



Ambassador Jemal Beker discusses financial sector collaboration with Finance Minister
H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Thursday called on H. E. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at his office. (Details on Page 8)



UNSC report endorses Pakistan's stance on terrorism from Afghan soil: FO
The UNSC report has endorsed Pakistan's view regarding terrorists of the banned TTP taking refuge within hideouts and sanctuaries in Afghanistan. Addressing the weekly press briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, FO Spokesperson Muntaz Zahra Baloch said that the report mentions how the TTP — declared as 'Fitna al-Khawarij' by the Pak govt — could "transform into an extra regional threat as well as an "umbrella organisation" of other terror groups.

Offering Funeral Prayers for Quds Martyrs

Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei led funeral prayers on Thursday morning at Tehran University over the bodies of Martyr Ismail Haniyeh, head of the political office of Hamas, and his bodyguard, Martyr Wasim Abu Shaaban.



Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh laid to rest in Iran as Khamenei leads mourners

IRNA
ISRAEL IN 1987. He served as Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority after Hamas won the 2006 elections, but was ousted when the group seized control of the Gaza Strip. The funeral comes amid heightened tensions in the region, as Israel also killed a top Hezbollah commander in a strike in Beirut just hours before Haniyeh's death. The developments have prompted concerns of a wider regional conflict erupting. Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim condemned Meta, Facebook's parent company, for removing his social media posts honoring Haniyeh as a "freedom fighter." Ibrahim issued a "stern warning" to Meta, accusing the platform of "cowardice" in censoring tributes to the Hamas leader.

Haniyeh's martyrdom in Tehran a flagrant violation of int'l laws: PM

Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday strongly denounced the attack that led to martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, chief of Hamas Political Bureau, in Tehran, terming it a barbaric act that was a flagrant violation of international laws and rules. The extraterritorial assassination, he said, had sparked widespread condemnation across the world including Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, Iran, China and Malaysia which had



denounced the attack in the strongest words. Ismail Haniyeh's children and grandchildren had also

been ruthlessly martyred, he added. The prime minister was chairing a meeting on the situation of Palestine which was attended by the parliamentarians representing the government's allied political parties. Shehbaz Sharif said that the bloodshed in Palestine continued for last nine months claiming lives of many innocent Palestinians everyday. Over 40,000 Palestinians including thousands of children had been martyred till date. "The world is silent over this barbarism," he said. "Such terrorism and extremism is highly condemnable." The prime minister said Netanyahu was out to destroy Palestine. Despite clear verdicts of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and resolutions of the United Nations, Israel could not be stopped from its barbaric acts. He expressed gratitude to the countries from the West such as Ireland and Spain who had openly supported the Palestinian cause and its two-state resolution.

President for a viable solution to rising energy costs

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for finding a win-win solution to address the issue of rising energy costs in the country. He proposed that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) should form a committee and work with the President's office to develop a viable solution to the issue of paying capacity charges to Independent Power Producers (IPPs). The President gave these remarks while talking to a delegation of FPCCI comprising of businessmen and office-bearers of 40 regional business associations, led by Dr Gohar Ejaz, at Aiwan-e-Sadr today. Talking to the delegation, the President announced that the President's office would collaborate with a smaller committee from the business community to find a win-win solution for the Government, the people, the business community and IPPs. He urged the for evolving a consensus solution so that none of stakeholders lose out.



He said that he was aware of the problems being faced by Pakistani businesses, that were in a "triple-whammy" due to high input, energy, and fuel costs. Dr Gohar Ejaz highlighted that rising energy costs were overburdening the people, industry, agriculture and exports sector. He emphasised the need for reforming the energy sector to bring down energy prices. Dr Gohar Ejaz requested the President to intervene in the matter and play his role in resolving the issues faced by Pakistan's industries and businesses due to high electricity prices. The President assured the delegation of his support in coming up with a solution to their problems and taking up the matter with relevant quarters.

PTI to stay out of power, banned when institutions decide, ministers say

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal and Defense Minister Khawaja Asif have openly discussed various issues including a potential ban on the PTI, the military's involvement in government formation, the military's willingness to form a government, and other matters in recent interviews. Federal Ahsan Iqbal has stated that the Pakistani military has decided to stay out of politics and should not be involved in political affairs. He further hinted at a potential ban on the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-

Insaf (PTI), stating that the decision will be taken when the relevant institutions deem it necessary. Iqbal, while speaking to an American broadcaster, dismissed concerns about ongoing negotiations between the military and the PTI, reiterating that the military has clearly stated its desire to remain apolitical. He challenged PTI founder Imran Khan to clarify what he is negotiating with the military, accusing Khan of inviting the military to intervene in politics and expecting them to install him as Prime Minister. Iqbal suggested that the PTI could rejoin the mainstream political scene by changing its behavior and apologizing to the nation and institutions. He emphasized that the PTI's current political approach has no space in Pakistan. Regarding a potential ban on the PTI, Iqbal clarified that such a decision cannot be solely based on the government's desire and would require approval from the Supreme Court. He attributed the potential ban to the PTI's alleged international campaign against the government. Iqbal further warned against any judicial actions that could destabilize the country, stating that Pakistan cannot afford further tensions.

SC's larger bench formed to hear Arshad Sharif's murder case

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court (SC) of Pakistan constituted a five-member larger bench to hear a suo motu case pertaining to senior journalist and former ARY News anchor Arshad Sharif's murder. The SC's Practice and Procedure Committee led by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa decided to form a five-member larger bench instead of a three-member bench with a 2-1 majority vote. The sources privy to the development said that CJP Qazi Faez Isa suggested keeping the 3-member bench intact, but Justice Mansoor Ali Shah and Justice Munib Akhtar, the other two members of the committee, voted in favor of forming a larger bench. The new bench of headed by Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail and comprising Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, and Justice Athar Minallah will hear the case to a date which will be announced later.

Lahore rain breaks 44-year record, hundreds of feeders trip

Bureau Report
LAHORE: Lahore experienced record-breaking rainfall on Thursday, breaking a 44-year-old record. The heavy downpour caused widespread flooding, with water entering homes, submerging roads and highways, and even reaching the emergency wards of hospitals, causing significant challenges for patients.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department reported that Tajpura received 315 millimetres of rainfall while Lahore Airport recorded the highest rainfall at 336 millimetres. Other areas, including Nishtar Town (250mm), Pani Wala Talab (226mm), Johar Town (220mm), and Gulshan Ravi (210mm), also saw significant rainfall.



The heavy rain has led to the tripping of over 400 feeders across the city, causing widespread power outages. The Lahore Electric Supply Company was waiting for the rain to stop before starting restoration efforts.

Austria Ambassador Andrea Vicky visits Multan and Inception of Historic Places

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: District Member Peace Committee and Member Cant Board Muhammad Yaqoob Shera met Austria Ambassador to Pakistan Mrs Andrea Vicky during her visit to Multan and presented a bouquet to welcome the pilgrims to Madinah tu Aulia Multan.

Awliya's historical heritage, culture, the city's largest commercial center, Cantt, the handicraft shops, embroidery and handmade products shops were inspected.

The ambassador of Austria Mrs Andrea Vicky visited Multan and gained awareness about the culture and civilization of Multan and also inspected the historical buildings of Multan.



Ambassador of Austria Mrs Andrea Vicky enjoyed the traditional food of Multan as well as delicious Multan mangoes and Sohan Halwa.

Member Cantt Board Mohammad Yaqoob Shera proposed on behalf of the guest ambassador to set up a Water filtration plant in Multan Cantt for the convenience of the public for the sake of Pakistan friendship.

The guest ambassador of Austria Mrs Andrea Vicky, also assured that the Austrian government will soon set up a water filtration plant in Multan Cantt.

Meanwhile, well-known social and political personality Muhammad Feroz Khan and social personalities of Cantt gave an enthusiastic welcome to the guest ambassador on his arrival in Multan Cantt.

Governor Punjab #H Block of FDA City should be declared as journalist colony: FUJ (Dastoor)

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Governor Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan has assured that he will definitely uphold the journalist-friendly tradition of PPP to resolve the long-standing demand of establishing a journalist colony of all journalists in Faisalabad with his discretionary powers and funds. Written requests will be approved by contacting soon. He expressed these views while meeting the delegation led by Syed Zikrullah Hosni, President of Faisalabad Union of Journalists Dastoor, before the Divisional Workers Convention of the People's Party in a private marquee on the Sea Road. In which General Secretary Shahroz ul Ibad, Vice President Asghar Manj, Joint Secretary Mian Abid Hussain, Secretary Information Malik Jameel Siraj, Members Executive Haji Ibrahim, Dilbar Khan Khattak, BDM Syed Sadaqat Ali Shah, Aftab Nawaz, Mian Kamran Yasin, Muhammad Tayyab. And others were also present. People's Party's provincial leader and former federal minister Rana Farooq Saeed Khan, Syed Hasan Murtaza, District President Muhammad Ejaz Chaudhry, General Secretary Rai Shahjahan, Divisional Information Secretary Sheikh Muhammad Tahir were present on this occasion. The delegation of FUJ Constitution was formally invited to meet the Governor Punjab and President Syed Zikrullah Hosni, General Secretary Shahroz Ibad, Vice President Asghar Manj, Information Secretary Malik Jameel Siraj, Joint Secretary Mian Abid Hussain along with other members visited the PPP house. Submitted a written request to Governor of Punjab Sardar Salim Haider Khan for setting up a journalist colony in Faisalabad and providing discretionary powers and funds for the welfare of journalists.

