



UN envoy calls for urgent de-escalation amid heightening Mideast tensions

The top UN envoy in the Middle East Friday called for urgent action to address the "growing risk" of regional escalation following recent deadly attacks in Lebanon, the Syrian Golan Heights and Iran linked to the Israeli war in Gaza. Tor Wennesland, UN Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process, issued a statement.



Parts of Karachi to face gas suspension on tomorrow

The SSGC has announced that gas supply to some areas of Karachi will remain suspended for 12 hours on Sunday (August 4). The suspension of the gas supply is part of the utility's efforts to improve the low pressure of gas for domestic consumers as well as industrial and commercial sectors in the port city, said a SSGC's spokesperson in a statement on Friday. The company said that a 20-inch diameter and 12-kilometre long gas distribution pipeline will be connected with the system on Sunday.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Funeral prayer in absentia

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Parliamentarians offering funeral prayer in absentia of Shaheed Ismail Haniyeh on Friday.



Photo: Online

Funeral prayer in absentia for Ismail Haniyeh offered

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A day of mourning is being observed across the country today to express solidarity with the Palestinian brothers and sisters and to condemn the Israeli state-sponsored terrorism in Palestine.

The decision to observe the day of mourning was taken at a consultative meeting of the allied parties held with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair in Islamabad.

Meanwhile, the funeral prayer in absentia for Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, who was assassinated in Tehran, was

offered after Jumma prayer in the entire country.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Ministers including Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, high level government authorities offered "Ghaibana Namaz-e-Janaza" of Shaheed Ismail Haniyeh at the Parliament House.

Later, special prayers were offered for high ranks of the martyred Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh.

President Zardari grieves over rain-related losses, urges swift action to aid affected

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives and damage to properties caused by rain-related incidents across various regions of the country. In a statement issued by the President House, he conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives. The president underscored the urgency of accelerating relief efforts to aid those affected. President Zardari also called for the implementation of precautionary measures to safeguard lives and prevent further rain-related tragedies. He emphasized the impor-



importance of timely actions by the administration to ensure the effective drainage of rainwater and mitigate the risks of future incidents. In his prayers, Zardari sought divine peace for the departed souls and strength for the bereaved families to endure their loss.

Public fury to boil over if zionist state not held accountable for bloodshed in Palestine: PM warns

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday strongly condemning the unabated bloodshed of Palestinian people by the Israeli occupation forces and the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, warned that the lava of public anger would get out of control if the Zionist state was not held accountable.

"The Zionist state has crossed all the limits of crimes... The lava of public anger is boiling... If justice does not prevail and the Zionist state killing innocent people is not held to account, the lava of public fury will be in no one's control. It will risk the annihilation of world's peace and development," the prime minister said addressing the National Assembly after the House unanimously passed a resolution calling Haniyeh's killing a 'deliberate conspiracy to

sabotage' Gaza ceasefire efforts and condemning the ongoing Israeli "state oppression and brutality" in Gaza.

The prime minister, who earlier also highlighted the issue in the cabinet meeting chaired by him a while ago and coalition parties meeting on Thursday, said the whole Muslim world including the Pakistani nation was grieved over Ismail Haniyeh's killing.

Thanking the members from both sides of the aisle for evolving a consensus on the resolution, he said the parliament's voice would resonate the world over to shock the enemies of Pakistan and strengthen its friends.

He highlighted that the Palestinian people were suffering the worst bloodshed by the Zionist state for the last nine months which killed around 40,000 people including thousands of women and children.



"The cities have turned into cemeteries. The cries have taken over the joys and smiles of the playing children. Palestine is giving a deserted look," the prime minister said and questioned the inaction and helplessness of the world to end the

Israeli oppression.

He said not only the Muslims rather every peace-loving human being, regardless of faith or creed, was questioning the non-implementation of the international laws and human rights charters for which the world bodies including the United Nations were created.

The prime minister also recalled the recent killing of Ismail Haniyeh's three sons and four grandchildren and said the nation having rendered such huge sacrifices could not be defeated.

He also apprised the House of the government's decisions to observe a day of mourning on Friday, offering Haniyeh's funeral prayer in absentia, continued dispatch of humanitarian aid and medical aid for the Palestinians, and the enrollment of Palestinian medical students in Pakistan's medical colleges.

PTI's founding member shot dead in Lahore



Bureau Report

LAHORE: A founding member of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and owner of a private hospital was shot dead outside the mosque in Lahore.

According to the details, a target incident was reported in Lahore, in which some unidentified individuals arrived in a vehicle and shot dead Dr. Shahid Siddique, founder member of PTI and owner of a private hospital, after Friday prayers.

The police spokesperson disclosed that the PTI leader was targeted outside Khizra Mosque just after the Friday prayers in Valencia Town, while the unidentified

accused manage to flee the scene after murdering Shahid Siddique.

Officials stated that at the time of the shooting, his son and driver were also with him, but they remained safe, meanwhile, Dr. Siddique suffered with four bullets and died while being transporting to the nearest hospital.

The police have collected evidence from the scene and initiated investigation to the case, According to Punjab Police spokesperson, IG Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar has issued an order to arrest the accused immediately. It is worth mentioning here that PTI leader had a residence in Johar Town and Valencia Town, Lahore.

Khan has allowed Achakzai to talk to political parties 'sans conditions'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan has given the green signal to opposition alliance head Mahmood Khan Achakzai's proposal to talk to political parties without any preconditions in furthering the PTT's agenda for restoring democracy.

"Achakzai wanted to have talks with political parties and Khan Sb had allowed him for that as we have no issues with that. If you want to have negotiations and if you have a proposal then we will consider it," PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan said during his appearance on a private TV Channel.

"So far neither from political parties nor from any other side [establishment] a proposal has come. We say and want to ease the tensions," he said while appearing on the show via video link on Friday.

Achakzai, a Pashtun politician from Balochistan, is the leader of a six-party opposition alliance which includes the PTI.



He was asked about the PTI founder's dialogue offer to the army and the party's efforts to engage with like-minded political parties to continue their anti-government movement.

Gohar went on to add that the former prime minister has not set pre-conditions for talks. He reiterated that Khan allowed Achakzai to go with his options. "We think that talks should be conducted and doors should be open and there should be a good environment."

Miftah Ismail proposes method to reduce electricity bills

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Former Minister of Finance on Friday proposed a method to the government of Pakistan to reduce electricity bills by 20 to 25 percent in the country.

According to the details, the former Finance Minister, Miftah Ismail, stated that the government can reduce electricity bills by 20 to 25 percent by cutting the Public Sector Development Program (PSDP) budget by Rs 185 billion.

He suggests that instead of allocating Rs 1,150 billion to the PSDP, the government should allocate Rs 968 billion to the development program.

This reduction in PSDP



allocation, coupled with the removal of certain taxes from electricity bills, would decrease the burden on consumers by Rs 185 billion.

Ismail emphasized that if the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif authorizes this adjustment, it could quickly resolve the issue.

He added that reducing PSDP expenditure would not significantly impact development but would reduce corruption.

Shah urges Kashmiris to observe 5th August a black day

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Senior APHC leader and chairman Democratic Freedom Party Shabir Ahmed Shah has appealed to the people of Kashmir to observe 5th August as a black day to convey a strong message to the world that Kashmiris do not accept India's hegemony and its illegal control over the territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a message from Tihar Jail, the incarcerated leader, termed 5th August 2019 move by the Indian government as one of the worst precedents of Indian colonialism.

"Stripping Jammu and Kashmir region of its nationhood status and reducing its status to a union terri-



...tion was a humiliating attack on our identity", Shah said.

The move, he said, was also a brazen violation of the international law and the UN resolutions that strictly bar the occupying state from taking any unilateral decision.

Reiterating Kashmiris' pledge to take the ongoing struggle to its logical end, the DFP founder said that India must bear in mind the fact that its barbarism and brutal suppression cannot deter Kashmiris from pursuing their cherished goal of freedom.

