, and an attempt to whitewash its dark history of committing "occupation,

President Abbas declares today a day of mourning in protest of Hamas leader's assassination

RAMALLAH: President Mahmoud Abbas declared today a day of mourning in protest of the assassination of Hamas political bureau chairman, Ismail Haniyeh.

The president ordered that flags be flown at half-mast in official Palestinian institutions in the West Bank governorates.

Earlier today, the President called on the Palestinian people to unite, be patient and steadfast in the face of the Israeli occupation.

terrorism, discrimination and mass killing".

Hamis expresses condolences over martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh

IRNA



TEHRAN: The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas expressed its condolences on the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, the head of the movement's Political Bureau, to the great Palestinian nation, the Islamic and Arab Ummah, and all the freedom-loving people of the world.

Hamis said in a statement on Wednesday morning that Haniyeh had been martyred by the Zionists in the Iranian capital Tehran.

The Hamas statement said: Mujahid Ismail Haniyeh, the leader of the movement, was martyred after attending the inauguration ceremony of the new president of Iran as a result of a treacherous raid by the Zionists on his residence in Tehran.

Earlier, the Public Relations Department of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) announced in a statement: Dr. Ismail Haniyeh, the head of Hamas' Political Bureau, and one of his bodyguards were martyred as a result of being hit at their residence in Tehran.

Musa Abu Marzouq, a member of Hamas' Political Bureau, said on Wednesday morning in response to the assassination of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh that the attack would not go unanswered.

According to the Palestinian Sama News Agency, Abu Marzouq said: The assassination of Commander Ismail Haniyeh is a cowardly act and will not go unanswered.

Israeli airstrike on Gaza kills Al Jazeera correspondent, photojournalist

Wafa

GAZA: An Israeli occupation airstrike on the city of Gaza Wednesday evening killed Al Jazeera correspondent Ismail Al-Ghoul and photojournalist Rami Al-Riffy.

Al-Ghoul and Al-Riffy were covering news from atop the rubble of the house of the late Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in the Shati refugee camp, west of Gaza, just before their vehicle was targeted by an Israeli airstrike, which decapitated Al-Ghoul's head.

Israel has proceeded with its genocidal offensive on the war-torn Strip in complete disregard of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which ordered Israel in a legally binding decision to halt its military offensive in Rafah, which may violate its obligations under the Genocide Convention.

Israel has been waging a devastating war on Gaza since October 7, killing at least 39,445 Palestinians and injuring over 91,073 others.

Moreover, at least 10,000 people



are unaccounted for, presumed dead under the rubble of their homes throughout the Strip.

Palestinian and international organizations say that the majority of those killed and wounded are women and children.

The Israeli aggression has also resulted in the forceful displacement of nearly two million people from all over the Gaza Strip, with the vast majority of the displaced forced into the densely crowded southern city of Rafah near the border with Egypt - in what has become Palestine's largest mass exodus since the 1948 Nakba.

PIDE Organized Memorial of Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi

Spokesman Report

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

Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi (July 11, 1935 - July 7, 2024) was a renowned Pakistani economist and scholar, known for his extensive contributions to economic theory and policy. Born in Meerut, British India, he migrated to Karachi, Pakistan in 1950. Dr. Naqvi earned his master's degree from Yale University in 1961 and his doctorate from Princeton University in 1966, followed by post-doctoral research at Harvard University.

Dr. Naqvi served as the director of PIDE from 1979 to 1995. His career also included roles as a senior economic advisor for the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) and as a Distinguished National Professor and Director General at the Federal Urdu Univer-



sity, Islamabad. He held various prestigious positions throughout his career, including stints at international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Bank. His scholarly work has left an indelible mark on economic theory and policy in Pakistan and beyond.

Prof. Naqvi's accolades include the Sitara-e-Imtiaz in Economics (1991), ECO Award (1992), Lifetime Academic Achievement Award (2009), and the title of Distinguished Professor (2005). His work on trade, investment, and economic policy has been widely recognized and respected, earning him accolades and respect from peers around the world.

The memorial service commenced with a recitation from the Holy Quran and Fatcha for the departed soul, followed by a series of speeches that highlighted Dr. Naqvi's remarkable achievements and the profound impact he had on the lives of those who knew him. Dr. Mahmood Khalid, Senior Research Economist at PIDE, opened the event by highlighting key achievements of Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi. Eminent speakers included Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan, Principal and Dean at NUST School of Social Sciences & Humanities, Prof. Asghar Qadir HI, SI, Fellow Pakistan Academy of Sciences, Distinguished National Professor, Dr.

Nadeem Burney, Economic Public Policy Program of the Techno-Economics Division at KISR, Ex- Chief of research PIDE, Dr Athar Maqsood, Professor NUST, Dr Eatjaz Ahmed, Ex-Professor QAU and Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE. All lauded Dr. Naqvi's visionary approach to economic development and his unwavering commitment to fostering intellectual growth and developing human capital in Pakistan.