Cardiac Hospital Muzaffarabad condemns alleged mob violence after death of patient

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: In the press release issued by the management of Cardiac Hospital Muzaffarabad regarding the incident that happened last night, it has been said that on July 30, 2024, after the death of a patient in Cardiac Hospital Muzaffarabad, the family rioted. The hospital was vandalized, doctors and other staff were not only harassed, but also tortured. In this regard, some elements on social media are sharing unfounded positions. According to the press release, Mr. Sajid Hussain Shah, a resident of Tariqabad, Muzaffarabad, was referred to Card One Hospital from AIIMS Muzaffarabad with Infero Posterior wall MI (Heart Attack) on 28 July 2024 and the emergency team of Card One Hospital immediately started treated the patient. After that, according to the SOPs, consent of the patient's family members for treatment. Inj. Streptokinase was administered and they were informed about the side effects of the injection. And it was also told that after this injection, not only the patient may have a stroke, but uncontrolled bleeding also starts in his body and mind. The patient was admitted in the CCU of this hospital for 02 days but the chest pain persisted and the rest of the patient's tests including ECHO Cardiography were done and the patient's family members were informed that on Tuesday, July 30, 2024, Angiogram/angioplasty (Stent) will be inserted. Dated 30 July 2024 Patient transferred from CCU to Cath Lab for angiography. After written informed consent, the patient's right coronary artery (RCA) was occluded during several angiography of the patient. A written permission was taken for angioplasty. After the angioplasty (stenting) was completed, the patient's brother was called to the cath lab and a video clip of the final result was also shown to the patient who complained of headache and vomiting. Injections were administered for

Independence Day celebrations in Lipa Valley to begin after Friday prayers

Bureau Report

LIPA VALLEY: The 77th Independence Day of the beloved Islamic Republic of Pakistan, like the four provinces, including both sides of the Line of Control in Wadi Lipa, has been started in Wadi Lipa. And private educational institutions, political, social, business centers and houses were formally inaugurated by hoisting green crescent flags. Inauguration ceremony was held at Government Girls Inter College Syedpura, Jinnah Public School Kesarkot, Press Club Lipa Member District Council Bashir Alam Awan's office and Nokot Street. The flag was unfurled at the memorial which was officially inaugurated by the Central Deputy Secretary Information of Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Shaukat Javed Mir, Member of District Council Bashir Alam Awan, Members of Local Council Siddique Ahmed Sheikh, Azhar Mir, Youth Leaders. Ehsan Alam Awan, Rafi Sheikh Atif Zahid Mir and Principal Girls College Prof. Azizur Rehman Awan, Vice Principal Jinnah Public School Shehzad Mughal unfurled the flag after the prayers. The students and teachers stood silently in Lipa Valley, the grand celebrations of Pakistan's Independence Day were started. Atif Zahid Mir, Rafi Sheikh Tariq Butt inaugurated the Government Girls Inter College and Jinnah Public School along with hundreds of students and teachers by hoisting the green crescent flags, Wadi Lipa, regarding the Independence Day of Pakistan by District Council Member Bashir Alam Awan. Magnificent flag hoisting ceremonies were held at the office, Press Club Lipa, J.com Guest House, the goal of the longest struggle of the people of Wadi Lipa is a strong, prosperous, stable, democratic Pakistan, that is why the people of Kashmir are the Pakistan Army and the green crescent flag. We consider the red line as an integral part of our faith and the eternal sacrifices of one and a half million Kashmiris are the symbol of the destination. Assembly candidate Shaukat Javed Mir's address at the flag hoisting ceremony at Jinnah Public School, Kesarkot, he said.

Tafsir Quran Volume Eighth and Ninth Will be launched on August 5

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Syed Riyaz Hussain Shah's Tafsir Commentary on the Qur'an Volume Eighth and Ninth volume will be launched on August 5 after Maghrib Namaz at Islamia Institute of Education, Sir Syed Khayaban, Rawalpindi.

According to the Deputy Director of Islamic Education Institute, Hafiz Muhammad Qasim Sheikh, the function will be presided over by Dewan Ahmed Masood Chishti Darbar Aliya Baba Farid Pak Patan Sharif. While the honored guests will include Hajj Pir Shamim Sabir Sabri Darbar Alia Astana Kalas Sharif, Pir Syed Makhdoom Abbas Shah Hamdani Astana Alia Bhangali Sharif, Pir Syed Nasir Sultan Shah Mashhadi Astana Alia Darul Fazl Sharif, Pir Syed Shah Muhammad Kamal Kazmi Astana Alia Turi Sharif present. Apart from the speeches of Allama Mufti Chaman Khan Najam-ul-Qadri, Allama Dr. Prof. Muhammad Asif Hazarvi, Prof. Irfan Jameel, a special address will be given by Qur'an commentator Allama Pir Syed Riaz Hussain Shah. The recitation of the Holy Quran will be presented by the eminent reciter of the country Professor Muhammad Mushtaq Anwar and Alhaj Ghulam Zainul Abedin Saeedi, Dr. Sarwar Hussain Naqshbandi Naat Rasool Maqbool. The event will be attended by eminent Sheikhs, scholars, Sanah Khan Rasool and people from different walks of life from all over the country.

Wildlife Protection Champions

Islamabad: The Group Photo of wildlife protection awards winners with Romina Khurshed Alam, Prime Minister's Coordinator on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Jamaat-e-Islami will continue to protest against inflation

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Amer-e Jamaat-e-Islami Multan Dr. Safdar Hashmi and other Jamaat-e-Islami leaders Ali Asghar Saleemi, Chaudhary Athar Aziz, Shazada Babar Mann, Shahid Baloch, Rafi Raza Advocate, Khawaja Asim Riaz while addressing a press conference at Multan Press Club said Jamaat-e-Islami will Continue to Protest Against inflation. unemployment and increase in Electricity Prices He Further said Hafiz Naeemur Rahman has started a public movement titled "Haqq du Awam ko, Haqq du Pakistan ko aur Badlo is Nizam e Zulm ko". In the first phase, a grand "public sit-in" has been held at Liaquat Bagh Murree Road, Rawalpindi. The demands made by Jamaat-e-Islami regarding the aims and objectives of this sit-in, which is still on its sixth day, are purely public demands. They are the voice of the common people.

There are cruel taxes in electricity bills, very ruthless slab rates, capacity charges in the name of IPPs, they are



collected by robbing people's pockets. People have given them more than six thousand billion rupees in the name of capacity charges so far. Electricity rates are touching the sky. Due to electricity bills, people are forced to sell their valuables, poor people are forced to commit suicide. In the current budget, the rulers have increased the petrol levy. Earlier it used to be 50 rupees, which was a very cruel prac-

tice, but now it has been increased to 75 rupees.

So that even if there is a reduction in the prices of petrol at the international level, no benefit will reach the people. The petrol levy tax is a total injustice to the people, and there has been a protest against it in the same way as the salaried class, whether it is government or non-government, it was the salaried class that paid

the highest tax even before this. He further said that in 2018, the salaried class paid a tax of 75 billion rupees and now in 2023-24 this tax has been collected around 375 billion rupees. While only five billion rupees were collected from the feudal classes, now the slab rate of tax on the salaried class has been increased, Even if the salaries go up, the taxes are cut so much that the home salary is further reduced.

Kashmir Exploitation Day: Meeting for review of media campaign and media coverage arrangements

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Regarding the implementation of the instructions of the Most Senior Minister and the Chief Secretary AJK, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Sardar Sohail Azam, Secretary Information and Food of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir regarding the review of media campaign and media coverage arrangements on the occasion of Kashmir Exploitation Day. Director of Public Relations Raja Shahid Hussain, Information Officers Syed Asif Hussain Naqvi and Raja Abdul Basit Khan participated in the meeting.



Secretary Information directed that the activities of Kashmir Exploitation Day should be fully publicized on social print and electronic media, Kashmir

Exploitation Day and human rights violations in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir should be highlighted on social media as well as India's August

5, 2019.

The events organized regarding unconstitutional, illegal and immoral actions should be advertised.



Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:45 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:08 pm
Isha 8:43 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

AIOU to commence admissions in BA, B. Ed. from September 1

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University will open admissions for its Teacher Training Programs, including the 1.5-year, 2.5-year, and 4-year B. Ed programs, starting September 1st. In addition, the university will offer a range of other programs in the second phase of the Fall 2024 semester, including associate degrees (BA/B. Com), Postgraduate Diplomas, and BS (ODL) programs.

Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, Vice Chancellor of the university, highlighted the success of the Faculty of Education's teacher training initiatives. He noted that millions of teachers have been trained through these programs, with alumni serving in educational institutions across the country. "Our trained educators are making a significant impact in schools, colleges, and universities nationwide," Dr. Mahmood remarked.

The first phase of admissions for the Fall 2024 semester is currently underway. The deadline for Matric, FA, and I. Com program applications is September 5th, while applications for BS (Face-to-Face) programs, MS, MPhil, and PhD programs are due by August 20th.

For further details on admissions, visit the university's website or contact one of its regional offices across the country.

MUSLIM Institute, Embassy of Indonesia hold seminar on nation-state, democracy

Emphasizing Islamic Welfare State Principles and Post-Colonial Perspectives

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: MUSLIM Institute in collaboration with Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia organized a seminar titled "Nation-State, Islam and Democracy: Perspectives from Pakistan and Indonesia." Chairman Nahdatul Ulema, Indonesia Mr. Ulil Abshar Abdalla was chief guest on the occasion.

Amongst distinguished speakers were Former Federal Law Minister Mr. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Acting Ambassador of Indonesia H. E. Rahmat K. Hindiarta, Amb (R) Tariq Osman Hyder, Adhoc Member Shariat Appellate Bench, Supreme Court Dr Qibla Ayaz Sahib, Senior Research Associate MUSLIM Institute Mr. Kashif Aslam and Public Relations Associate MUSLIM Institute Asif Tanveer Awan. Speakers emphasized that debates on nation-state and democracy are common in academia and should be discussed.

Islamic teachings prioritize a welfare state over a specific governance form, with the rightly

guided Caliphs selected through diverse methods suited to societal needs. Governance in Islam is based on clear objectives from Islamic injunctions and laws. Islamic societies do not permit representatives to create policies against Islamic values, though concessions are allowed in exceptional circumstances. Pakistan, founded on Islamic principles by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, unites diverse cultures and ethnicities.