He expressed the optimism that the day was not far off when India's imperialistic presence in Kashmir would come to an end and the region would be free from the Indian bondage.

AJK minister meets with social media activists for promote Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Information and Food, Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Sohail Azam, met with social media activists/vloggers in the context of Kashmir Exploitation Day and Pakistan Independence Day. In the meeting, Director Relations Raja Shahid Hussain, Director Information Amjad Hussain Minhas, Deputy Secretary Information Raja Imran Saleem, Social Media Activists Asif Raza Mir, Javed Iqbal Hashmi, Raja Amjad Khan, Basharat Mughal, Raja Aftab Siddique, Syed Nadeem Hussain Shah, Waqas Kazmi, Raja Shoab Mehmood and Faiza Gilani were present. The participants gave suggestions regarding creating a narrative and promoting it on social media. Secretary Information Sardar Sohail Azam said that the grip of social media has become very strong in the formation of public opinion, social media is the most powerful tool of the present age, which has made a deep impact in all spheres of life. We have highlighted the human rights violations committed by India in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir to the world through pen as well as social media. Secretary Information welcomed the views of social media activists and thanked them. Director of Public Relations Raja Shahid Hussain said that PID is starting various projects for capacity building of mediapersons in which digital media is focused.



Rain water

KARACHI: Rain water accumulated on MA Jinnah Road, after heavy rains during the third spell of monsoon.



Photo: Online

Sports necessary for mental and physical development of children along with education: Saima Ali



Javed Shiuket Vance

SAHIWAL: Deputy Commissioner Sahiwal Saima Ali has said that sports are necessary for healthy activities and the playgrounds should be settled for training and mental and physical development of children along with education. Deputy Commissioner Saima Ali said in Government High School Sahiwal. Expressed his views to the media while participating as a special guest in the final match of Azadi Hockey Cup 2024. CEO Education Muhammad Ikram and DEO Secondary Khadim Hussain Mohal were also present on this occasion. The final match of Azadi Hockey Cup 2024 was played between the teams of Tehsil Sahiwal and Tehsil Chichawatni. After an interesting competition, the team of Tehsil Chichawatni won on penalty shots. Appreciate the efforts And emphasized the need to continue such healthy activities among the students. On this occasion, Deputy Commissioner Saima Ali started the tree planting campaign by planting saplings in the school and urged the students to go ahead in tree planting and their Take care. Finally, ceo education Chaudhry Muhammad Ikram also gave certificates of appreciation to the coaches and match referees.

Protest demonstration held in Multan on martyrdom of Palestinian leader Ismail Haniya



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Under the leadership of Allama Syed Mazhar Saeed Kazmi, the head of Jamaat Ahlus Sunnat Pakistan, a protest demonstration was held at Shahi Eid Gah Khanewal Road, Multan, on the martyrdom of the great Palestinian leader Ismail Haniya, in which Allama Muhammad Farooq Khan Saeedi, Wasim Mumtaz Advocate, Professor Dr. Muhammad Apart from Siddique Khan Qadri, Khadim Hussain Saeedi, hundreds of protesters participated, Allama Syed Mazhar Saeed Kazmi addressed the protesters and said that the world of Islam has lost a great leader and lover of the Prophet (PBU) due to the martyrdom of the great Palestinian Hurriyat leader Ismail Haniya. After the martyrdom of 79 members of the family, his martyrdom is a great knowledge of the present day which history can never forget.

ICCI chief visits IMCB, I-8/3, to assess school's facilities

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Ahsan Bakhtawri, President of ICCI, visited IMCB, I-8/3, Islamabad accompanied by the Traders Association of I-8 Markaz and other ICCI members. The visit was also attended by members of the College Management Committee, including Mr. Junaid Abbasi, Mr. Abdul Hameed Abbasi, and Mr. Mateen Kakar.

The Principal Prof. Shahid Mehmood Abbasi briefed the guests on the ongoing renovation projects at the college, initiated under the special instructions of the Hon. Secretary (Education) Mr. Mohyudin Wani. FBISE adopted the institution for upgrading to address missing facilities, with the Hon. Chairman FBISE Mr. Junaid Akhlaq taking a personal interest in the matter. The Secretary FBISE Dr. Bashir Ahmed Khan, Mr. Sajid Abbasi, Director Affilia-



tion, and their team made the upgrades possible in a short timeframe.

The visitors toured the upgraded computer lab, library, infirmary, laboratories, smart classrooms, and playground. Mr. Bakhtawri, an alumnus of IMCB, F 8/4, praised Mr. Wani for his efforts to enhance govern-

ment schools, making them more appealing to parents and students.

Mr. Bakhtawri also pledged his support for the institution, including organizing monthly medical camps and sports competitions in collaboration with FDE through ICCI. He reminisced about sports

activities during his school years and commended Mr. Wani for revitalizing playgrounds and sports programs.

Mr. Bakhtawri also donated two ACs & a LCD for the computer lab. The Principal expressed gratitude to the esteemed guests for their visit.

Pakistan Ulema Council will hoist the Pakistani flag on every madrasa on Aug 14

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sahibzada Hamza Tahir-ul-Hassan City President of Pakistan Ulema Council Faisalabad



said this in his special statement and added that there are external conspiracies to weaken Pakistan, the whole nation is united and will continue its struggle for the security and stability of Pakistan. Those who want to weaken Pakistan will defeat this conspiracy, the sacrifices of our martyrs will bring color and the martyrs who sacrificed for the dear motherland are our foreheads and today the whole nation is united and united with its Pakistan Army and security agencies. They will defeat every conspiracy that they are doing to weaken Pakistan. Pakistan has been taken in the name of Islam and the flag of Islam will remain high and the whole nation is standing as a leaden wall in front of foreign conspiracies. Sahibzada Hamza Tahir ul Hassan. He further said that on August 14, Pakistan will hold a candlelight vigil.

Three-Day Scouts Open Group in Mingora to promote Pakistan's scouting

By Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: A Three-Day Scouts Open Group Conference organized in Mingora of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to promote the importance and development of scouting and to make Pakistan known internationally in the field of scouting. In the conference of Multan Scouts Open Group held in the school, the prominent position of KPK Member Provincial Assembly and Chief Commissioner of Pakistan Scouts distribution of souvenir certificates to the scouts leaders of Multan. Member Provincial Assembly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Akhtar Khan Chief Commissioner Pakistan Boys Scouts Association

Sarfraz Qamar Daha Director and social personality Haji Muhammad Ali besides more than two hundred group scouts leaders and members of the four provinces of Pakistan participated in the closing ceremony, local MPA Akhtar Khan. Welcoming the scouts of Sindh, Balochistan, Punjab, KPK Gilgit-Baltistan, Khairpur, Kohistan, said that they will represent Pakistan in a good position at the world scouts level for the development of our government scouts and solving their problems. Chief Minister KPK will give recommendations for a three-day conference and will implement these recommendations very soon. Organizing all open groups in Pakistan is to increase membership

and ensure participation in international level activities as scouting open groups are the only volunteers that keep the scouting sector alive after government level scouting for a long time. While Scouting inculcates leadership qualities in the new youth as well as teaching religion how to enjoy life and help others, we have tried to convince the participants from this conference that at the school level Such students should also be produced who can nurture the spirit of scouting.

Provincial Secretary KPK Iftikhar Ahmed Shamuza and senior scouts leaders from other provinces also addressed the event and said that today's successful conference will



make the name of scouts all over the world bright and through this conference a message will be sent that Pakistan too. He is performing his services in scouting in Asian countries and such open groups of Pakistan who could not participate in the conference will also encourage them for the development of the field. Attended and received a prom-

inent position, provincial minister Akhtar Khan and Chief Commissioner of Pakistan Sarfraz Qamar Daha distributed souvenirs and shields. On this occasion, the scouts also presented cultural traditional dances of the four provinces and went to the National Scouts Headquarters. Three lakh rupees was announced for the successful organization of

the conference. At the end of the ceremony, the leaders of the four provinces presented proposals and certificates were also distributed to the special guests by Swat Scouting Open Groups. Prof. Dr. Naik Akhtar, Director Youth Program, Senior Scouts Leader, Azhar Dogar, Ilyas Gujjar, Faisal and many others participated.



Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:46 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:07 pm
Isha 8:42 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

IESCO extends last date for payment of electricity bills

ISLAMABAD, AUG 02 (APP): The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) has announced 10 days extension in last date for payment of electricity bills on directives of the Prime Minister.

Now the consumers could pay their bills without paying any late payment surcharge, said Chief Engineer Commercial Arif Khan Sadduzai in a statement issued here Friday.

He said that those consumers who had already paid their bills for month of July with late payment surcharge (LPS), their LPS would be adjusted in the coming bills for August.

He said the IESCO Commercial Directorate has already issued necessary directives to all field formations, banks and post offices. The consumers could also contact their concern SDO offices, Revenue offices or IESCO customers Services Centres for necessary guidelines, Arif Khan said.

China experts discuss ways to boost Pakistan's economic growth at PIDE event

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level Chinese expert delegation participated in an event organized by the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) at the Marriott Hotel in Islamabad, marking a significant step towards enhancing economic collaboration between China and Pakistan. The event, titled "Pakistan Economy & Growth: Learning from Chinese Experience," aimed to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and best practices between the two nations.

In her introductory remarks, PIDE's Pro VC Dr. Durre Nayab emphasized the importance of such interactions in fostering growth and development. She highlighted the need for adopting strategies that have propelled China to economic success, tailored to Pakistan's unique context.

The event featured a detailed presentation by Dr. Nadeem ul Haque, Vice Chancellor of PIDE, who discussed the critical need for policy reforms, investment in human capital, and fostering an innovation-driven economy. Dr. Haque noted that the event aimed to explore lessons Pakistan can learn from

China's economic transformation, which provides insights into growth strategies, infrastructure development, industrialization, and policy reforms applicable to Pakistan.

Dr. Nadeem ul Haque highlighted that Pakistan's burgeoning market for electric vehicles (EVs) represents a significant growth area. With over 50% of households owning motorbikes and a growing demand for cars, the market for 2- and 4-wheel EVs is set to expand rapidly. Initiatives to promote EVs and public transport in Islamabad are already underway, positioning Pakistan strategically as a hub for EV production for both local and export markets.

Chinese lead experts have lauded the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) for its exceptional efforts in identifying and addressing the critical challenges facing Pakistan. Through rigorous empirical research and the engagement of top-tier specialists, PIDE is exploring innovative solutions to these issues. This esteemed national think tank is undeniably instrumental in charting a course for Pakistan's success and prosperity.

Representatives from all leading



think tanks from all provinces of Pakistan participated in the seminar and emphasized the importance of skill development, industrial linkages, and technology transfer between China and Pakistan. Indeed, it is a great initiative by PIDE aims to establish thought connectivity with China. We need more research collaborations and the sharing

of ideas. China has much to teach us about policies and reforms. CPEC-II should include a component for shared and collaborative research.

During the event, the Chinese delegation engaged in meaningful discussions with representatives from Pakistani academia and think tanks. The discussions covered a broad range of topics,

including economic policy, industrial development, and sustainable growth. The event provided a platform for the exchange of ideas, fostering a collaborative approach to addressing economic challenges.

They commended PIDE for organizing such a highly productive, significant, and timely event.

Gorgeous

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of dark clouds on the sky during pleasant weather in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pak-Qatar Asset Management wins the Employer of the Year Award 2024

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited (PQAMC), a leading Islamic asset management company and part of Pak-Qatar Group, Pakistan's premier and pioneer Islamic financial services group, has been awarded the Employer of the Year Award by securing 1st position in the Small National Category, presented by the prestigious Employers' Federation of Pakistan. This award recognizes PQAMC's continuous commitment towards offering employment, career



growth and learning opportunities to numerous individuals in the country. The award is presented to organizations that demonstrate exceptional standards in recruitment, inclusion and development.

On this occasion and

highlighting the important role of the HR team, Mr. Farhan Shaukat, Chief Executive Officer at PQAMC, commented, "We are immensely proud of this achievement, which reflects the tireless efforts of our HR

team in enhancing the recruitment practices and career growth among our workforce. This award not only demonstrates our dedicated recruitment efforts but also emphasizes on our ongoing commitment to developing talent and enhancing productivity."

PQAMC has set a benchmark in the financial sector for its proactive initiatives in nurturing talent and promoting a culture of inclusivity and growth. This award serves as evidence to the organization's relentless pursuit of excellence in human resource practices.

AKU alumna returns to Pakistan after 30 years as Dean

City Desk

KARACHI: Dr. Salimah Walani has been named the next Dean of the Aga Khan University School of Nursing and Midwifery, Pakistan, effective August 1, 2024, as announced by AKU Provost and Vice President, Academic, Dr. Tania Bubela. The appointment follows a thorough and competitive recruitment process, which was facilitated by an international search firm and overseen by a dedicated search committee.



Dr. Walani graduated from AKU-SONAM, Pakistan, in 1987, and subsequently served as a faculty member at the university for six years. She then pursued a Master of Science in Nursing from Simmons University, Boston, a Master of Public Health from Harvard University, and a PhD in Nursing Research and Theory Development from New York University.

Dr. Walani comes to AKU with extensive global health and academic experience. Her impressive career includes faculty positions in graduate programmes at Felician University in New Jersey, the University of Connecticut, Arizona State University, and Pace University in New York.

Qatar, Turkey, and Bangladesh Envoys praise Arif Balgamwala's Ticket Collection



City Desk

KARACHI: The research collection of extremely rare tickets by renowned businessman and philatelist Arif Balgamwala, who holds the 'Tamgha-i-Imtiaz' in Philately, has garnered significant acclaim at the ongoing "My Karachi" exhibition at the Expo Center. The event is being held under the auspices of the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI).

Arif Balgamwala explained to the visiting Consuls General that this is the first time such rare tickets have been showcased in Pakistan. His collection includes tickets that highlight the historical significance of medals awarded to the Pakistan Army during the 1965 war. Additionally, the collection raises awareness about various diseases, including polio and different types of cancer, through the medium of tickets.

The exhibition also features Pakistani currency notes with printing errors. These items, along with the rest of Balgamwala's research collection, offer valuable information and insights to the participants.

ADCG says dengue eradication possible with effective participation of public

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: 2nd Aug Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed has said that the complete eradication of dengue is possible with the effective participation and awareness of the public. District Coordinator IRMNCH Dr. Muhammad Saeed, officials from the Department of Education, Health and other departments participated in the meeting. Tell them that measures are being taken to eliminate dengue throughout the district, in this regard, all the departments are playing their special role, along with this, the departments are also running a campaign for public awareness. A detailed review of the functioning of all the departments was done, ADCG addressed the meeting on this occasion and said that in the current situation dengue mosquito is very dangerous and deadly, it is necessary that all the government, The semi-government and private institutions should play their full role to eradicate dengue and ensure all necessary measures, provide maximum awareness to the public about preventive measures to protect against dengue mosquito and ensure that Make people follow these steps.

Role of women in food systems transformation to achieve food nutrition, security

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speakers at a seminar on food systems and role of women on Friday underscored the crucial need to enable role of women in food systems' transformation to achieve food nutrition and security.

The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) in collaboration with the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) organised a seminar on "Role of Women in Food Systems Transformation to Achieve Food and Nutrition Security" at the PMAS Arid Agriculture University here.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Registrar and Assistant Professor, Dr. Nazia Rafique said saving our planet, lifting people out



of poverty, and advancing economic growth are crucial goals. Major issues faced by our society today include food security, climate change, and women empowerment, she added.