Dr. Ashfaq Hasan Khan remarked, "Prof. Dr. Syed Nawab Haider Naqvi was a beacon of knowledge and a mentor to many. His work in economic development and policy has shaped the course of our nation's progress. His legacy will continue to inspire future generations of economists."

Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque added, "Dr. Naqvi's contributions to PIDE and his efforts in establishing it as a premier research institution are unparalleled. He was not just an academician but a guiding force for many young economists who looked up to him for wisdom and guidance."

Family members of Dr. Naqvi shared personal anecdotes, reflecting on his humility, generosity, and the values he instilled in them. His daughter, Ayesha Naqvi, spoke of her father's enduring love for learning and his belief in the transformative power of education.

25th Anniversary of enthronement of King of Morocco

Morocco-Pakistan enjoy deep, cordial relations: Mohamed Karmoune

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune along with his spouse Mrs Karmoune and senior officials of the embassy received guests at a reception the embassy hosted to mark the Twenty Fifth Anniversary of the Accession to the throne of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI, Kingdom of Morocco, at Islamabad Serena Hotel

Muhammad Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh and Mr. Masadik Masood Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ministry of Energy, Petroleum Division were the Guest of honour on the occasion, while Moroccan Consul General in Karachi Ishtiaq Baig, his brother Mirza Ikhtiar Baig, Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of Diplomatic Corps, H. E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, ambassadors of the African countries, the Arab countries along with colleagues from other embassies attended the reception and felicitated the ambassador on the occasion.

A large number of businessmen community representatives, civil society and members of academia were also there.

The Ambassador of Morocco Mohamed Karmoune has said the celebration July 30, 2024 of the 25th anniversary of His Majesty King Mohammed VI's ascension to the Throne is a moment for the renewal of the strong ties that unite the Moroccan citizens with their King and the commemoration of positive transformations and great achievements that Morocco has accomplished over the last twenty-five years under the leadership of His Majesty King Mohammed VI.

It is also a time to evaluate the present and reflect on the challenges that still lie ahead to achieve a modern and prosperous



State.

Ambassador Karmoune further said over the past 25 years, the democratic institutions have been strengthened, the country's GDP has tripled and the social protection policy has witnessed considerable efforts to improve access to medical care and social services.

He said the Moroccan political landscape has undergone significant changes during His Majesty King Mohammed VI's reign. An in-depth constitutional reform was adopted in 2011 to improve the efficiency of the political institutions.

On the economic level, hundreds of mega restructuring projects have been achieved or are on the way to completion, be it in infrastructure, renewable energy, transportation, airports, ports networks, digital connectivity, to mention only these.

"This infrastructure has enabled Morocco to diversify its economy and emerge as a major African industrial and tech-

nology platform, by developing key sectors like the automotive and the aerospace industries."

He said these projects, coupled with an ideal environment for foreign investors, have boosted the competitiveness of the country and attracted significant foreign investment. Between 2007 and 2023, the country attracted around 37.5 billion US dollars in net foreign direct investments, averaging 2.2 billion dollar per year, placing the country as one of the most attractive investment destinations in Africa.

Morocco has become a catalyst or even a driving force that uplifts its own economy and those of neighboring and continental countries.

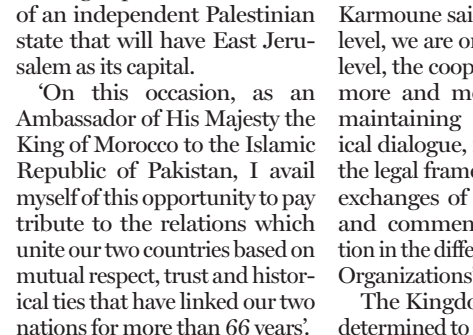
The Atlantic initiative, launched by His Majesty, is beginning to reshape the geostrategic landscape in Africa. This project, which aims to provide Sahelian countries with a maritime outlet, has been receiving much attention and praise for

its great potential to establish multilateral partnership and boost African economic integration, he added.

The ambitious plan will end the isolation of Sahelian countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Chad and Mali by opening their doors to the Atlantic Ocean, something that will undoubtedly bring numerous economic benefits to these nations.

He said considerable efforts have been made to improve access to medical care and services. The country is focusing on providing solid and reliable social protection to all Moroccans. 3.8 million Families are now receiving a state social income and 23 million Moroccans are benefiting from mandatory health insurance.

On the Palestinian question, His Majesty reiterated Morocco's support for the Palestinian cause. He stressed that the plight of Gazans requires global efforts to genuinely work towards a definitive solution to the conflict. This should ensure that Gaza remains



an integral part of the territories of an independent Palestinian state that will have East Jerusalem as its capital.

"On this occasion, as an Ambassador of His Majesty the King of Morocco to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, I avail myself of this opportunity to pay tribute to the relations which unite our two countries based on mutual respect, trust and historical ties that have linked our two nations for more than 66 years."