Jinnah advocated for democracy based on Islamic ideals and principles, emphasizing discussions and consultations in state affairs. Debates on nation-state and democracy also require examining post-colonial perspectives. Terms like "expats" vs. "immigrants" and "first world" vs. "third world" reflect biases rooted in Western supremacist philosophies by Kant and Hegel, who influenced liberalism and modern democracy. It is crucial to consider these epistemologies and recognize the rich history of Islam as the common



denominator for addressing challenges in Muslim nation-states. Ambassador of Indonesia remarked that Pakistan and Indonesia are two largest Muslim countries having one of largest democracy.

There were deep relations between our founding fathers. Indonesia always tries to take part in creating a peaceful world for all. Muslims have a duty to excel, following Quranic rules and regulations, and to educate people on true Islamic practices in daily life.

There are similarities and differences between the two countries.

Both countries share Sufi traditions and have brotherly relations. The teachings and essence of Islam are the same globally. Speakers observed that Islam was preached in Indonesia and Pakistan through Sufis, and we remain indebted to them for that. Pakistan and Indonesia together represent the largest Muslim population. If there are misconceptions about Islam, the fault lies with us.

The biggest question since September 2001 is whether Islam is compatible with democracy. Indonesia serves as an example that Islam is indeed compatible with democracy. There is also the question of whether nationalism is compatible with Islam. Scholars have put forth arguments proving that Islam is compatible with nationalism. However, the concept of nationalism for Muslims is different and that is well explained by Allama Iqbal.

Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

733rd National Day of Switzerland

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, Ambassador of Switzerland to Pakistan Georg Steiner and others cut the cake during 733rd National Day of Switzerland, at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

K-Electric Renewable Energy Projects Garner Local, International Interest



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 640 MW of Renewable Energy marks a significant stride in K-Electric's journey towards embedding sustainability in power generation. This is the first step of many, demonstrating our unwavering commitment to sustainable practices and innovative solutions.

Karachi, 01 August 2024: K-Electric (KE) completed another significant milestone in its ambitions to enhance its share of renewable energy in its generation mix, envisaged under the company's Power Acquisition Program (PAP). The company announced the receipt of a total of 15 bids for the first of its ambitious renewable energy initiatives of 150 MW solar projects at Winder and Bela, Balochistan.

Aiming to harness 30% renewable energy solutions in its fleet by 2030, KE initiated a competitive bidding process for multiple renewable energy projects earlier this year following a successful nod of approval from NEPRA. This transparent approach is a testament to KE's commitment towards sustainable energy solutions. Over the next 5 years, KE aims to add a total of 1300 MW of renewable energy projects, furthering its commitment to sustainable energy solutions.

Syed Moonis Alvi, CEO of KE, expressed his enthusiasm about this development, stating, "Garnering 15 bids for the first cohort of the solar energy project is a huge milestone for KE as well as for Pakistan. It represents local and international players' trust in KE as a brand, as well as growing confidence in Pakistan's economic potential. I am delighted to see several reputable firms sharing our vision to build a resilient, robust, and sustainable energy future for Karachi."

Shahab Qader Khan, Chief Strategy Officer, also shared his views, adding, "These renewable energy projects are in-line with KE's vision and NEPRA's directives to prioritize local fuels and green sources. We are optimistic that the success of these projects will encourage others to participate in the subsequent process as well."

KE accelerated its transformational journey by designing its portfolio to include wind and solar capacity to maximize energy yield. In addition to the 150 MW solar project in Balochistan—for which the bidding is closed, a 270 MW project in Sindh, comprising 120 MW at Deh Halkani and 150 MW Deh Metha Ghar, in District West, Karachi, and a 220 MW hybrid (wind and solar) project at Dhabaji, Sindh, are at the bidding stage. KE welcomes potential partners to bid on projects in Sindh and craft a progressive energy future.

Economic confidence among finance professionals edges higher globally despite big fall in North America

City Desk

LAHORE: The latest ACCA (the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants) and IMA* (Institute of Management Accountants) Global Economic Conditions Survey (GECS) suggests that confidence among accountants and finance professionals edged slightly higher in Q2 2024 and is just above its historical average. For chief financial officers (CFOs), all the key global indicators rose, with sharp gains evident in the New Orders and Capital Expenditure indices.

Alain Mulder, Senior Director Europe Operations & Global Special Projects at IMA* said: "The American economy has slowed from the heady pace of expansion in the second half of 2023, and the latest results raise the risk of some further moderation over coming quarters. The probability that the U. S. Federal Reserve begins easing monetary policy after the summer has increased, although inflation developments over coming months will be crucial."

Jonathan Ashworth, Chief Economist, and ACCA, said: "The GECS points to some further improvement in the global economy in Q2. Further signs of a pickup in the important Western European and Asia Pacific regions are encouraging, although the decline in the North American and U. S. indices bear watching closely."

Confidence is significantly higher than its historical average in Asia Pacific, slightly above in the Middle East and Western Europe, at its average in South Asia, slightly below average in Africa, and well below average in North America.

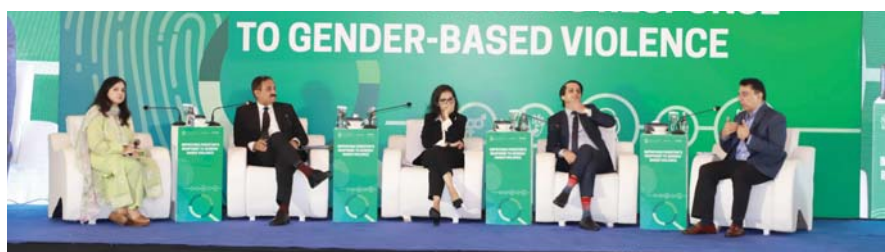
Ashworth concluded: "Despite the resilience of the global economy so far in 2024, many important downside risks and challenges remain. Sticky inflation could limit central banks' scope for monetary easing, while geopolitical and political risks remain very elevated and will continue to create significant uncertainty."

A discussion on implementation of the Anti-Rape Act 2021

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Law and Justice, in collaboration with the UK-Pakistan Serious Crime and Law Enforcement (UPSCALE) programme, organized a panel discussion to increase awareness of the Anti-Rape (Investigation and Trial), Act 2021.

The event featured experts with experience in implementing the Anti-Rape Act and dealing with cases of gender-based violence. The session was inaugurated by Federal Secretary for Law and Justice, Raja Naem Akbar and chaired by Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the Anti-Rape Special Committee. Notable experts from law enforcement and civil society including Ghulam Sarwar Nihung, Prosecutor General ICT, Dr. Inam Waheed Khan, DIG Police and Advisor



UPSCALE, Barrister Usama Malik, Director, Directorate of Legal Education Pakistan, and Nida Aly, Executive Director of the Asma Jehangir Legal Aid Cell, provided perspectives on the challenges police, prosecution and lawyers face in ensuring justice for women in gender-based violence cases. Zainab Mustafa, member of the Special Committee, and Community Protection Advisor at UPSCALE concluded the plenary session by highlighting the government's commitment to improving investigation and trial of gender-based violence

crimes. In his opening statement, the Secretary Law and Justice, Raja Naem Akbar stated, "This seminar aims to create awareness on the rights of the citizens under the Anti-Rape Act, 2021."

In her keynote address Ayesha Raza Farooq acknowledged the significant new initiatives under the Act for combating sexual violence and ensuring justice for survivors.

Community Protection Advisor (UPSCALE), Omar Maniar set the context for the discussion by summarising the

new framework for survivors of sexual violence including anti-rape crisis cells, specialized investigation units, designated prosecutors, creation of special courts and the creation of the national sex offenders register which will allow police to monitor convicted offenders and reduce reoffending.

The event concluded with an acknowledgement of the collaborative effort required to implement the Anti-Rape Act 2021 effectively and reaffirmed the commitment of all stakeholders to fostering a safer and more just society.

With U. S. Govt support, Islamabad's Polyclinic Hospital and UN Women launch anti-rape crisis cell

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Government Polyclinic Hospital, with technical support from UN Women and funding from the U. S. Embassy's Office of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL), has launched the Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) at Polyclinic Hospital in Islamabad as part of the Tahaffuz project.

Pakistan's first-ever Anti-Rape Crisis Cell was launched at the Karachi Police Surgeon's Office in August 2023, with support from the United States (INL) and technical assistance from UN Women. Another Anti-Rape Crisis Cell was established at Nishtar Hospital in Multan in November 2023.

The event began with a warm welcome from Dr. Naushin Farooq, Head of Department Gynecologist, FG Polyclinic Hospital. Her words of



encouragement and commitment to the cause set the tone for the ceremony, highlighting the government's dedication to eradicating sexual violence and providing comprehensive support to survivors.

Saman Ahsan, UN Women OIC, addressed the audience, emphasizing

the critical importance of Anti-Rape Crisis Cells as foundational centers for consolidated services for rape survivors. She stated, "Anti-Rape Crisis Cells serve as essential pillars in our collective efforts to combat sexual violence and ensure the rights and well-being of rape survivors. By providing compre-

hensive services and support, these cells play a pivotal role in empowering survivors to reclaim their lives and seek justice."

Dr. Sophia Younas, Deputy Director Health at the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination emphasized the Pakistani government's commitment to eliminating sexual violence and offering extensive support to survivors.

Sen. Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the Special Committee on Anti-Rape (Investigation & Trial) Act, 2021, remarked that the ARCC facility in Islamabad underscores the government's commitment to enhancing the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) "As we gather to inaugurate Islamabad's Anti-Rape Crisis Cell, we mark a crucial milestone in our unwavering pursuit of justice and safety for all citizens."

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Electrifying Pakistan's mobility - Chinese way

Dr. Irfan Ahmad Gondal

As the world shifts towards sustainable energy solutions, electric vehicles (EVs) have emerged as a pivotal component in reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change. Pakistan, with its burgeoning population and increasing urbanization, stands at a crossroads in its journey towards electric mobility.

Leveraging the expertise of its neighbor, China, which has established itself as a global leader in EV technology, Pakistan has a unique opportunity to accelerate its transition to electric mobility.