"Deputy Executive Director SDPI, Syed Qasim Ali Shah said according to the Agriculture Labour Force

Survey, 77 percent of women contribute to agriculture at the farm level.

"Women involved in farming often spend more than 50 hours per week working on the farm.

Despite their significant contribution, women receive 35 to 40 percent lower wages compared to men, and often

they are not paid at all when working on their own farms," he added.

Country Director, GAIN, Farah Naz said food systems encompass the cultivation, production, harvesting, and processing of food.

In Pakistan, 60 to 70 percent of calories come from staple crops like wheat, which

should not be the sole component of our diets.

Technical Director, NICB, Dr. Abida Raza said one-third of food is either lost or wasted. "There is a need to adopt environment-friendly processing technologies. Malnutrition is also caused by the high consumption of processed foods and the exclusion of natural fruits, vegetables, and dairy products like yogurt and milk from our daily diets," she said.

She added that food systems transformation should focus on innovation in nutrition to ensure food security. Universities should host multiple training sessions, encouraging student participation, as they can carry the message back to their communities.

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Country's Two Sinking Boats

During a cabinet meeting, the Prime Minister reiterated the achievements of his brother, Mian Nawaz Sharif, in controlling the electricity load shedding crisis that had plunged the country into darkness and strangled the economy. However, he failed to acknowledge that the same Independent Power Producers (IPPs) brought into Pakistan under shortsighted policies and highly favorable "buy or pay" terms have resulted in Rs. 2.3 trillion (\$14 to \$15 billion) of circular debt. This has strained the country's scarce financial resources and skyrocketed electricity prices, making them unaffordable for the ultra-poor and even the high middle class. The economy has been crippled, with domestic consumers groaning under hefty electricity bills, leading some to commit suicide due to their inability to pay.

The small and large-scale manufacturing sectors are struggling to survive in the open market due to exorbitant input costs, which are reflected in the prices of their products. Investors are shying away, knowing that products manufactured in Pakistan have little chance of capturing the market. This is due to the availability of the same products at much lower costs and better quality from many other countries that offer a sustainable supply of inputs, a stable political environment, repatriation of profits, consistent policies, and a better image of the country.

In his live speech, the Prime Minister pointed finger at two sectors: power sector and FBR, terming them "two boats" that, according to him, if kept afloat, will put the country on the path of progress and development. However, if they sink, the country will sink further into abysmal social, cultural, and economic downgrading, leading to total destruction.

Ironically, during his speech, the Prime Minister veered off-topic multiple times. He started by criticizing Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) for holding a sit-in against the unbearable hike in electricity prices. He then shifted to criticize PTI for its insensitivity and failure to add even a single watt to power generation during its ten-year government in KP and its less than four-year government in the center. He proceeded to praise himself and his government for their hard work, which he claimed was being impeded by the anti-state politics of the opposition. He also praised the military leadership for helping the government survive and condemned the PTI's founder for putting bilateral relations with the USA at great risk by waving the Cypher at a political rally. Later, he jumped to condemn a deplorable fatal attack by Israel in Iran that killed Hamas leader Haniyeh and promised to pass a resolution in the National Assembly.

However, he failed to provide any solution to the electricity price hike or to suggest improvements in the Federal Board of Revenue.

During my 40 years of government service, it became evident to me early on, that the performance of a civil servant is not measured by doing the right thing and observing the rule of law, but by doing the unlawful in a lawful manner. While other officers may not share my experience, this does not change the reality. In our country, vested interests are so deeply entrenched in every part and conduit of our system that we have lost sight of truth, objectivity and national interests. The harsh reality is that our system is intricately

woven to protect these vested interests, rewarding those who align themselves with the powers that be—whether politicians, civil or military bureaucrats, or their benefactors and beneficiaries among big businessmen, industrialists, real estate tycoons, bankers, or even smugglers.

For example, one of the biggest reasons for the electricity crisis is line losses and electricity theft. Pakistan produces approximately 130-140 billion kWh of electricity annually, with an average production cost of Rs. 10-12 per kWh. Out of this around 18-20% wasted due to line losses and 10-12% due to electricity theft. The financial impact of transmission and distribution losses is about Rs. 271-292 billion annually, while electricity theft costs an additional Rs. 157-169 billion. In total, the combined financial loss due to line losses and theft is approximately Rs. 428-461 billion annually (around \$2.56-2.79 billion), placing a substantial burden on the economy and contributing to the circular debt crisis in Pakistan's power sector.

We all know that neither domestic consumers nor small businesses or the industrial sector have the influence or means to steal this much electricity without the express consent of the government, the bureaucracy, or distribution companies. These entities benefit from weak and easily manipulatable electricity production and distribution systems and, therefore, have neither the desire nor the will to automate the system out of fear of losing control.

Fact is that there are distribution solutions available which if set in place could reduce the line losses and electricity theft

to zero such as the Advanced Metering Infrastructure (AMI). This system traces every watt of electricity from production to final consumers. It includes smart meters installed at generation stations, substations, and consumer premises to measure real-time electricity usage. Communication networks transmit this data to central databases, while data management systems collect, store, and analyze it. SCADA systems monitor and control electricity transmission and distribution, and Energy Management Systems (EMS) optimize grid operations by balancing supply and demand. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) provide spatial data for the grid, and Meter Data Management Systems (MDMS) ensure accurate data processing for billing and analysis. Implementing an AMI system in a country like Pakistan could cost between \$4.55 billion and \$7.25 billion allowing the country to comprehensive monitoring, management, and optimization of the electrical grid. The entire cost of installation of this system will be recouped within two years by saving the cost of inline losses and cost of the electricity theft.

However, our elite—including politicians, civil and military bureaucracy, and their benefactors and sponsors—have neither the will nor the desire to implement these solutions. Much like other systems that lack transparency and have weak command, control, and reporting mechanisms, they allow elites to divert the wealth generated by these systems to serve their vested interests. Yet, hope remains that one day civil society as a whole will rise to challenge and dismantle these entrenched practices.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Israeli aggression: 'unspeakable atrocities'

Palestinian children in the Gaza Strip have witnessed "unspeakable atrocities" following 300 days of Israeli attacks on the enclave, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees (UNRWA) has said. "The children of Gaza are going through unspeakable atrocities," UNRWA Commissioner-General Philippe Lazzarini said in a post on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

They "are living in trauma and shock due to 300 days of war, displacement, loss and pain."

The UN agency launched a learning program for the traumatized children in the war-torn enclave.

"This first step in a much longer road focuses on activities that will give children a refuge from the horrors they continue to live through," Lazzarini said

Children make up half the population in Gaza, or more than one million people.

They are "traumatized and shocked," said Scott Anderson, UNRWA's director in Gaza.

The Back to Learning programme was launched "to help children cope and just be children," he said. "It will give them safe spaces to play, learn, grow, reunite with old friends and make new ones."

The first phase will see an expansion of ongoing psychosocial support activities, focused on arts, music and sports, in addition to raising awareness on the risks of explosive ordnance.

The second phase will transition to include informal learning activities, with reading, writing and math lessons.

UNRWA plans to provide formal education for children in Gaza as soon as conditions permit.

"For this, Gaza urgently needs an immediate, durable ceasefire for the sake of children and their futures," Anderson said.

Also on Thursday, the UN humanitarian affairs office, OCHA, warned that ongoing hostilities, repeated evacuation orders, access impediments and other challenges continue to hamper efforts to deliver aid in Gaza.