Ambassador Mohamed Karmoune said 'on the political level, we are on an eye-catching level, the cooperation is getting more and more stronger, by maintaining a regular political dialogue, reinforcement of the legal framework, numerous exchanges of high-level visits, and commendable coordination in the different International Organizations'.

The Kingdom of Morocco is determined to continue its coop-

eration with the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. We strongly believe that working together will achieve our common development vision and embed our relations in excellence, he concluded.

Participants enjoyed Moroccan and Pakistani cuisines made under the supervision of Pathmanathan Balagangdaram, Executive Chef, Serena hotel, Islamabad.

Photos: Sultan Bashir (Online)

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
77,886.98	78,628.80
Day's High	Day's Low
79,151.81	77,810.16
Index Value	Change
8,956,249,219	-741.82
Percentage	Time
-0.94%	31 Jul, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,367.98	+93.57
Percentage	Time
+1.13%	31 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
40,972.94	+229.61
Percentage	Time
+0.56%	31 Jul, 1:50 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
39,101.82	+575.87
Percentage	Time
+1.49%	31 Jul, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.85	186.65
Bahrain Dinar	741.05	749.05
Canadian Dollar	203.75	205.75
China Yuan	38.4	38.8
Danish Krone	40.15	40.55
Euro	301.75	303.85
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	73.9	74.6
Singapore Dollar	202.4	204.4
Swedish Korona	26.6	26.9
Swiss Franc	309.05	311.55
Thai Bhat	7.5	7.65
U.A.E Dirham	75.65	76.35
UK Pound Sterling	356.35	359.9
US Dollar	279.3	280.5

Acquisition of German Conglomerate, CCP's Approval for Market Integration

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a significant merger in the steel industry with international implications. The transaction involves EP Corporate Group (EPCG) acquiring over 20% shares from the German industrial conglomerate Thyssenkrupp.

Specifically, EPCG will acquire 20% stake in Thyssenkrupp Dritte Beteiligungsgesellschaft mbH and 19.99% stake in Thyssenkrupp Vierte Beteiligungsgesellschaft mbH, as per the Investment Agreement signed in April 2024.

As per the merger application, the two target companies jointly control M/s Thyssenkrupp Steel Europe AG which is currently active in Pakistan through the sale of grain oriented electrical steel. The same is engaged in the business of production, processing, distribution and sale of flat carbon steel products along with the integrated production chain. On the contrary, EPCG is a joint-stock company registered under the laws of the Czech Republic with the principal activity of a holding company.

The CCP's competition assessment identified 'grain oriented electrical steel' as the relevant product market. The analysis confirmed that Thyssenkrupp Steel Europe AG's market share in Pakistan is minimal and will remain unchanged post-transaction, ensuring no market dominance will be established.

The CCP envisions that this merger will attract foreign investments, boost local steel production, and bolster Pakistan's industrial growth and economic stability. Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, Chairman CCP, reiterates that this strategic move is expected to open up markets, encourage technological advancements, and create a more competitive landscape within Pakistan's steel industry. This will significantly contribute to the overall economic development of the country, fostering innovation and efficiency.

Silence of influential on IPPs proves involvement: Dr. Shahid

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Wednesday that the silence of influential on the issue of IPPs is proof of their collusion in the conspiracy.

He said the IPP project initiated in the 1990s bankrupted the country and destroyed the masses. Still, the politicians and bureaucrats never raised their voices against this plunder.

He added that the attitude of politicians and top power bureaucracy reveals their priorities regarding the country and the nation.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said in a statement issued here today that now when matters

have gone out of control, a few politicians are starting to speak up. However, the major political parties are still silent spectators, indicating their lack of concern about the country and the masses.

He said that some companies installing IPPs in Pakistan have installed IPPs of the same capacity in neighbouring countries and Arab countries whose tariffs are half that of Pakistan. Still, the matter was never investigated as it would expose the political elite.

He said the honour of starting the IPPs belongs to the People's Party. Still, the other major parties of the country have also left no stone unturned in this regard.

At this time, IPPs have become a significant threat to the country's integrity. Pakistan has to make a capacity payment of 2091 billion



rupees to IPPs for the current financial year. The estimated capacity payment for

state-run nuclear plants is 465.7 billion rupees, the payment for hydropower plants is 446.4 billion rupees, and for imported coal power plants is 395.4 billion rupees, and 256 billion rupees will be paid to Thar coal power plants as capacity payment.

Power plants run on furnace oil, wind, LNG, gas, bagasse, and solar power plants and pay billions of rupees.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that despite not generating electricity, one power plant was paid one and a quarter billion rupees in three months despite not producing a unit of electricity.

The greedy owners of IPPs must reduce their profits and understand that they will only generate handsome money if the country remains, Mr. Butt warned.

Inauguration

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain, is cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the vehicle export section at Toyota Indus Motors Company on Wednesday.