China's rise as a powerhouse in the electric vehicle industry is nothing short of remarkable. Over the past decade, China has invested heavily in research and development, infrastructure, and manufacturing capabilities, positioning itself as the world's largest producer and consumer of electric vehicles. Chinese companies like BYD, NIO, and Geely have become household names, known for their innovation, affordability, and quality. China holds a dominant position in the global electric vehicle (EV) market. Here are some key facts regarding the Chinese EV industry. China is the world's largest producer of electric vehicles, accounting for approximately 64%

of global EV production. This includes a wide range of electric vehicles, from passenger cars to commercial vehicles. In terms of sales, China also leads the global market, with 59% of global EV sales in 2022, meaning that out of every 10 EVs sold, 6 are from China. This significant market share underscores China's role as the largest consumer of electric vehicles worldwide.

These figures highlight China's pivotal role in the global EV industry, both in terms of production and consumption. This leadership is driven by substantial investments in research and development, a comprehensive value chain, and supportive government policies. One of the key factors behind China's success in the EV sector is its comprehensive approach to the entire value chain. From battery production to vehicle manufacturing and charging infrastructure, China has developed a robust ecosystem that supports the growth of electric mobility. This holistic approach has enabled Chinese automakers to produce electric vehicles at competitive prices, making them accessible to a broader audience.

Pakistan's geographic proximity to China presents a significant advantage in the realm of electric mobility.

The two countries share a long-standing relationship, characterized by economic cooperation and strategic partnerships. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project

under China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has further strengthened this bond, creating opportunities for collaboration in various sectors, including the automotive industry.

Chinese expertise in electric vehicle technology offers a promising avenue for Pakistan to leapfrog into the era of

techniques, and best practices. This collaboration can help Pakistan build its own capacity to produce electric vehicles, reducing its reliance on imported fossil fuels and promoting energy security.

A robust charging infrastructure is essential for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. China has made substantial investments in building an extensive network of charging stations, making it convenient for EV owners to recharge their vehicles. Pakistan can benefit from China's experience by collaborating on infrastructure development projects. Joint efforts to establish charging stations across major cities and highways can alleviate range anxiety and encourage more consumers to switch to electric vehicles.

One of the barriers to EV adoption in many developing countries, such as Pakistan, is the high cost of electric vehicles. Chinese automakers have excelled in producing affordable EVs without compromising on quality. By importing or locally assembling Chinese electric vehicles, Pakistan can offer its citizens cost-effective alternatives to traditional gasoline-powered cars. This affordability factor can play a crucial role in driving the adoption of electric vehicles among the masses.

Battery technology is at the heart of electric vehicles, and China has made significant strides in this area.

To be continued

Chinese companies are leaders in battery production, with advancements in energy density, charging speed, and longevity. Pakistan can collaborate with Chinese battery manufacturers to establish local production facilities, reducing the cost of batteries and making electric vehicles more accessible.

By leveraging China's advancements, Pakistan can accelerate the development of its own EV industry, benefiting from technology transfer, joint ventures, and investment. By partnering with established Chinese companies, Pakistani manufacturers can gain access to cutting-edge technology, production

Israeli attacks in Beirut, Tehran 'represent a dangerous escalation'

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has urged the international community to prevent escalation in the Middle East, following an Israeli strike on Lebanon's capital and the killing of the chief of Hamas Political Bureau Ismail Haniyeh in Iran.

"The Secretary-General believes that the attacks we have seen in South Beirut and Teheran represent a dangerous escalation at a moment in which all efforts should instead be leading to a ceasefire in Gaza, the release of all Israeli hostages, a massive increase of humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza and a return to calm in Lebanon and across the Blue Line," UN Spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric said in a statement issued on Wednesday.

"Rather than that, what we are seeing are efforts to undermine these goals," he added.

On Tuesday, Israeli launched an airstrike on the densely populated southern suburb of Beirut which reportedly targeted a senior Hizbollah commander, Fuad Shukur, who was killed, according to media reports.

This followed a rocket attack on a football field in the Israeli-occupied Golan on Saturday.

On Wednesday morning, Haniyeh, the Hamas political leader, was assassinated in Tehran, reportedly in an Israeli strike.

Dujarric said the Secretary-General has consistently called for maximum restraint by all, adding "it is increasingly clear, however, that restraint alone is insufficient at this extremely sensitive time."

The UN chief urged all to vigorously work towards regional de-escalation in the interest of long-term peace and stability for all, he said.

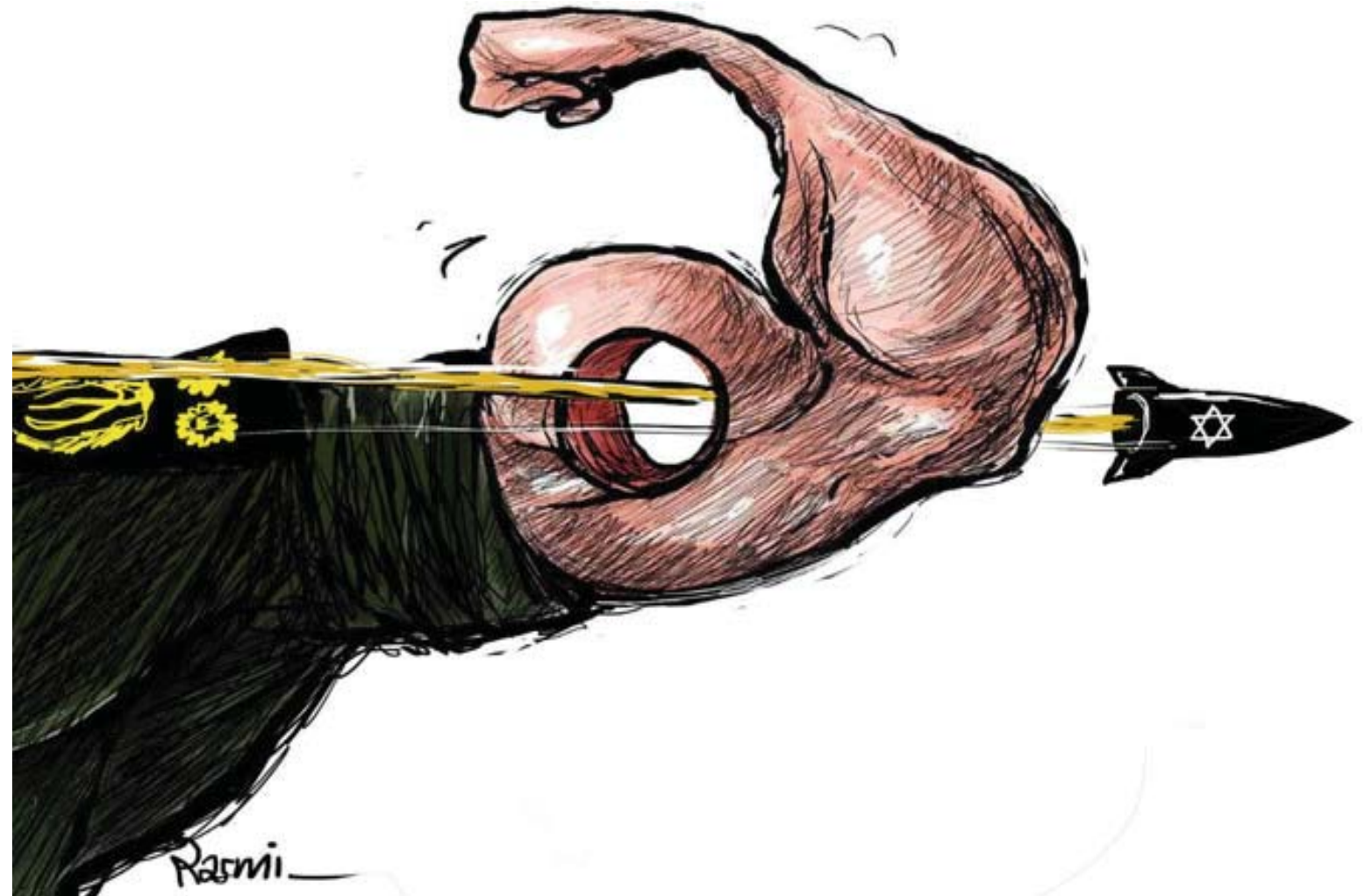
"The international community must work together to urgently prevent any actions that could push the entire Middle East over the edge, with a devastating impact on civilians. The way to do so is by advancing comprehensive diplomatic action for regional de-escalation," the statement concluded.

The UN's top envoy in the Middle East also expressed profound concern over the recent developments which he said "may have far-reaching implications for the region".

In a series of posts on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter, Tor Wennesland called for restraint and avoiding actions that could further destabilize the region.

The UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Process said he is in contact with all relevant parties to work towards defusing tensions, and the goal is clear - regional de-escalation, including achieving a ceasefire and the release of all hostages in Gaza, and working towards a lasting piece.

The UN Security Council in New York is set to meet this afternoon to debate the crisis.



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

Cult Politics II

In the complex realm of democratic governance, some nations have consciously favored institutional strength over the appeal of charismatic figures. The United States, for instance, historically underscores the significance of institutions in upholding democratic governance. Despite periodic infatuations with charismatic leaders, its constitutional framework—established over two centuries ago—ensures a robust system of checks and balances. The separation of powers among the executive, legislative, and judicial branches, coupled with the Bill of Rights, prevents any single entity from monopolizing authority. Key institutions like the Supreme Court, Congress,

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

Germany provides another compelling example of prioritizing institutions over personalities. Post-World War II, Germany rebuilt its democratic system with a strong emphasis on institutional safeguards. The Basic Law (Grundgesetz) establishes a federal structure with clear separation of powers and guarantees fundamental rights for all citizens. Key institutions like the Federal Constitutional Court in Germany ensure that legislation adheres to constitutional principles, thereby guarding against abuses of authority. Germany's steadfast commitment to democratic institutions has been

pivotal to its post-war achievements, promoting stability, economic growth, and societal unity.