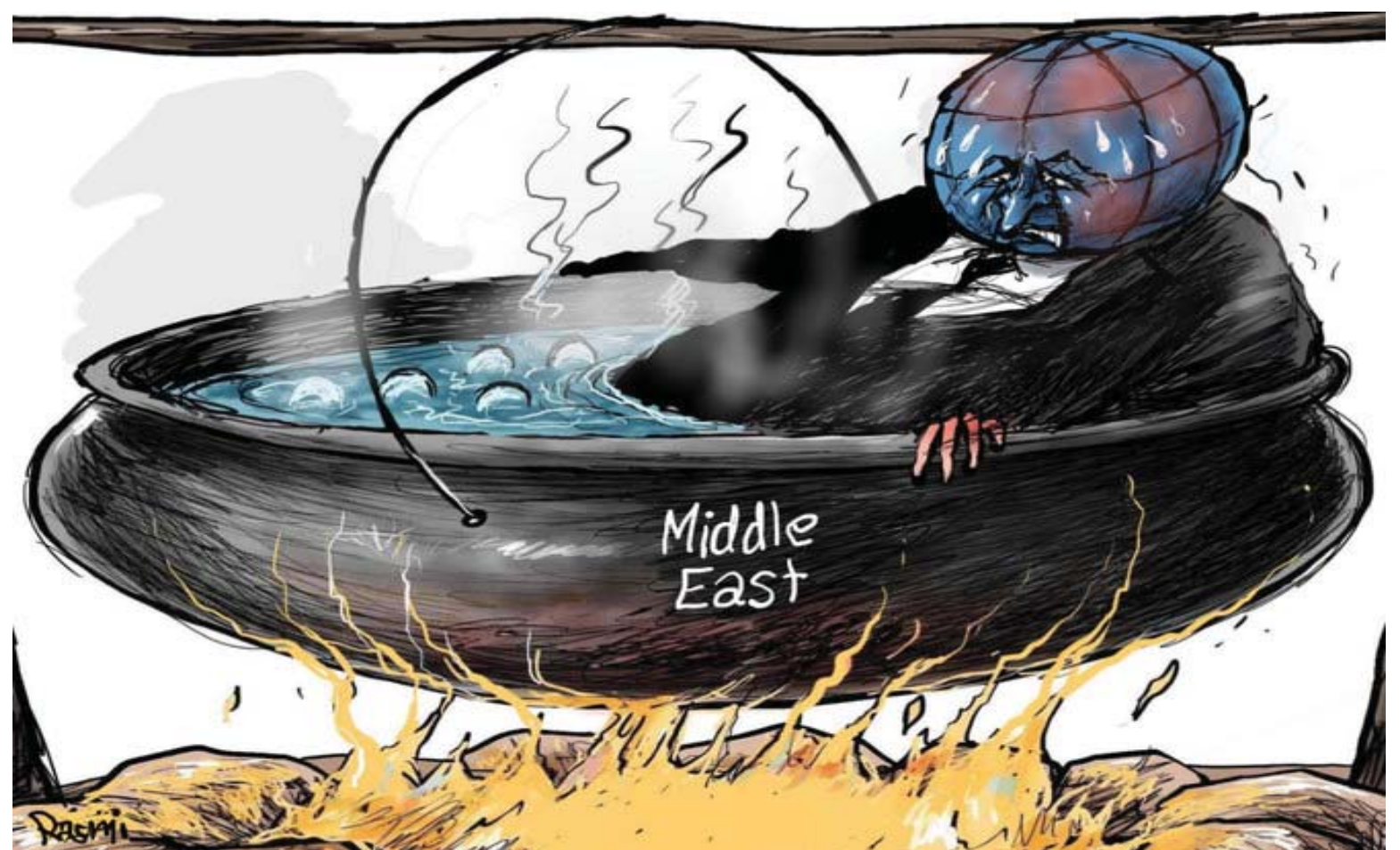
Additionally, only 12 of 18 bakeries in Gaza are operating, and those in middle areas only have enough fuel to last for a few days.

Despite the challenges, WFP was able to reach nearly 1.2 million people in July with food, wheat flour or hot meals, although rations were reduced and irregular.

Humanitarian partners also voiced concern over the destruction of the Canada reservoir in Rafah, which was blown up last week.

The reservoir has a holding capacity of some 3,000 cubic metres of water and until recently served thousands of displaced people sheltering in Rafah.

They warned, however, that its destruction could hinder the return of residents to Rafah and further push families to resort to drinking unsafe water, thus putting them at risk of dehydration, malnutrition and disease.



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

Cult Politics - III

To mitigate the risks associated with blind loyalty, societies must prioritize civic education and cultivate a sense of civic responsibility among their citizens. Educating citizens about democratic principles, rights, and responsibilities empowers them to engage thoughtfully in political processes, hold leaders accountable, and advocate for policies that serve the common good. Promoting active participation in civil society, including grassroots activism and community engagement, underscores the value of collective action over individual charisma.

Globally, the phenomenon of uncritical adherence to charismatic figures has shaped political landscapes to varying extents. North Korea serves as a stark example where blind loyalty to a personality—specifically the Kim dynasty—has been institutionalized over generations. The regime's propaganda apparatus cultivates a cult of personality around its leaders, portraying them as flawless figures deserving unquestioning devotion. This narrative suppresses dissent, stifles critical thinking, and maintains a controlled environment where dissenting voices are marginalized. The lack of critical assessment of leadership decisions has contributed to economic stagnation, isolationism, and human rights abuses, highlighting the dangers of unbridled personality cults. In Russia, under President Vladimir Putin's leadership, there has been a significant emphasis on projecting a strongman image. Putin's charisma and assertive policies have garnered substantial public support, often overshadowing critical

scrutiny of his government's actions. The consolidation of power and suppression of dissenting voices have created an environment where independent media is marginalized, civil society faces restrictions, and political opposition encounters significant obstacles. The narrative portraying Putin as a defender of Russian interests has cultivated a sense of patriotism that discourages questioning his policies, underscoring the challenges of maintaining democratic accountability in such contexts.

In the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte's administration has been marked by a strongman persona and populist appeal. Duterte's unconventional governing style, including controversial policies such as the war on drugs, has garnered strong support from segments of the population drawn to his decisive leadership approach. However, the administration's crackdown on dissent, attacks on press freedom, and

rhetoric dismissing criticism as unpatriotic have fostered an environment where critical thinking and independent analysis often take a back seat to loyalty to the leader's agenda.

In political realms, the relationship between leaders and their followers is often depicted as one of trust, representation, and service to the people. Yet, historical and contemporary examples reveal instances where politicians exploit their supporters' loyalty to advance personal agendas rather than genuinely serving public interests. One tactic employed by politicians to exploit such loyalty is through manipulating emotions and allegiance. Charismatic leaders frequently cultivate loyalty and devotion among their supporters by

appealing to identity, ideology, or personal charisma. This emotional connection can be potent, leading followers to overlook or rationalize inconsistencies, shortcomings, or unethical behavior in their leaders.

Politicians who prioritize self-interest over the common good may redirect resources—financial, legislative, or administrative—to projects or initiatives that primarily benefit themselves or their inner circle, neglecting the genuine needs of the populace. This diversion can manifest in various forms, including corrupt practices, nepotism, cronyism, and the allocation of public funds for personal gain or political favoritism. Such exploitation of followers' devotion undermines fundamental democratic principles like transparency, accountability, and the rule of law. By prioritizing personal gain, these leaders erode trust in institutions, weaken democratic norms, and foster a climate where political power becomes concentrated in the hands of a few, often at the expense of broader societal interests. Across Latin America, numerous political figures have faced accusations of exploiting the loyalty of their supporters to enrich themselves and their associates. Instances of corruption, misappropriation of public funds, and abuse of authority have eroded trust in democratic institutions and perpetuated cycles of inequality and poverty.

In Eastern Europe, populist leaders have ascended to power by tapping into popular discontent and rallying dedicated followers around nationalist or anti-establishment messages. Once in office, some of these leaders have concentrated authority, undermined independent institutions, and suppressed opposition to strengthen their control, often at the expense of democratic checks and balances.