Photo: Spokesman

UPaisa integrated into Bookme to enhance the ticket purchasing experience



Commerce desk

ISLAMABAD: Leading digital financial service platform, UPaisa, has signed a strategic agreement with Bookme, Pakistan's premier online ticketing platform to integrate its payment API into the Bookme app, to offer their joint customers, a seamless and secure payment experience for booking tickets for movies, buses, events and much more.

The agreement was signed by Syed Atif Raza, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G and Faizan Aslam, CEO Bookme

in Islamabad with the aim to facilitate customer facilitation as well as for strengthening Pakistan's digital payment landscape. The partnership simplifies transactions for Bookme users to enhance their user experience by allowing them to purchase tickets effortlessly using UPaisa's reliable and efficient payment gateway.

Commenting on the development, Syed Atif Raza, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G said, "We are thrilled to partner with Bookme to bring our secure payment solutions to a broader audience. The collaboration furthers our commitment

to fostering innovation, financial inclusion, and the proliferation of cutting-edge digital solutions for our customers. Together, we are poised to deliver an unparalleled user experience by simplifying digital transactions for everyone in the country. UPaisa is always keen to build strategic collaborations to amplify its impact."

The integration of UPaisa payment API into the Bookme platform will facilitate faster, and more secure transactions, and enable users to enjoy a smoother checkout process coupled with an enhanced overall user experience.

Mobilink Bank Launches Pakistan's First Women-Led Incubator Program

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank strengthens its commitment to women's economic empowerment with the launch of Pakistan's first-ever industry-specific incubation program designed exclusively for women entrepreneurs. This initiative falls under the umbrella of the Bank's ongoing Women Inspirational Network (WIN) program. The WIN Incubator program aims to empower 25 women entrepreneurs by equipping them with knowledge in core business areas including ideation, planning, business management, financial literacy and marketing. The graduating startups will gain access to a professional network and guaranteed Bint-e-Hawwa loans to fuel their ventures. The most promising startups will compete for a PKR 4 million investment to bring their startup ideas to life.

Mobilink Bank is part of the VEON group, a global digital operator that provides

converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers in six dynamic markets that are home to 7% of world's population.

Sumera Abbasi, Executive Director of TIE Islamabad and a recognized leader in the Pakistani startup ecosystem, has been appointed to head the WIN incubator.

"Mobilink Bank is transforming the entrepreneurial landscape in Pakistan with our WIN Incubator program," said Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank. "This initiative is aimed at breaking barriers for small women-owned businesses by providing essential tools and resources.

Also sharing her thoughts, Sumera Abbasi, Executive Director TIE Islamabad said, "The WIN Incubator is designed to empower women entrepreneurs by providing them with the tools, resources and support needed to succeed. It serves as a launchpad for women to transform their ideas into thriving enterprises."

SECP recommends formation of Pools to meet Insured Pakistan vision

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: To meet the objectives of the Insured Pakistan 5-year Strategic Plan, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has released a comprehensive report titled "Insured Pakistan: Pools Dynamics."

This report underscores the necessity for establishing insurance pools in Pakistan by evaluating the current insurance landscape and existing official insurance schemes. It discusses international case studies and examples, evaluates domestic legal and regulatory frameworks, and proposes an action plan for creating insurance pools in Pakistan, emphasizing the collective responsibilities of involved stakeholders.

Pakistan is exposed to

multiple risks such as disaster risks, energy and power sector risks, agriculture risks, etc., and yet the country remains largely uninsured. In the event of an undesired event, major reliance is placed on budgetary allocations for loss and recovery financing.

Commissioner Insurance, Aamir Khan, in his message, emphasized the need for establishing specialized risk pools in Pakistan, as the pooling of risk and resources in a systematic manner shall enable the government, insurance industry and policyholders to collectively mitigate large risks.

The report's draft version was unveiled in December 2023 at the International InsureImpact Conference 2023 held in Karachi. It has been meticulously revised following stakeholder input.

ICCI President slams IPPs as threat to national sustainability

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry has termed the IPPs as detrimental for the country's sustainability by demanding their forensic audit. He said that the entire business community is on the same page over the issue and it will not let the government to renew their contracts without taking it on board. He said that the individuals responsible for excessively costly agreements should be held accountable, with consequences for negligence or misconduct. He said that the high tariffs and capacity payments have

made electricity unaffordable for the industry as well as the common people which is badly affecting the country's export sector as the buyers in the global market have started looking for alternatives of Pakistani products.

The ICCI President said this while addressing a largely attended press conference entitled 'IPPs and electricity crisis' here at the Chamber House on Wednesday.

PPP MNA and UBG leader Dr. Mirza Ikhtiar Baig said that a delegation of business leaders is holding a meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari tomorrow (Thursday) over the issue to apprise him of the dire situation and find out a viable way

forward. He added that according to a report most of the IPPs are accused of breach of contracts, therefore the government should not hesitate in initiating a criminal action against them.

Vice President ICCI Azhar ul Islam Zafar demanded that an inquiry commission should be constituted to probe the entire episode and to bring those involved in wrong doings to justice.