South Africa's journey from apartheid to democracy highlights the vital role of robust institutions in addressing historical injustices and fostering inclusive governance. The country's 1996 Constitution embodies principles of equality, human rights, and the rule of law. Institutions such as the Constitutional Court have played essential roles in interpreting and upholding the Constitution, ensuring that democratic standards prevail over individual interests. Despite its diverse society and occasional political challenges, South Africa's dedication to institutional integrity has been crucial in solidifying democratic progress and fostering reconciliation. These examples serve as a lesson for Pakistani politicians and citizens alike in shaping their political system.

Conversely, across the globe, charismatic personalities often captivate public imagination, leading to situations where individuals, communities, and even nations blindly follow leaders. Charismatic figures possess a magnetic allure, using their charisma to inspire trust, rally supporters, and articulate a compelling vision. However, unquestioning allegiance to charismatic leaders can obscure rational judgment and critical evaluation of their policies, actions, and societal impact. This blind devotion diminishes the role of informed decision-making in governance and public discourse.

When individuals or groups uncritically follow charismatic figures, there is

a risk of reduced accountability. Leaders may exploit this loyalty to avoid scrutiny, consolidate power, or pursue agendas that diverge from public interests. Without critical thinking and robust accountability mechanisms, institutions designed to check power may weaken, undermining democratic governance and eroding trust in democratic processes.

In democratic societies, the active participation of informed and critical citizens is essential for upholding democratic values such as transparency, pluralism, and human rights. Blind adherence to personalities undermines these principles by prioritizing loyalty over values and fostering divisions rooted in personality cults rather than reasoned debate and consensus-building. This erosion can lead to polarization, intolerance, and diminished civic engagement, thereby weakening the foundation of democracy itself.

History provides ample instances where blind allegiance to charismatic leaders resulted in disastrous consequences, from totalitarian regimes to populist movements. Contemporary politics also demonstrates how emotional appeals and identity politics can overshadow substantive policy discussions and critical analysis.

Critical thinking serves as a crucial antidote to the dangers of blind obedience. It empowers individuals to question assumptions, assess evidence, and consider diverse perspectives before forming opinions or making decisions. Fostering critical thinking skills requires investment in education, media literacy, and creating a cultural environment where dissent is valued as a necessary aspect of democratic discourse.

To be continued

Capital Parking - Coping with a challenging issue

Abdul Samad Tariq

ISLAMABAD, Jul 28 (APP): In the vibrant heart of federal capital where pulse of daily life beats against backdrop of bustling streets and evolving cityscapes, a transformative effort is underway to tackle one of urban living's most pressing challenges; the parking space.

For years, Islamabad has been grappling with dual pressures of rapid population growth and increasing vehicle numbers, straining the city's infrastructure, particularly its parking facilities.

As the number of vehicles registered with Islamabad Excise Department already surpasses one million, the vehicles registered with other cities plying in capital, further add to traffic load and capital roads and parking areas feeling like shrinking rapidly.

Due to lukewarm response of previous regimes towards this emerging challenge, the situation continued worsening with capital roads and markets seen stuffed with vehicles and thousands of them parked on main arteries of the city.

"Finding parking space at capital markets has become a challenge," said Asadullah Khan, a local businessman. "Daily rising vehicles number is further aggravating the situation. If timely measures are not taken travelling and parking at capital markets would become impossible."

"Ensuring convenient and accessible parking is crucial for reducing traffic congestion and enhancing overall quality of life in Islamabad," remarked Azam Khan Lodhi, a traffic consultant at

Capital Development Authority (CDA).

For enhancing efficiency and convenience, he stressed to integrate advanced technological solutions into parking management systems. "Introduction of smart parking meters and mobile applications can facilitate residents and visitors to locate available parking spaces, minimizing the time spent in search of parking and optimizing use of existing infrastructure. Such innovations would also help control vehicular emissions related environmental pollution."

Some recent measures like running metro busses on different routes as well as introduction of electric busses are also seen as a positive step towards addressing this issue.

"Recent intra-city electric busses have been a game-changer. They save much of time and hassle, especially during peak hours. I'm glad Islamabad is embracing technology to improve urban mobility," said Sarah Ahmed, a frequent commuter.

Beyond technological advancement, community engagement also lies at the heart of Islamabad's parking management initiatives. Regular public consultations and feedback mechanisms enable authorities to tailor solutions that resonate with the diverse needs of city residents.

"By involving community in shaping our parking policies, we can better address their concerns and create a more sustainable urban parking environment for them," stated CDA's spokesperson. "As Islamabad continues to evolve into a modern metropolis, the commitment of authorities for resolving parking issues is of paramount importance."

The spokesperson said, the city planners are also focusing on public

transportation, cycling infrastructure and more parking spaces. "As many as 30 electric busses have started operating on NUST to PIMS and from PIMS to Bari Imam. The CDA will charge Rs. 50 flat fare from each passenger as charging points have also been set up for electric busses at Convention Centre and H-9."

He informed, a fleet of 70 busses has also arrived in Islamabad for operating on 11 other routes as the CDA hopes to receive last fleet of 60 busses in near future taking the tally 160 busses. "This initiative will facilitate commuters with safer and speedy journey and reduce pressure on capital's environment."

Meanwhile, an environmental consultant Irfan Niazi said, investing in sustainable urban mobility is not a choice but a necessity to make capital vibrant and a livable city for coming generations.

In this context, he mentioned to approval of CDA's Development Working Party (DWP) approval of Rs 4.56 billion for underpasses and strategic loops at Serena Chowk Khayaban Suhrawardy and Convention Center Srinagar Chowk to ease out traffic congestion and Rs 3.9952 billion projects for Jinnah Avenue and 9th Avenue intersection, underpasses and flyover.

"These developments mark substantial progress in addressing Islamabad's infrastructure needs, promising enhanced traffic flow and modernized urban management systems," Niazi said.

With this set of initiatives going to be in place, one can hope the capital becoming a sustainable urban landscape, ensuring seamless blend of modernity and convenience for its residents and visitors alike.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan to work jointly for making central Asia climate resilient

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: In a significant development towards global climate action, Pakistan and Kazakhstan have reaffirmed their commitment and agreed to boost collaboration for coping with climate risks, environmental, energy, air pollution and water scarcity challenges being faced by these both countries.

This agreement was reached during a meeting held here on Thursday between Romina Khurshid Alam, coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and a Kazakhstan embassy delegation led by Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan H. E. Yerzhan Kistafin.

The Kazakhstan's envoy informed the PM's climate aide that his country was deeply interested to strengthen people-to-people contact through tourism and engagement in various socio-economic development sectors including bilateral trade, education and research, environment, climate change, disaster risk reduction, renewable energy, efficient water management, aiming to improve



quality of the life and environment of the both countries.

He also offered his country's all-out technical, technological and financial support through the joint working with the climate change & environmental coordination ministry to build Pakistan's climate resilience, promote eco-tourism, climate-smart agriculture and boost power generation from renewable energy sources.

Romina Khurshid Alam thanked the Kazakhstan's ambassador for extending his country's offer to engagement with

the ministry for building up collaboration in climate change, energy, agriculture, water and eco-tourism sectors.

The PM's climate aide assured the ambassador of her all-out support, saying: "I would mobilise every possible resource to engaged with Kazakhstan government through the embassy to benefit from experiences of Kazakhstan regarding climate risk management, tapping of renewable energy, efficient water management, disaster management, sustainable farming practices and eco-tourism."

Romina Khurshid further said that the region's glaciers are shrinking at a rapid pace, particularly in the Tien Shan and Pamir mountain ranges. These glaciers are crucial for providing water to rivers and lakes that support agriculture and drinking water supplies. As they recede, there's an increased risk of reduced water availability.

The Kazakhstan's ambassador agreed with the PM's coordinator, saying that the region was confronted with common challenges of environment and climate change.

"My country would do utilize every possible resources and work closely with Pakistan to tackle these challenges through not only bilateral but also a regional approach involving other climate-vulnerable countries from Central Asia," the ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin said.

E Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan Yerzhan Kistafin calls on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam in M/o Climate Change & Environmental Coordination on August 1, 2024.

US.-Pakistan Green Alliance Framework Improves Climate-Smart Agriculture: Andrew Schoffer

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: U. S. Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schoffer highlighted U. S. efforts to promote economic growth in Pakistan, and the role of U. S. business in Pakistan's agriculture sector, during his first visit to South Punjab

Pakistani mangoes are renowned worldwide, and this sector is crucial to the country's economy and culture. The United States has supported the mango industry through provision of advanced graders for processing facilities across Punjab and Sindh said Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schoffer who visited Luftabad mango farm Multan. This support has helped improve technology, reduce labor costs, speed up shipment processes, meet international quality and hygiene standards, and expand exports to international markets."

A 2015-19 USAID-project improved the international and national competitiveness of Pakistan's commercial agriculture and livestock sectors in four product lines: meat, high value and off-season vegetables, mangoes, and citrus fruits. USAID's support helped attract investment worth \$80 million in the private sector, creating more than 12,000 full-time jobs.

US Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schoffer also toured the Corteva Agriscience Research facility. He emphasized the close cooperation through the U. S.-Pakistan Green Alliance Framework to expand climate-smart agriculture, clean energy, and effective water management. Across Pakistan, dozens of U. S. companies employ approximately 120,000 Pakistanis and provide critical research and development capabilities.

Unity Foods' "Ba Ikhtiyar Kissan" Program: Empowering Pakistani farmers for a brighter future



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Unity Foods, a frontrunner in Pakistan's agro-based commodities sector, proudly launched the "Ba Ikhtiyar Kissan" Program through its subsidiary Unity Plantations. This groundbreaking initiative is dedicated to empowering farmers nationwide by providing them with advanced technical skills in modern agriculture, high-quality seeds, and fertilizers. By doing so, Unity Plantations aims to boost crop yields, enhance financial independence, and promote sustainable livelihoods.