To be continued

Electrifying Pakistan's mobility - Chinese way - II

Dr. Irfan Ahmad Gondal

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. Additionally, research and development partnerships can further enhance Pakistan's capabilities in battery technology. Two Chinese ventures stand out; NIO ET7: This model features a 150 kWh battery that offers a range of up to 1,044 kilometers (650 miles) on a single charge. This is one of the highest ranges available in the market today. Secondly CATL's LFP Battery: Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Limited (CATL), a leading Chinese battery manufacturer, has developed a lithium iron phosphate (LFP) battery capable of delivering a range of over 1,000 kilometers (621 miles) on a single charge. These advancements highlight China's leadership in EV battery technology, providing long-range solutions that are crucial for the widespread adoption of electric vehicles. While the opportunities are abundant, Pakistan must also address several challenges to fully realize the potential of electric mobility.

Building a comprehensive charging infrastructure requires substantial investment and planning. Pakistan needs to develop a strategic roadmap for the deployment of charging stations, ensuring coverage in urban centers, highways, and rural areas. Public-private partnerships and incentives for private investors can play a crucial role in accelerating infrastructure development.

Besides the infrastructure, a supportive policy and regulatory framework is essential for the growth of the electric vehicle industry. Pakistan should formulate policies that incentivize the production and adoption of electric vehicles. This includes tax incentives, subsidies, and reduced import duties on EV components.

Clear regulations for charging infrastructure, safety standards, and vehicle registration will provide a

conducive environment for the industry to thrive.

Raising public awareness about the benefits of electric vehicles is crucial for their widespread adoption.

Pakistan can launch awareness campaigns to educate consumers about the environmental and economic advantages of EVs. Collaborating with Chinese experts to showcase successful case studies and best practices can help build trust and confidence among potential buyers.

To establish a sustainable EV industry, Pakistan must focus on local manufacturing and skill development.

By investing in training programs and vocational education, the country can create a skilled workforce capable of supporting the production and maintenance of electric vehicles. Collaboration with Chinese institutions and companies can facilitate knowledge transfer and capacity building.

The road to electric mobility for Pakistan is paved with opportunities and challenges. By leveraging China's expertise in electric vehicle technology and capitalizing on the strategic proximity between the two nations, Pakistan can accelerate its transition to a sustainable and eco-friendly transportation system. Through technology transfer, joint ventures, and investment in infrastructure, Pakistan can build a robust EV industry that not only reduces its carbon footprint but also enhances energy security and economic growth.

As Pakistan embarks on this journey, it must address the challenges of infrastructure development, policy formulation, public awareness, and skill development. With the right strategies and collaborative efforts, Pakistan can position itself as a key player in the global electric vehicle market, driving towards a greener and more sustainable future.

Dr. Irfan Ahmad Gondal heads the Department of Mechanical Engineering Technology at National Skills University, Islamabad and talks on Renewable energy, Hydrogen energy, Electric vehicles and Climate Change. He's included in the list of top 2% scientists globally.

Ambassador of France to Pakistan meets the Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of France to Pakistan Mr. Nicolas Galey called on Minister of State for Finance & Revenue Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik at Finance Division today.

Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik provided an overview of Pakistan's economic progress, highlighting positive trends such as increased foreign exchange reserves, decreased inflation, and a robust stock market, all corroborated by recent ratings from international agencies. He outlined key reforms



underway, including privatization ini-

atives, energy sector advancements, and restructuring of state-owned enterprises (SOEs). The discussion also covered the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) digitization initiative, which is being implemented with support from McKinsey to enhance tax administration and compliance. The Minister of State highlighted the budget for 2024-25, focusing on strategies to expand the tax base by integrating untaxed segments and encouraging non-filers to comply. Significant projects in customs and inland revenue aimed at improving digitization and operational efficiency

were also discussed.

Ambassador Mr. Nicolas Galey expressed appreciation for the excellent reforms undertaken by Pakistan and offered technical support from France in areas of mutual interest. He recognized the progress made by the Government of Pakistan in stabilizing the economy and expressed confidence in the potential for further collaboration.

Looking ahead, both parties affirmed their commitment to deepen economic relations, exploring investment opportunities, and expanding bilateral trade.

Israel wants to expand the war and bring the plan of Greater Israel to completion

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Israel wants to expand the war and complete the project of Greater Israel, said the Emir of the Islamic Organization, Shajauddin Sheikh in a statement. This made it clear once again that Israel is not only bent on erasing Gaza, but is now pushing hard to drag other Muslim countries into the war, so as to destroy the peace of the whole world. The history of the illegitimate Zionist state

is probably that in order to fulfill its nefarious goals, it makes the Muslim countries involved in it. has full support from most of the countries and India, a clear example of which was seen when the war criminal Nitinyahoo received a warm welcome during his recent visit to the United States. Threatened to wipe out the Muslims living in Gaza West Bank and East Jerusalem, but repeated the announcement that the leaders of Hamas will be targeted in other countries as well. The rich organization, applauded dozens of times by the current Zionist representatives in Congress, asserted that after the tragedy of the target killing of Ismail Haniyeh in Iran, all Muslim countries must take practical measures against Israeli brutality and terrorism. The martyrdom of an important leader of the Muslim Ummah during an official visit is also a huge failure of the Iranian security, which requires a full and transparent investigation. Muslimah has been humiliated and humiliated, not just by calling Netanyahu a war criminal and observing the day of mourning for the martyrdom of Ismail Haniyeh, but by taking practical measures. Constituencies Action to Help Palestinian Muslims

Heavy rain, floods in Pakistan kill at least 30



Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Floods brought by torrential rains in Pakistan caused damage that killed at least 30 people this week, authorities said on Friday, as the second-largest city of Lahore was drenched in the most rainfall it has received in more than four decades.

The arrival of the monsoon season has sparked floods and landslides across South Asia in the past week, with at least 195 killed and almost 200 missing in one disaster in neighbouring India.

Rain pummelled Pakistan's north, causing floods, building collapses and heightening the risk of electrocution.

"The 44-year-old rainfall record was broken in Lahore once again," said utilities officials in the northeastern province of Punjab, where authorities tallied six deaths and warned that flash floods were expected in the south this week.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 12 children were among the two dozen people who died in the last three days of rains and floods in the north-western province. Anwar Shehzad, a spokesman for its disaster management agency, told Reuters.

Global organisations, such as the United Nations, see Pakistan as one of the countries most vulnerable to extreme weather and climate change, with floods wreaking havoc in 2022, killing more than 1,700 people and displacing millions.

Bangladesh bans Jamaat-e-Islami following deadly job protests

Bangladesh on Thursday banned right-wing Jamaat-e-Islami party, its student wing Islami Chhatra Shibir and other associate organisations under anti-terrorism law, Anadolu Agency reported citing an official order.

The ban will come into effect immediately, according to a gazette notification issued by the home ministry.

The government move came as the South Asian nation has been witnessing massive student protests since last month, which have led to the death of at least 150 people.

The move, decried as "unconstitutional and illegal" by the Jamaat-e-Islami, comes after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina blamed it and the main opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) for violence that forced her to impose curfew.

MOU

YUNNAN: Chairman Capital Office FPCCI Karim Aziz Malik presents the present Crest of FPCCI to representative of CCPIT, after the signing MoU between FPCCI and CCPIT Yunnan China.



U. S-Funded English Access Program opens doors to new opportunities for youth in Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: U. S. Deputy Chief of Mission Andrew Schofer and Consul General Lahore Kristin Hawkins welcomed 300 new students in Multan to the U. S. government-funded English Access Scholarship Program – an opportunity for youth ages 13-20 from disadvantaged communities to improve their English skills, learn about American culture and develop leadership abilities.

"The Access program is about far more than just gaining English-language proficiency. It develops future leaders by teaching leadership skills that extends beyond the classroom and into practical life," said US Deputy Chief Of Mission Andrew Schofer.