Former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that the IPPs issue is not the issue of the business community and the general public but the issue of the country's sustainability.



Former President ICCI Tariq Sadiq also pointed out the disparities in the rates of the IPPs by saying that Pakistan is bearing the highest electricity rates of the IPPs in the region.

Those present on the occasion among other include former

President ICCI Mian Shaukat Masood, President All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajran Ajmal Baloch, Malik Shabbir, Malik Mohsin Khalid, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Waseem Chaudhry, Irfan Chaudhry, Maqsood Tabish, Ameer Hamza, Munizeh Majid etc.

Climber Hassan Shigri's body retrieved from K2's bottleneck

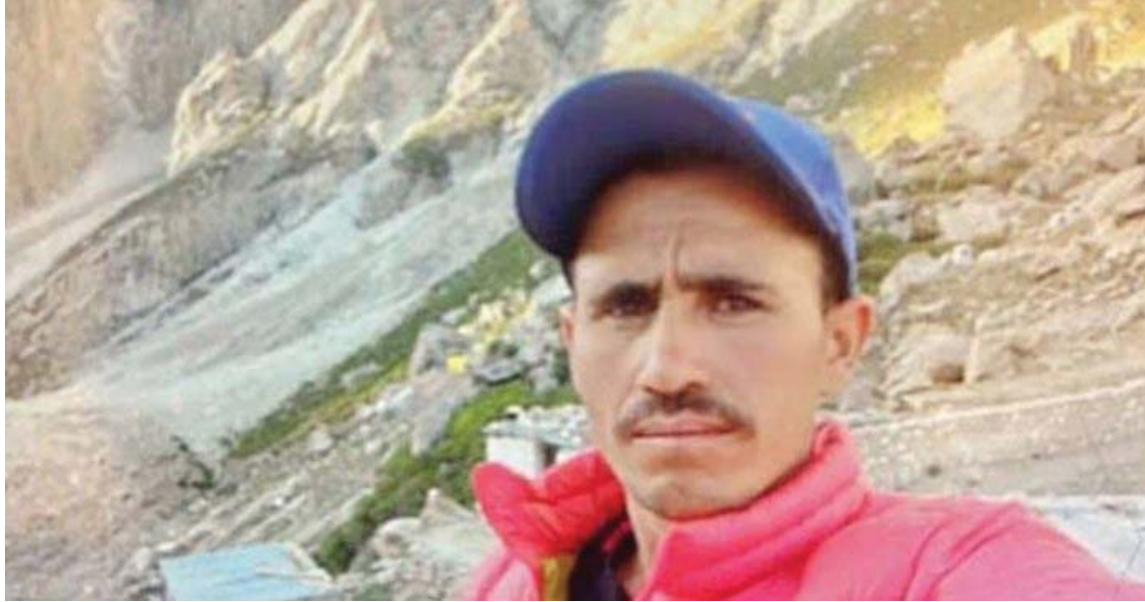
Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: An outfit of high-altitude porters (HAPs) has successfully retrieved the body of climber Muhammad Hassan Shigri from the bottleneck of K2 at a staggering 8,200m and reached advance base camp. Shigri tragically lost his life at this perilous spot last year.

This marks the first-ever rescue mission of its kind on K2 from such an extreme altitude. The feat happens to fall on the very same day that K2 was first ever summited 70 years ago. The team dug out the body from bottleneck out of snow on Monday (July 29) and reached advance base camp (ABC) at an incredible speed on Wednesday (July 31) at approximately 6:30pm.

Climber Naila Kiani, approached by Hassan's family for assistance, leveraged her ongoing Mahreq clean-up project at K2 to undertake this humanitarian mission. Utilising the existing infrastructure kept the costs minimal, and the project was organised swiftly.

Previous attempts to fund such expeditions were too costly and did



not receive approval. By conducting this mission on a not-for-profit basis, the team managed to reduce costs to one-third of the original estimates provided to the Gilgit-Baltistan govern-

ment. However, the mission is yet to receive sponsorship to fund the humanitarian effort.

Key team members included climbers Dilawar Sadpara, Akbar Hussein

Sadpara, Zakir Hussein Sadpara, Mohammed Murad Sadpara, Ali Mohammed Sadpa, Naila Kiani (Project Lead), Imran Ali (Logistics Manager), Wali Ullah Fallahi (DC Shigar).

Lahore Women's Cricket Team beat Multan Women's Cricket Team in Flood Light Trophy Match

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Sports develop confidence and personality in a person, for this, open fields will also have to be settled. Chaudhry Altaf Shahid, Chairperson of Club International District 305 N One Zone Mix B, addressing the prize distribution ceremony at the end of Fatima Jinnah Women Flood Light Cricket Trophy match at DHA Multan Sports Complex under the auspices of Asian Academy Pakistan and Pakistan Foundation.

On this occasion, the organizer Shabana Adnan said that the Asian Academy will continue to provide all sports facilities to girls so that the talents of girls can be revealed.