Farrukh Amin, CEO of Unity Foods, shared his thoughts on the initiative: "The Ba Ikhtiyar Kissan Program is a testament to our dedication to Pakistan's agricultural sector. By equipping farmers with the necessary tools and knowledge, we are not only enhancing food security but also creating a sustainable and prosperous future for our communities and future generations."

As Unity Foods continues to expand its efforts, the company remains steadfast in its mission to advance food security in Pakistan. The "Ba Ikhtiyar Kissan" Program is more than just an initiative; it is a movement towards building a community founded on trust, cooperation, and shared growth. It aligns with Unity Foods mission to see enhanced food security in Pakistan by developing a sustainable and efficient farm to fork food supply chain system.

Bank Alfalah Reports Substantial Growth

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Bank Alfalah Limited (BAFL), in its meeting held on August 01, 2024, approved the Bank's financial results for the half year ended June 30, 2024.

The Bank reported profit after tax of PKR 20.609 billion, representing Earning Per Share (EPS) of PKR 13.07. The Board of Directors declared an interim cash dividend of PKR 2.00 per share (20%) for the quarter ended June 30, 2024, bringing the total interim cash dividend for the year to PKR 4.00 per share (40%). The Board had earlier declared and paid an interim cash dividend of PKR 2.00 per share (20%).

The Bank's deposit base closed at Rs. 2.102 trillion as at June 30, 2024; representing a 18.3% year-on-year (YoY) increase. CA and CASA ratios stood at 41.4% and 68.9% respectively. The Bank remains focused on strengthening its customer franchise by gearing towards its strategic pillars of expansion and innovation.

The Bank reported its advances at Rs. 820.004 billion while upholding robust credit discipline amid challenging market conditions, and has sufficient provision against non-performing loans with a coverage of 118.5%, including general provision.

The Bank remains adequately capitalised with CAR at 17.13% as at June 30, 2024, staying comfortably above the regulatory requirement.

The Bank is ready to explore new horizons, expand its presence, and make a deeper, more meaningful impact on the community and financial empowerment.

Governor Sindh visits Ethiopian Embassy to Condole with Ambassador Jemal Beker over landslide incident

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Kamran Khan Tessori, Governor of Sindh, on Wednesday visited the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad to express condolence over demise of over 230 people in the incidents of landslide that took place in Gofa Zone of the Southern part of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

Upon arrival at the Embassy, H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of FDR Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, accorded warm welcome to the Governor Sindh.

The Governor Sindh expressed solidarity with the Government and people of the FDR Ethiopia over the tragic incident and sympathized with the bereaved families. He expressed his support and



commitment to jointly work with the Government of Ethiopia in addressing the climate related issues.

On the occasion, H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker briefed the Governor

about relief and rescue efforts of the Government of the Ethiopia being carried out for permanent relocation of the affected persons in sustainable manner.

The Ambassador also highlighted the Green Legacy Initiative of H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed, Prime Minister of Ethiopia, which was aimed at combating climate challenges and ensuring food security in the country and region as well.

He informed the Governor that Ethiopia had planted more than 40 billion seedlings of indigenous plants of fruits, vegetable and animal feed in the last four years through massive mobilization of the masses.

H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker expressed his commitment to work with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for addressing the climate issues through joint initiatives under the Green Legacy Initiative.

The matters of mutual interests including bilateral and multilateral cooperation also came under discussion during the meeting.

Telecoms, mass media and construction companies are prime targets for cyberattacks in 2024

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Telecom, mass media, and construction development companies are the top cyberattack targets in the first half of 2024, reports Kaspersky. Telecoms faced the greatest number of incidents, likely due to attackers' interest in sensitive data and trusted relationships exploitation. In turn, mass media are traditionally targeted during international conflicts, while construction development firms may be also attractive for threat actors due to their extensive subcontractor use.

In the telecommunications sector, there were 284 cybersecurity incidents per 10,000 systems, according to Kaspersky Managed Detection and

Response (MDR) statistics for January-June 2024. Mass media companies experienced 180 attacks per 10,000 systems, while the construction development, food and industrial sectors followed with 179, 122 and 121 incidents, respectively.

"A successful attack, especially an advanced one, on a telecom company can expose millions of customers' records, including contact details, social security numbers, and credit card information. That's why this sector is so attractive for cybercriminals. The mass media organizations become an increasingly frequent target during international conflicts, which are often characterized by information warfare in which they play a crucial role. The



construction development firms, in turn, have significant cash flows and rely on subcontractors, making them vulnerable to attacks via trusted partners' infrastructures and spear phishing," explained Sergey Soldatov, head of Kaspersky Managed Detection and Response.

To make sure infrastructure is not compromised, periodically conduct

compromise assessment, and in case of clear evidence of a cyberattack, start incident response. To build own internal security operations, SOC consulting services can help. Provide your SOC team with access to the latest threat intelligence (TI), such as with the Kaspersky Threat Intelligence Portal. Upskill your cybersecurity team to tackle the latest targeted threats, for example with Kaspersky Expert Training (xTraining). As many targeted attacks start with phishing or other social engineering techniques, introduce security awareness training and teach practical skills to your team - for example, through the Kaspersky Automated Security Awareness Platform.

Workshop on 'Bridging the collaboration gap between Academia and PDMA/DDMA Sindh

Zainab Hyder

KARACHI: A workshop was organized under heading of "Bridging the collaboration gap between Academia and PDMA/DDMA Sindh through curriculum development and advancing research on disaster preparedness/ DRR/Climate Change adaptation" by the Fast Rural Development Program (FRDP) in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and consortium partner CESVI, funded by the European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) under the technical support of the PDMA Sindh and the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

In opening of the event Mr. Mubashir

Hassan, Expert for DP-DRR WHH Pakistan emphasized the critical need for collaboration between academia, disaster management authorities, and the NGOs. Chief guest Mr. Imdad Hussain Siddiqui, Director of Operations at PDMA Sindh, highlighted the importance of Disaster Risk Management education at all levels and offered his support for its smooth implementation through collaboration with the HEC, academia, and the NGOs. Mr. Siddiqui further shared that He will personally follow up with the vice chancellors of respective universities and HEC about the progress after this initiative.

At the end He also discussed the challenges faced during the 2022 disaster

and shared his experiences along with PDMA's contributions to successfully managing past events by presenting Atlas of hazard profiling of Sindh province.

Ms. Fozia Rajput, Executive Director of FRDP, expressed her appreciation and gratitude to PDMA for their crucial role in guiding all humanitarian partners toward building a more resilient society.

Mr. Hidayatullah Kasi, Deputy Director, Curriculum development HEC - Islamabad, presented the procedure and guidelines about the addition of degree and elective courses of Disaster management in the universities, He also shared the roles and responsibilities of board of studies and HEC.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| Current | Prev. Close |
| 77,740.30 | 77,886.98 |
| Day's High | Day's Low |
| 78,241.02 | 77,595.92 |
| Index Value | Change |
| 5,758,347,283 | -146.68 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.19% | 1 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm |

| Europe: FTSE 100 Index | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 8,283.36 | -84.62 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -1.01% | 1 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1 |

| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 40,244.52 | -598.27 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -1.46% | 1 Aug, 1:15 pm GMT-4 |

| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 38,126.33 | -975.49 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -2.49% | 1 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9 |

Open Market Forex Rates

| Currency | Buying | Selling |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Australian Dollar | 184.8 | 186 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 741.05 | 749.05 |
| Canadian Dollar | 204 | 206 |
| China Yuan | 38.4 | 38.8 |
| Danish Krone | 40.15 | 40.55 |
| Euro | 301.6 | 303.65 |
| 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 | 75.75 | 76.4 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 357.8 | 357.35 |
| US Dollar | 279.3 | 280.5 |

Policing Cartels: CCP Recovers PKR 32 Million in Penalties

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has made notable progress in its ongoing battle against cartelism, successfully recovering penalties amounting to PKR 32 million. This recovery is a testament to the CCP's commitment to upholding competition laws and ensuring that entities engaged in anti-competitive practices are held accountable.

Over the past years, the CCP has imposed cumulative penalties amounting to approximately PKR 74 billion in cases related to various sectors including sugar, cement, cooking oil and ghee, poultry, automobile (including tractors), paint, lubricants, real estate, steel, fast-moving consumer goods, milk, food and beverages, electronic goods, glass, and e-commerce, with. However, the actual collection of these penalties has faced significant legal hurdles, delaying justice and enforcement.

The appointment of new management under the leadership of Chairman CCP, Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu, marked a turning point in the CCP's approach to enforcing competition laws. Bringing onboard a renewed focus on diligently pursuing pending court cases and enforcing penalties.

Key strategic actions included establishing of a dedicated Market Intelligence Unit (MIU), strengthening the CCP's legal team, enhancing coordination with judicial authorities, and prioritizing cases with significant public interest. These concerted efforts have resulted in efficiently policing cartels leading to successful recovery of penalties.

The CCP aims for further strengthening its enforcement capabilities and continuing to pursue pending cases with vigor. The commitment to fighting cartelism and identifying 'smoking guns', the CCP remains unwavering, with the mandate of promoting competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activities.

Ishaq Dar laid foundation stone of SECP Head Office Building

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan and Federal Senior Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, laid the foundation stone of the new Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), head office building. The Federal Minister for Finance, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Chairman SECP Akif Saeed, and other senior officials were present for the special occasion.

Speaking at the event, Senator Ishaq Dar stated that the establishment of SECP's independent building was an important step towards the financial autonomy of the institution and shared that the plot of land for the head office building was approved by the government in 2017.

Further, he remarked that SECP will continue to play an important role in the development of the country's economy, and pledged the government's full support in introducing key reforms to SECP's regulatory framework. He also highlighted Pakistan's potential for economic development



and market growth, citing over \$10 billion worth of proven minerals, urging the youth to have hope in the resilience and richness of Pakistan's potential. Speaking on the occasion, the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator

Muhammad Aurangzeb, also reaffirmed the Ministry of Finance's full support to SECP for the approval of its laws before Parliament. Aurangzeb shared that the government was in the process of introducing reforms to deal with the country's financial challenges and to improve its financial health, which include improving the energy mix, reducing circular debt and dependence on banks, and taking forward the privatization program.