The English Access Scholarship Program is one of the highlights of the longstanding cooperation between the United States and Pakistan. Since 2004, more than 27,000 Pakistani students have graduated from the Access program,



including more than 6,000 in Punjab Province. The U. S. Mission is currently sponsoring English programs in three cities across Punjab – Faisalabad, Multan, and DG Khan – and looks forward to continuing its educational partnerships across Pakistan.

Deputy Chief Of Mission Andrew Schofer also attended the Pakistan-U. S. Alumni Network's South Punjab Chapter reunion, which included alumni from Multan, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalpur, DG Khan, and other districts. Since 1950 the U. S. government has fostered mutual understanding through educational exchanges, benefiting thousands of individuals.

More than 44,000 Pakistanis are alumni of these opportunities. Pakistani alumni of U. S. exchange programs play a significant role in the U. S.-Pakistan relationship, and many are leaders in business, education, government, and the non-profit sector, contributing positively to their communities

Prioritizing Global Health: Rejecting the Export of 'Kiddie Packs' to Sudan

Ashfaq Ahmad

In a significant move to safeguard public health, health advocates and organizations from 25 African countries have appealed to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif of Pakistan to reject proposals allowing the manufacture and export of 10-stick cigarette packs, colloquially known as "kiddie packs," to Sudan. This collective plea, undersigned by 54 organizations and 60 advocates, underscores a global concern for protecting children from the dangers of tobacco addiction.

The petition underscores that allowing the production of kiddie packs for export, while maintaining stricter regulations domestically, poses significant ethical and health challenges. It implies that it is acceptable to endanger the health of children in another region, which is a morally indefensible stance. The advocates emphasize that if a

product is deemed too dangerous for children in one country, it should be considered equally harmful for children everywhere.

The petition further describes that the African continent, particularly Sudan, faces numerous health and socio-economic challenges. The introduction of cheaper and more accessible cigarette packs would exacerbate these issues, increasing the risk of tobacco addiction, diseases, and premature deaths. The argument that these packs would not be sold in Pakistan but only in Africa is a clear example of prioritizing profit over public health. This could lead to a domino effect, where once kiddie packs are introduced in one country, they could proliferate across the continent, undermining efforts to control tobacco use and protect public health.

The petition also underscores the unacceptable nature of BAT's strategy to exploit regulatory differences across continents to market harmful prod-

ucts to vulnerable populations. It is imperative to recognize that permitting the manufacture of these kiddie packs, even if not sold domestically, contradicts the spirit of our public health goals and international obligations. Moreover, it is ethically questionable to facilitate a practice that endangers children in another part of the world, particularly in regions already struggling with numerous public health challenges.

The stance against weakening tobacco control laws is not limited to African advocates. The Health Services Academy (HSA) in Islamabad has also raised its voice, warning against the increased accessibility and affordability of smaller cigarette packs. During a recent press conference, HSA Vice Chancellor Prof Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan and other health experts highlighted the severe impact of tobacco on public health in Pakistan. They pointed out that tobacco contributes significantly to the burden

of chest and lung diseases, with higher rates of addiction and premature deaths among children being a primary concern.

Dr. Khan emphasized the global consensus against such measures, citing the petition from the coalition of African organizations and health advocates. Prof Dr. Matiur Rehman from HSA underscored the harmful effects of active, passive, second-hand, and third-hand smoking, stressing the need for stringent tobacco control measures. Dr. Madiha Siddiqui, a consultant pulmonologist from Indus Hospital, shared alarming statistics on the rising number of female patients with tobacco-related illnesses, highlighting the widespread impact of tobacco across different demographics.

In a letter addressed to the Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS, R&C), HSA highlights the stringent tobacco control regulations in Paki-

stan. Currently, these regulations prohibit the sale of cigarette packs containing fewer than 20 sticks. This measure aims to restrict minors' access to affordable cigarettes, aligning with global standards.

However, a leading cigarette manufacturer in Pakistan is actively lobbying to amend these regulations to allow for the production of 10-stick packs intended for export to Sudan. This proposed change contradicts Article 16 of the World Health Organization's Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), which emphasizes the prohibition of small cigarette packets to prevent access by minors.

The ethical implications of banning a harmful product domestically while exporting it to another country are stark. It suggests a double standard in health policies and a disregard for the well-being of children in other parts of the world. The HSA is known for its dedication to

public health through education, research, and policy advocacy and support the global stance against such practices.

In another related and alarming development, the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (NHS, R&C) has issued a proposed statutory notification, S. R. O. 1065(1) 2024, suggesting amendments to facilitate the export of kiddie packs to Sudan. Whereas civil society organizations in Pakistan working for tobacco control firmly believe that cigarette packs containing fewer than 20 cigarettes should not be manufactured in the country.

Moreover, Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC-Pak), a project of Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) and a coalition of more than 100 civil society organizations from four provinces of Pakistan working for tobacco control, appeals to the Prime Minister of Pakistan that

public health should transcend borders, and the protection of children from tobacco addiction and its related harms is a shared responsibility. Allowing the manufacture and export of kiddie packs not only undermines global tobacco control efforts but also sets a dangerous precedent. It is imperative that Pakistan, as a responsible member of the international community and a signatory to the WHO FCTC, upholds its commitment to protect public health and rejects any measures that could endanger children worldwide. The collective voice of health advocates from Africa and Pakistan should resonate with policymakers, urging them to prioritize health over profit and ensure a healthier future for all children.

The writer is a Research Associate at the Coalition for Tobacco Control Pakistan (CTC-Pak)/Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR). ashfaq@alternativemedia.org.pk

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,225.98	77,740.30
Day's High	Day's Low
78,434.16	77,926.53
Index Value	Change
10,086,561,059	+485.68
Percentage	Time
+0.62%	2 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,174.71	-108.65
Percentage	Time
-1.31%	2 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
39,536.07	-811.90
Percentage	Time
-2.01%	2 Aug, 1:05 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
35,909.70	-2,216.63
Percentage	Time
-5.81%	2 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	73.95	74.65
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	75.8	76.45
UK Pound Sterling	356.8	356.35
US Dollar	279.2	280.4

Desperate youths are fleeing the country: Mian Zahid Hussain

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Chairman of the FPCCI Advisory Board and National Business Group Pakistan, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum, and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, as well as former provincial minister Mian Zahid Hussain, said on Friday that the vast majority of people are considering themselves insecure due to inflation and electricity bills.

He said that the relationship between the people and the welfare state is constantly weakening, and the youth are eager to seek employment outside the country.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the country's population is increasing faster than its harmful effects on its economy.

Talking to the business community, the veteran business leader said that General Zia-ul-Haq was a controversial ruler. Still, there was no inflation during his time. All the

Deputy Commissioners used to be present in vegetable and fruit markets before dawn, and they used to take strict action against profiteering.

Similarly, he said, the magistrates did not allow the price of anything, including milk, curd, bakery, etc., to increase.

After Zia-ul-Haq, the inaction of the administration has crippled the country's economy and the people. Inflation has come down from 35 per cent to 12 per cent. Still, due to a lack of market control, the situation has reached the point where people are hopeless about their future.

The business leader said that there is no respect for Pakistani passports and Pakistanis in the world, and the system is being run through a begging bowl having huge holes of IPPs.

Mian Zahid Hussain said IPPs have stolen two thousand billion rupees from consumers this year. In comparison, they are ready to



steal 2800 billion rupees next year. He said the biggest shock to the country's economy in recent years was IPPs and obsolete electricity systems. At the same time, the

second major shock is the failure of government institutions, which consume 1200 billion rupees of public tax annually.

Also, tax evasion of 4 thousand billion rupees per year is evident. Due to these factors, the country's economy and reputation are being destroyed, and the government has reached the threshold of bankruptcy.