Now women are playing their full role alongside men in every field. Asian Academy Pakistan and Pakistan Foundation are organizing matches in different cities of Pakistan to bring forward the talents of girls. We want healthy minds for the development of Pakistan, which is possible due to sports. On this occasion, cricket between women of Lahore and Multan.

The match was played in which Multan scored 120 in the first twenty



overs while opening later Lahore women cricket team achieved the set target in 19 overs at the loss of 4 wickets and won the match by 6 wickets.

Zahida was awarded the best player in the match, got Professor Azam Hussain performed the duties of commentator

in the cricket match while Muhammad Wasim Sheikh, Muhammad Siddiqui also participated.

At the end of Fatima Jinnah Trophy Women Flood Light Cricket match under the auspices of Asian Academy Pakistan and Pakistan Foundation,

Chaudhry Altaf Shahid, Shabana Adnan, Professor Azam Hussain, Chairperson of Lions Club International District 305 N One Zone Mix B at DHA Multan Sports Complex. Along with giving the trophy to the captain of the match winning team.

Nadal and Alcaraz knocked out of Olympic doubles

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz were dumped out of the Paris Olympics men's doubles on Wednesday by Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram in possibly Nadal's last appearance at Roland Garros.

The Spanish dream team lost 6-2, 6-4 to the US fourth seeds, who progressed to the semi-finals in Paris.

Rafael Nadal and Carlos Alcaraz, dubbed "Nadalcaraz", have been one of the main talking points at the Paris Games tennis tournament, wowing the crowds in their first two matches.

But they came unstuck in the last eight against doubles specialists Krajicek and Ram, who both have Grand Slam-winning pedigree.

Nadal was broken in the first



game of the match on Court Philippe Chatrier and Alcaraz

also lost serve as the US pair took the first set.

The Spaniards suffered another costly break in the

seventh game of the second set, which ultimately proved decisive.

They battled tigerishly in the 10th game but failed to take advantage of three break points and Krajicek and Ram sealed victory on their second match point.

Nadal, a 14-time French Open champion, said after his painful defeat to Novak Djokovic in the singles competition in Paris that he would make a decision on his future after the Olympics.

The 38-year-old, immortalised in a statue at Roland Garros, has been plagued by injuries in recent years and is now 161st in the world.

Alcaraz still has a chance of winning a medal in the men's singles competition — he is through to the quarter-finals, where he will face US ninth seed Tommy Paul.

Pakistan U-19 Cricket Team to take part in UAE Three Nations-Series



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan men's U19 cricket team will take on Afghanistan and hosts United Arab Emirates (UAE) in a 50-over tri-series from 13 to 26 November.

Pakistan will face the UAE in the event opener (venue to be confirmed in due course) with the tournament to be played on a double-league format and the top two sides qualifying for the final.

This series will be played in the build up to the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup 2024 and will provide an excellent opportunity to the three sides to finalise their preparations for the competition, whose details will be announced by the ACC in due course.

With the PCB National U19 Cup (one-day) and Championship (three-day) due to commence in October, these events will be good platforms and opportunities to the emerging and talented cricketers to perform consistently so that they can impress the selectors and strengthen their claims for the tri-series and the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup selection.

PCB Director International, Usman Wahla: We are delighted that the Pakistan Men's U19 team will be taking part in a highly competitive U19 tri-series in the UAE just before the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup. This will be a great opportunity for the young players to grow and nurture their skills.

The PCB is thankful to the Emirates Cricket Board for arranging this tri-series which also shows strong bilateral ties between both the Boards and our shared commitment towards developing young players.

U19 tri-series (50 overs) fixtures (venue to be confirmed in due course)

- 13 November - Pakistan vs UAE
- 15 November - Afghanistan vs Pakistan
- 17 November - UAE vs Afghanistan
- 19 November - Pakistan vs Afghanistan
- 21 November - Afghanistan vs UAE
- 23 November - UAE vs Pakistan
- 26 November - Final

PFF NC conducts introductory referee course

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Normalization Committee (NC) conducted an introductory referee course in Islamabad.



This three-day course aimed to enhance the participants' physical, technical, tactical and theoretical knowledge of refereeing, said a press release.

A total of 24 participants attended the course to improve their refereeing skills. The sessions were led by PFF Referee Manager Khurram Shahzad and Physical Instructor Yasir Rehman, who provided expert guidance throughout the training.

A PFF NC spokesperson emphasized the dedication to advancing refereeing standards in Pakistan, stating,

"PFF NC is committed to improving refereeing through various developmental courses. We have additional courses planned for the coming months, focusing on different aspects of refereeing, to further support this initiative."

PBBF forms new scrutiny committee for KBBA

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Basketball Federation (PBBF) has formed a new Scrutiny Committee to investigate the affairs of the Karachi Basketball Association (KBBA) and evaluate the affiliated basketball clubs.



Initially, Mahfooz-ul-Haq was appointed as the chairman of the committee, said a press release.