Chairman SECP, Akif Saeed, announced that the SECP is introducing radical reforms in the regulatory frameworks to facilitate ease of doing business and investment processes. He also briefed participants on reforms being introduced to improve the internal workings of SECP, including improving gender diversity, improving the technical skills of employees, and digitalizing the entire process of regulatory approvals to improve efficiency and ensuring transparency.

He assured Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar that construction work for the SECP building would commence promptly and be completed on time.

Anti-encroachment operation

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is placing bananas on a footpath as Metropolitan Corporation Rawalpindi has taken away his pushcart during anti-encroachment operation in front of Allama Iqbal Park in the city.



Photo: Online

Danyal Chaudhry visits ICCI: Terms trade counselors' role vital for attracting foreign investment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Danyal Chaudhry, Member National Assembly and Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, emphasized that Pakistan has immense potential for foreign investment, requiring dedication and passion to showcase its products globally. Mentioning government's initiatives to enhance foreign exchange earnings and economic growth, he stressed the crucial role of trade and investment counselors in foreign missions for the cause.

During his visit to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Chaudhry met with President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and highlighted the significance of chambers worldwide in fostering trade and business relations. He appreciated ICCI's efforts in exploring business opportunities and attracting foreign investors, saying, "Chambers play a vital role in promoting economic development, and ICCI is doing a commendable job in this regard."

Bakhtawari suggested linking commercial counselors' promotions to their performance in meeting investment targets, saying, "This will incentivize them to work



harder and attract more foreign investment." He also proposed establishing business display centers in foreign missions to showcase Pakistani products to promote the country's export potential.

Furthermore, Bakhtawari announced ICCI's plans to organize events engaging youth in entrepreneurship and startups. He emphasized the need to equip young people with skills to become job creators rather than job seekers.

Former ICCI President and United Business Group (UBG, FPCCD), Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari empha-

sized the importance of guiding the young generation, determined to contribute to the country's advancement, to secure a brighter future. He said, "Our youth is our asset, and with proper guidance, they can play a significant role in Pakistan's economic growth."

He also appreciated the role of Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme, Rana Mashood Ahmed Khan in empowering the youth of Pakistan.

Those present in the meeting also include Ameer Hamza, Faizan Shahzad, Zulqurnain Abbasi, Zia Chaudhry, Waseem Chaudhry and other.

Alsvin Limited Black Edition: Refreshed look with leather seats yet only Rs 25,000 more

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Master Changan Motors, a disruptive automobile manufacturer known for breaking the status quo and compelling competitors to upgrade their decades-old models, has unveiled the Black Edition of its popular "Smart sedan" Alsvin, offering an exclusive and stylish look for discerning car buyers.

The Alsvin Black Edition features several significant aesthetic upgrades and is targeted towards individuals who seek to stand out from the crowd and crave to accentuate



the sporty design of Alsvin. The sleek and sophisticated look of the Black Edition is ideal for individuals who value both performance and aesthetics in their driving experience.

On the outside, the Alsvin Black Edition undergoes a transformative blackout treatment with sleek black door handles, black outside rear view mirror and black alloy wheels whispering a promise of exclusivity as you approach. The black roof creates a dynamic silhouette that cuts through the crowd and hints at the power and performance beneath.

Price Drop! Dial to China at the lowest rates ever with Zong 4G!

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong 4G, the leading telecom service provider in Pakistan, is thrilled to announce the launch of new International Direct Dialing (IDD) China Bundles for both prepaid and postpaid customers. In a bid to enhance connectivity and provide greater value to the customers, Zong 4G is also significantly reducing the rates for IDD calls to China.

Starting today, Zong 4G's customers can enjoy new IDD China Bundles "Kam Paisay Ziyada Baat" & "Pak-China Friendship Bundle". These bundles are a new offering that make

communication for Chinese expats in Pakistan easier and more affordable. These bundles cater to the growing demand for reliable international communication, allowing Zong customers to stay connected with their loved ones and business associates in China.

Zong is providing smooth connectivity along CPEC routes, combined with affordable bundles the services aim to foster stronger business and personal relationships between the two nations. With triple the resources at the same price, these bundles are designed to enhance the ease of communication.

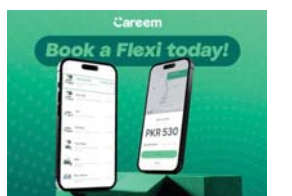
Careem launches Flexi Rides in Karachi, customers can choose their own price

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Careem, the pioneer of ride-hailing in Pakistan, has launched its 'Flexi' car type in Karachi, enabling customers and Captains to take rides on their own preferred fare. The introduction of Flexi Ride is a new ride-hailing option redefining freedom of choice for both customers and Captains by enabling them to choose their own preferred price.

Commenting on the bringing Flexi Ride to Karachi, Imran Saleem, General Manager Ride Hailing at Careem Pakistan, stated, "We are really excited to bring Flexi Ride to our customers in Karachi, as it has garnered a great response in other cities of Pakistan. The idea behind the service is to give customers the flexibility to choose their own fares, all while offering unparalleled experience and the utmost level of safety."

The Flexi Ride will offer four categories: Flexi GO, Flexi GO Mini, Flexi Bikes and Flexi Riksha. While the Flexi Ride will be available in categories of GO and GO Mini, the GO Premium category will remain unchanged, offering the pre-existing marketplace model which is based on a variable fare.



Fly Jinnah partners with T3 Aviation Academy to train future Pakistani pilots

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Fly Jinnah, Pakistan's leading low-cost airline, has proudly partnered with T3 Aviation Academy to induct its first batch of future Pakistani pilots. This milestone marks the beginning of an ambitious journey to cultivate and develop local aviation talent in Pakistan.

The initial training phase for these CPL holders commenced on June 20, 2024, at the T3 Academy facility in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates. After completing this foundational training, the group will advance to aircraft base training and line training with Fly Jinnah. This comprehensive program



will equip them with the skills and knowledge necessary to meet the highest international standards.

This collaboration was made possible with the invaluable support of the Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority and reflects the commitment to fostering local talent. The initiative aims to develop a new generation of pilots who will contribute significantly to the growth and success of Pakistan's aviation industry.

DG NAB Masood Alam lauds MEPCO for holding national level hockey tournament

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Director General NAB Masood Alam has said that it is a great honor to organize a national level event in Multan to promote national sports and to produce young players. I made a name for myself by performing brilliantly. He expressed these thoughts on the occasion of participating in Mepco Hockey Gold Cup tournament as a special guest. President Mepco Sports Association Engineer Chaudhry Khalid

Mahmood said that Mepco is taking all possible measures to promote sports. Organizing tournaments at local and corporate level to provide maximum playing opportunities with the aim of maintaining the fitness and performance standards of the players. He said that in the past years, Mepco organized tournaments at the local level to improve the game of Kabaddi, Hockey and Baseball players. Sports Officer GAPCO (Gujranwala) Ehtishamul Haque said that for the first time, MEPCO

has organized a megaserie between power companies, the credit goes to MEPCO Sports Association. Secretary Haider Usman Athangal and Sports Officer Mepco Razia Sultana said that according to the results of July 31, 2024, NTDC Lahore is on top with 9 points after winning two matches in Pool A, while Mapco Multan is on the second place with 7 points after winning one match. Gujranwala is third with 6 points after winning one match and Punjab White's hockey team is in

fourth place after failing in 3 consecutive matches. In Pool B, LESCO won two matches with 8 points, Fesco won 2 matches out of 3 matches and placed second while ISCO played one match in which they had to face failure. Director General NAB Masood Alam watched the matches at the Astrotrough Hockey Stadium and the matches met the players/managers/coaches of the playing teams. Both the guests were also given shields by Mepco Sports Association.

Pak street child football team qualifies for Norway Cup prequarter finals

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan street child football team downed Norway's Charlottenlund club by 5-0 in the play-offs in Norway Cup and has moved in the pre-quarter finals.

The national street child football team scored 1 goal in the first half while 4 goals in the second half of the game.

For national street child football team, Kashif scored two goals while Obaidullah, Owais and Mohammad Isa scored one goal each.

The national street child football team will play the



pre-quarter final stage match on Friday.

It may be mentioned that the national team was the

undefeated team of the event in 2023.

Olympics | Feature: Sibling duos catch eyes in badminton doubles competition



Xinhua

PARIS: The excitement was palpable as Kerry Xu, a first-time Olympian in the US women's badminton doubles team, stepped onto the court at the Paris Olympics.

"With the music and all the hype, I was on the verge of tears," she recalled, describing the moment that she realized her Olympic dream alongside her best friend and twin sister, Annie Xu.

Kerry and Annie, both 24, have been inseparable since they started playing badminton at the age of eight. Their partnership has earned them multiple US National titles and impressive international performances.

"We are always on the same wavelength," Annie noted, highlighting their unique synergy on the court. "Whether we're excited or nervous, we feed off each other's energy."

The Paris Olympics also showcased other sibling duos in the badminton doubles event, including France's Toma

Junior Popov and his younger brother, Christo Popov.

Competing at the Porte de La Chapelle Arena, the Popov brothers, with Toma Junior's height and strength complementing Christo's left-handed finesse, demonstrated their deep family bond and shared passion for the sport.

The Popov brothers are not only teammates in doubles but also competitors in singles, with Toma Junior securing France's sole spot in the men's singles event.

"Playing doubles with my brother is an unforgettable experience," Christo said, emphasizing the unique dynamic of their partnership.

In their final group tournament on Tuesday, the Xu sisters faced off against Bulgaria's Gabriela and Stefani Stoeva, another sister pair known for their stronger connection on the court.

Despite their close relationship, Stefani acknowledged that they sometimes have frictions, even during

matches. However, the sisters always manage to reconnect and focus on their shared goals.

Gabriela shared her unexpected journey into badminton, which began after her initial refusal to try the sport. "I used to be a dancer," she laughed, recalling one day when she and their mom went to pick up Stefani from badminton and the coach asked her if she wanted to try badminton as well, to which she flatly refused. "And look where I am today, this was 23 years ago. So never say never."

The match between the Xu and the Stoeva sisters ended with the Bulgarian duo winning 21-18, 21-12, securing their place in the knockout stage.

Reflecting on the experience, Annie Xu commented on the unique feeling of playing against another pair of sisters. "We see each other as two peas in a pod, we felt that same sisterly dynamic on the court, they kind of reminds us of our own," she said.

China's Sheng wins 2nd Olympic gold with men's 10m air rifle victory

Xinhua

CHATEAUROUX, FRANCE: Chinese marksman Sheng Lihao claimed his second gold medal at the Paris Olympics when he triumphed in the men's

10m air rifle final on Monday.

The 19-year-old world record holder, who paired with Huang Yuting to win the 10m air rifle mixed team event on Saturday, set a new Olympic record with 252.2 points for his second title.

Sweden's Victor Lindgren, Croatia's Miran Maricic and India's Arjun Babuta battled fiercely for the silver medal, with Lindgren holding his nerve to finish second with 251.4 points. The bronze medal went to Maricic.



Sheng Lihao of China competes during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)



Lihao of China reacts during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao (C) of China reacts during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao of China competes during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)



Sheng Lihao of China competes during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)



Sheng Lihao (R) of China competes during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao of China competes during the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao (L) of China shakes hands with Miran Maricic of Croatia after the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao (C) of China, Victor Lindgren (L) of Sweden and Miran Maricic of Croatia celebrate after the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Sheng Lihao (L) of China shakes hands with Miran Maricic of Croatia after the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhao Dingzhe)



Gold medalist Sheng Lihao of China attends the awarding ceremony after the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)



Gold medalist Sheng Lihao (C) of China, silver medalist Victor Lindgren (L) of Sweden and bronze medalist Miran Maricic of Croatia take selfies during the awarding ceremony after the 10m air rifle men's final of shooting at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games in Chateauroux, France, on July 29, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairing a consultative meeting of Allied Parties regarding deteriorating situation in Palestine on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Nation to observe day of mourning today to show solidarity with Palestinians

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government allied parties on Thursday decided that the nation would observe a day of mourning across the country on August 2 (Friday) in solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters and to condemn the Israeli state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine.

A consultative meeting of the allied parties on the deteriorating situation in Palestine, in a joint declaration, also announced that the funeral prayer in absentia for Ismail Haniyeh, chief of Hamas Political Bureau, who was assassinated in Tehran on Wednesday, would be offered by the nation after Friday

prayers.

The meeting, which was presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, also decided to present a resolution in the Parliament to express full solidarity with the people of Palestine.

The participants of the meeting strongly condemned the ongoing Israeli brutalities in Palestine for last nine months, and expressed full solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters.

They also expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

They were of the view that the Hamas leader's assassination incident was a conspiracy to sabotage the efforts to get

stopped the ongoing Israeli atrocities on the Palestinians and establish peace in the region. Such incidents destroyed the world peace.

The prime minister termed the ongoing Israeli state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine a tragedy for the Muslim Ummah. The meeting demanded to ensure immediate provision of humanitarian aid to the unarmed Palestinians.

It was decided that Pakistan would continue to provide relief goods, besides taking effective measures for the medical assistance of the oppressed Palestinian brothers and sisters. It was further decided that the injured Palestinians would be brought to

Pakistan for treatment.

The meeting also decided that Palestinian medical students would be admitted to medical colleges in Pakistan with financial support to continue their education.

The participants were of the view that with the ongoing genocide and state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine, Israel was violating the resolutions of the United Nations, the decisions of the International Court of Justice and international laws, while the world community remained a silent spectator.

They asked the international community to adopt a clear stand against the Israeli brutalities, as otherwise it would be a question mark

against viability of international laws and institutions for future generations.

The meeting also urged the international community, including the United Nations to break their silence and immediately get stopped the ongoing genocide of the oppressed Palestinians by the Zionist forces and bring Israel to justice for war crimes.

Leaders and senior representatives of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League-Q, Pakistan Muslim League Zia and National Party attended the meeting.

Chairman Senate Gillani meets with UK Minister of State for South Asia Hamish Faulkner MP



Zeeshan Hassan

LONDON: Chairman Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani in a meeting with UK Minister of State for South Asia Hamish Faulkner MP at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) in London.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Dr. Muhammad Faisal, was also present. Chairman Senate congratulated Faulkner on his appointment as Minister. During the meeting, Chairman Senate emphasized the importance of a strong partnership to advance the interests of both countries. He highlighted the role of the Pakistani diaspora in promoting relations between the two countries. Chairman Senate said that now is the time to turn the broader dialogue between the two countries that started in 2011 into a broader strategic partnership. Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani reiterated Pakistan's determi-

nation to increase cooperation with Britain in the economic, defense and trade sectors and to achieve lasting peace and stability in South Asia in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and international laws. He also stressed the importance of resolving the Jammu and Kashmir conflict.

Expressing concern over the dire humanitarian situation in Gaza, the Chairman Senate strongly emphasized on the immediate ceasefire and resolution of the Palestinian conflict. Minister of State Faulkner thanked the Senate Chairman for his visit to FCDO, highlighting the importance of further promoting cooperation in various sectors including trade and investment, climate change, defence, education and socio-economic development. Reiterating his desire to work closely with the Government of Pakistan to advance the Pakistan-UK partnership, the Minister also recalled his stay in the 2010 Multan floods.

Asif says Faiz expressed dissatisfaction with Imran



Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Asif, in a separate interview with a private channel, revealed that former Army Chief General Faiz Hameed had expressed frustration with Imran Khan in 2019, suggesting that Khan take control of Punjab by June and the federal government by December.

Asif also claimed that Khan's belief that he will return to power in September or November is a delusion. He accused Khan of bringing

back terrorists, bankrupting the country, and writing letters to the IMF. Asif asserted that Khan only cares about himself and his power.

Asif further disclosed that in April 2019, General Hameed met with him at the home of General Bajwa's father-in-law and inquired about the extension of General Bajwa's term. Asif claimed that he told Hameed that they were fed up with Khan and suggested that he take control of Punjab by June and the federal government by December.

Ambassador Jemal Beker discusses financial sector collaboration with Finance Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Jemal Beker Abdula, Special Envoy, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on Thursday called on H. E. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb at his office.

During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest including bilateral cooperation in financial and banking sector in order to attract foreign direct investment from Pakistani side.

On the occasion, H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker briefed the Minister about home grown economic reforms undertaken by the Government of the FDR



Ethiopia to attract foreign direct investment, increase its productivity and boost job creation in the country.

The Ambassador said the Government of FDR Ethiopia had liberalized its economy allowing foreign investors to open businesses and take joint ventures which would eventually help build a robust

economy.

He informed the Minister that the Embassy of Ethiopia had mobilized, coordinated and organized two big business and trade delegation in last two years with participation of 75 and 80 members, respectively.

H. E. Ambassador Jemal Beker said the two trade dele-

gation to Ethiopia and one Ethiopian business delegation to Pakistan had given a major boost to the bilateral trade. However, the collaboration in financial and banking sector was crucial to further increase the volume of bilateral trade, he added.

He informed the minister about recent visit of the State Minister of Finance of Ethiopia to Pakistan and his meeting with his predecessor for prospective collaboration in the financial sector of the two countries.

On the other hand, the Minister welcomed the Ambassador at his office and appreciated the recently adopted second phase Home grown macroeconomic reform policy of the Government of Ethiopia under the leadership of H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed,

Prime Minister of Ethiopia that will address macroeconomic imbalance, attract FDI, increase domestic productivity and job creation.

The Minister said the Government of Pakistan had also initiated its home grown economic reforms stressing the need for learning from each other experiences in financial sector.

He assured full support of the Government of Pakistan for promoting bilateral trade between the two countries by enhancing collaboration economic areas particularly in financial sector.

The Minister called the Ethiopia Airlines a success story and a major instrument to connect Pakistan not only with Ethiopia but the entire Africa.

British journalist speaks up after being denied PTI founder's interview

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Charles Glass, a British journalist, who was denied permission to meet Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan at Adiala jail, approached the Ministry of Interior.

In a letter to the Ministry of Interior, Charles Glass maintained that he was not allowed to meet Imran Khan despite the court's order.

"I want to meet my friend (Imran Khan) at Adiala jail," the British journalist added.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Ministry of Interior cancelled the visa of Charles Glass who wanted to meet the PTI founder. The permission of the British journalist was denied and he was sent back to his country.

The sources said that Charles Glass also approached Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi through email and requested to be allowed to meet his friend, Imran Khan.

It is pertinent to mention here that the former prime minister has been behind bars since August 2023 and was later convicted in Toshakhana, CIPHER, and cases Iddat.

Imran Khan's convictions in all the cases has been suspended while he is still in the cases pertaining to May 9 riots.

Data regulation, cybersecurity topmost priorities: Minister Shaza Fatima

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said that data regulation and cybersecurity are the topmost priorities of the present government.

She said that Ministry of IT & Telecom is committed for the growth of IT sector, as taking IT exports up to \$25 billion is our target.

She was addressing Roundtable on Open Data Flows & Pakistan's Digital Economy held at Ministry of IT on Thursday.

Managing Director Asia Internet Coalition (AIC) Jeff Paine,

Google and Meta representatives attended the Roundtable session.

Convener Digital Pakistan Committee Tania Aidrus and Secretary IT Aisha Humera Chaudhry were also present.

Shaza Fatima said that on the directives of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, private sector is being fully supported and facilitated. She said that steps are being taken for transforming Pakistan

into Digital Economy.

Detailed discussion was held on data localisation, and the participants also gave recommendations regarding data hosting and data sensitivity. Authorities of Pakistan Software Houses Association (P@SHA), PTA, SECP, State Bank of Pakistan, NITB, and senior officers of the Ministry of IT also participated in the Roundtable session.



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