However, due to personal reasons, he excused himself from the position. Consequently, the PBBF reconstituted the committee, appointing Muhammad Ashfaq as the new chairman. The committee also includes Islam Khan Niazi and Wasim ur Rehman as members.

The newly formed committee has been tasked with thoroughly scrutinizing the operations and governance of the KBBA. The PBBF has expressed confidence that the committee will conduct a comprehensive review and submit its findings in a timely manner. This initiative reflects the PBBF's commitment to ensuring transparency and accountability within its affiliated bodies.

Joe Root reclaims No.1 Test ranking as India stars rise in T20I lists

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: England star Joe Root has been rewarded for his excellent series against the West Indies by overtaking New Zealand veteran Kane Williamson and re-claiming his crown as the No.1 ranked batter on the ICC Men's Test Player Rankings, issued on Wednesday.

Root managed a series-best 291 runs over three matches against the Caribbean side and his effort of 87 in the third and final Test of that series in Birmingham allowed the 33-year-old to catapult past Williamson and back into the top position he vacated last year.

The former England captain first became the No.1 ranked Test batter way back in August 2015 and his latest effort to climb to the top comes on the back of a strong series against the West Indies that saw him score his 32nd Test century and rise to seventh overall in the Test run-scorer list.

Williamson drops to second place on the Test batter rankings as a result of Root's recent surge, while Pakistan's Babar Azam (equal third), New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell (equal third), Australia's Steve Smith (fifth) and India's Rohit Sharma (sixth) all gain a spot as England's Harry Brook falls four rungs to seventh following a rare failure against the

West Indies.

The good news for the West Indies from that third Test was the performance of Jayden Seales, with the young quick improving seven spots on the bowler charts to rise to equal 26th and a new career-high rating on the back of his three wickets in the first innings against England and 13 scalps for the series.

Stokes (up one place to sixth) and Chris Woakes (up three spots to ninth) make ground on the list for Test All-Rounders in a further boost for England as they stayed in touch with the ICC World Test Championship pacesetters, with India star Ravindra Jadeja remaining at the top of that cate-

gory with a comfortable lead.

And it was a host of India's best white-ball performers that were the big winners on the latest T20I rankings, with Yashasvi Jaiswal (up two spots to fourth) and Shubman Gill (up 16 places to 21st and a new career-high rating) the biggest eye-catchers on the updated list for T20I batters following the team's series sweep over Sri Lanka away from home.

It's a similar story on the updated T20I bowler rankings, with former top-ranked spinner Ravi Bishnoi back inside the top 10 following an eight-spot jump.

Teammates Arshdeep Singh (up four spots to 19th), Washington Sundar (up six places to

40th) and Mohammed Siraj (up 37 rungs to 47th) also make some ground, while Sri Lanka will be buoyed by the ongoing improvement from Matheesha

Pathirana that saw the speedster jump 13 places to equal 77th on the list for T20I bowlers.

There is also a major shake-up on the latest T20I rankings for all-rounders, with Australia's Marcus Stoinis claiming the No.1 spot once again despite his side not playing any 20-over cricket over the last week.

Stoinis replaces Wanindu Hasaranga at the top, with the Sri Lanka star dropping two places to fall to equal third after a relatively quiet series against India.



Economic growth meeting for GB

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chairing a meeting of the Committee on the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister reiterates support for GB development

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday reiterated government's commitment to support development of Gilgit-Baltistan for the overall economic growth.

The minister was chairing a meeting of the Committee on the issues of Gilgit-Baltistan, according to press release issued

by finance ministry.

Aurangzeb expressed his appreciation for the well-thought-out proposals presented in the meeting and underscored the importance of reforming GB's administrative and fiscal frameworks.

He emphasized that these reforms were vital for both the welfare of the local population and the stimulation of tourism.

According to the press

release, the meeting commenced with a detailed briefing by the Chief Secretary, who outlined the issues faced by the GB government.

Some of these issues were related to insufficient fund allocations and delays in Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) projects, which lead to employee related and other liabilities.

The Chief Secretary advo-

ated for solar power projects designed to address the region's growing energy requirements. He also proposed initiatives for the digitization of land records and the expansion of airports to enhance tourism potential.

These proposals aim to modernize GB's infrastructure and capitalize on its natural beauty, further contributing to the region's economic develop-

ment. Among others, the meeting was attended by Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Muqam; Minister for Finance-GB, Muhammad Ismail; Minister for Agriculture-GB, Mohammad Anwar; Ex CM GB Hafiz, Hafeez Ur Rehman; Chief Secretary GB; Member WAPDA and other officials from relevant Ministries.

Law minister chairs meeting of body for drug pricing



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of the committee formed to give recommendations for independent drug

pricing in the country.

Under the directions of the prime minister, a committee has been constituted to address drug pricing in Pakistan, said a press release.

The meeting was attended by relevant stakeholders who

presented an overview of the operations of independent price authorities and their functions worldwide, highlighting best practices.

The committee deliberated on the best model for Pakistan, considering various viewpoints

from all stakeholders. It was decided that a detailed working paper will be prepared for the next meeting.

This paper will identify the current issues related to the pharmaceutical industry, with a focus on pricing in the

market.

Key areas to be addressed include, issues related to pricing in the market, medicine imports and the market distortions they cause and categories of drugs that fall outside the domain of government pricing.

UAE Ambassador, Commerce minister discuss bilateral trade, investment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a bid to enhance bilateral trade and investment opportunities between the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Pakistan, the UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Hamad Obaid Ibrahim Salem Al-Zaabi, met with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss bilateral trade, investment, and the way forward on the Pakistan-UAE Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed.

Minister Jam Kamal Khan underscored the longstanding and amicable relations between Pakistan and the UAE, emphasizing the need to expedite key investment projects, said a press release issued on Wednesday.

He welcomed the expansion of DP World, a multinational logistics company, and Abu Dhabi Port, affirming the government's ongoing support for such initiatives.

Expressing his views, Minister Jam Kamal highlighted the manifold benefits that the Karachi-Pipri Freight Corridor Project would bring to Pakistan.



The Ambassador emphasized that the two countries have enjoyed long-

standing, fraternal relations and expressed confidence that these ties

will continue to grow stronger over time.

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Federal Cabinet okays privatisation of 13 power division entities

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet has greenlighted the privatisation of 13 entities under Nader Pakistan's Power Division, including nine power distribution companies, citing sources.

Sources told that out of the 11 government-owned power distribution companies, nine have been included in the privatisation list.

However, Quetta Electric Supply Company and Tribal Electric Supply Company were excluded from the list.

Furthermore, the cabinet also approved the inclusion of power generation companies (GENCOs) in the privatisation list.

The cabinet also granted approval for declaring six Power Division entities as 'national important entities', which include Power

Holding Limited and Central Power Purchasing Agency (CPPA).

Moreover, the cabinet has approved the restructuring of four Power Division entities, including Quetta Electric Supply Company and Tribal Electric Supply Company. The restructuring of Islamabad-based entities NTDC and NESPAK has also been approved.

Earlier in May, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif announced that Pakistan will privatise all state-owned enterprises, broadening its initial plans to take only loss-making state firms private.

Chairing a meeting on the privatisation process of loss-making state enterprises, the premier said that the government's job is not to do business but to ensure a business and investment friendly environment.

Govt, JI on same page, says Amir Muqam as sit-in continues

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: As Jamat-e-Islami's (JI) sit-in against rising inflation and exorbitant electricity bills continues for sixth day, the government and the party on Wednesday held positive negotiations with the former's delegation saying their demands are similar to the latter's.

The development came following negotiations between delegations of government and Jamat-e-Islami at Commissioner Office, Rawalpindi.

JI's four-member delegation was led by Liaquat Baloch, while the government committee consists of Amir Muqam, Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Commissioner, and DC Rawalpindi.

Speaking to journalists after meeting, Amir Muqam said that the government's delegation told JI that their demands are similar to theirs, and they both want prosperity in the country.

For his part, Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that the govern-



ment is making efforts to provide relief to the people of Pakistan. He added that the Prime Minister has already announced relief measures, including 200 units of free electricity.

Chaudhry expressed optimism that a positive outcome will be achieved soon. He also stated that the government is trying to resolve the issues as soon as possible and will meet with their team again today.

CM felicitates police on successful operation in Kacha

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated the Punjab Police on carrying out a successful operation against the dacoits in the Kacha area.

The CM paid tribute to Inspector Muhammad Rizwan on embracing martyrdom during carrying out the



operation due to heart attack. The CM expressed her heartfelt sympathies and condolence with the bereaved family. She directed to provide the best treatment facilities to the injured constable.

She said, "It is the first and foremost duty of the Punjab government to protect life and property of people and we will fulfill it under any circumstance."



PTCL confirms internet disruption across country

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Users across Pakistan are facing significant disruptions to their internet services due to a widespread outage affecting the Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL).

According to a PTCL spokesperson, the company's network is down in various cities, causing disruptions in banking and other government offices. The spokesperson confirmed that PTCL teams are working to resolve the issue as quickly as possible.

Sources indicate that the internet outage is causing widespread inconvenience to the public, with banks and



government offices forced to close.

Reports suggest that the internet slowdown is related to the installation of a new internet security network. Officials claim that the firewall is undergoing testing, which is causing the slow internet speeds. This claim has been confirmed by senior officials.

PM Shehbaz orders to ensure ...

Continued from Page 1

told that the data of the children missed from polio vaccination had been digitised to ensure their vaccination through digital tracking.

Coordinator to Prime Minister

on National Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed, PM's Focal Person on Polio Eradication Dr Ayesha Raza Farooq, Secretary National Health Dr Nadeem Mehbub and National Coordinator on Polio Eradication Muhammad Anwarul Haq attended the meeting.