Mian Zahid Hussain said Pakistan would immediately go bankrupt if China demanded loans. Even in these circumstances, instead of decreasing, government expenses and national debts are continuously increasing, terrorist activities are going on in the country, and our soldiers are martyring themselves.

Mian Zahid Hussain said there is an urgent need for the government, the opposition and the elite to hold meaningful talks with the business community on a one-point agenda to fix the country's economy. Otherwise, there is no chance of improvement in the economy.

Shaking Hands

ISLAMABAD: Zafar Bakhtawari, former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Secretary General United Business Group (FPCCI, UBG) is meeting with President Asif Ali Zardari. Former Federal Minister for Commerce and Industry Dr. Ejaz Gohar is also present. It is noteworthy that a 40 member delegation of Business leaders including Presidents of different Chambers of the country held a meeting with the President over the IPPS issue under the leadership of Dr. Gohar Ejaz.



Enhancing Commercial Real Estate Development, CCP Approves Acquisition

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a merger in real estate sector. This approved transaction involves M/s Enaara Properties Rawalpindi Ltd acquiring 100% shareholding of M/s Sprint Services Rawalpindi Ltd under a Share Purchase Agreement.

Sprint Services Rawalpindi is a public unlisted company with the business footprint in developing commercial real estate. It owns a shopping mall in a prime location in Rawalpindi. Its major shareholders include M/s FYC (Pvt) Ltd, a private limited

company, and two individuals. Whereas, Enaara Properties is a holding company specifically established to execute this acquisition and to conduct business in real estate sector.

Under the Competition Act, 2010, the CCP is responsible for assessing mergers to prevent anti-competitive practices and ensure fair competition. The CCP's approval signifies that the merger does not pose a threat to competitive market conditions. By approving this merger, the CCP strives to ensure compliance with competition law while potentially fostering growth and stability in Pakistan's real estate sector.

Designate Ambassador to US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh visits ICCI

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's designated Ambassador to the United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh has said that America is the most attractive market for Pakistan and that we have to focus on it to explore more and more economic opportunities.

He said this while talking to Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry during his visit to the Chamber.

He said that in the capacity of a professional diplomat he thinks that his first and foremost responsibility will be to bring both the countries closer to each other.

Rizwan Saeed Sheikh added that he was totally convinced that Pakistan will successfully overcome its existing economic difficulties and that for this purpose he will also approach the Pakistani-Americans irrespective of their political affiliations to persuade them to explore the investment opportunities in Pakistan.

He described Pakistan's IT sector as the most significant and attractive area for the rest of the world because of being cost effective as compared to other countries.

On his part, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari noted that the United States is not only the largest export market of Pakistan but a leading investor also with more than



80 companies currently functioning and providing employment to hundreds of thousands of people.

He said that both the countries are resolute to foster the existing economic partnership to long term stability and mutual prosperity by upgrading their economic collaboration in alternative energy, agriculture, climate resilience and technology.

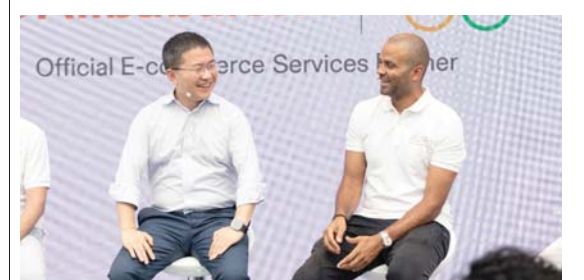
Former President ICCI and Secretary General United Business Group (FPCCI, UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari by terming the designate Ambassador as the most suitable professional for the job said that there is a dire need to focus on economic diplomacy

instead of the political diplomacy to pull the country out of the existing economic mess. He said that when we will set right our economic matters, the political matters will automatically be aligned it will yield positive results.

Former President ICCI Mian Shaukat Masood expressed the hope that the Ambassador would build all the things articulately and focus on enhancement of the country's exports to the United States.

Acting Vice President Ameer Hamza underlined the need for strengthening linkages between the Chambers of both the countries for the purpose.

Alibaba.com teams up with the IOC to Propel Athletes into Entrepreneurship



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: At a grand launch event in Paris today, Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, will announce it has become the first worldwide Olympic and Paralympic e-commerce partner to join the fourth edition of the Athlete365 Business Accelerator program ("Business Accelerator")—an IOC-led initiative to support athletes with dual-career and career-transition opportunities by empowering them to become entrepreneurs.

Kuo Zhang, President, Alibaba.com, said: "At Alibaba.com, we have witnessed many individuals without a business

background become highly successful SMEs using our services and tools. Athletes, known for their courage, determination, and positive mindset in sports, bring these same essential traits to the business world.

Kaveh Mehrabi, Director of the Athletes' Department at the International Olympic Committee, said: "We're excited to bring Alibaba.com on board as a partner for IOC's Athlete365 Business Accelerator program. By equipping athletes with the right training and skills through Alibaba.com's mentoring program and digital tools, together, we will give aspiring athlete and Olympian entrepreneurs the boost they need to start their own businesses.

Govt's commitment to strengthening economy commendable: Iftikhar Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Iftikhar Khan, the advisor to the president of the FPCCI, on Friday asked the State Bank of Pakistan to immediately lower interest rates due to the fact that headline inflation in July 2024 dropped to 11.09 percent, the lowest level since October 2021.

Because the fall is very beneficial to the economy, authorities need to be compelled to reduce interest rates. This would reduce the government's burden of debt payments and benefit businesses, he said.

Iftikhar Khan stated that interest payments on debt currently consume between seventy-five and eighty percent of income, with the majority of the debt being domestic and originating from commercial banks.

He expects the interest rate to drop further to 9-10% by year's end due to falling inflation.

He continued by saying that although oil and commodities prices are falling globally, the Middle East's circumstances will also have an effect on inflationary pressures. The current real interest rate is 8.4%, and it went positive in March 2024 following a 37-month hiatus. It has been increasing in positive territory ever since, which means the SBP should think about reducing the discount rate even further.

The business leader asserts that maintaining a high positive real interest rate poses significant threats to debt's sustainability. High real interest rates raise the cost of borrowing, which increases the government's debt servicing expenses.

He observed that high interest rates impose a strain on the state's budget, particularly in the case of a nation that is already deeply indebted, such as Pakistan.

He said that there has been a rise in inflation in

other domains such as food and drink, transportation expenses, and apparel and footwear.

He praised the administration for reaffirming its will to deal with the twin deficits, boost exports, and carry out tax, energy, and state-owned enterprise privatisation reforms. The International Monetary Fund is in charge of this agenda since its board will likely approve a \$7 billion, 37-month Extended Fund Facility for Pakistan during a meeting later this month.

Pakistan's current fiscal year requires it to repay \$24.8 billion in external debt. \$21.2 billion of the \$24.8 billion total comes from principal repayment, and the remaining \$3.6 billion comes from interest payments. According to the SBP governor, \$22 billion of the gross funding requirements are for principal repayment, and the remaining \$4 billion is for interest.

The government is encouraging the private

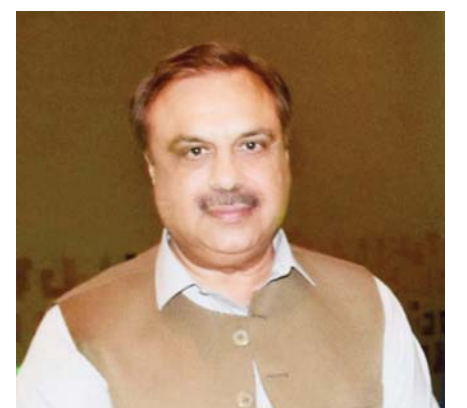
sector to take the initiative and participate in the nation's economy because it would not be involved in businesses run by the private sector.

He emphasised that the credit rating agency Fitch upgrading Pakistan's rating, the central bank lowering the policy rate, and increased global confidence as a result of the IMF's new lending programme all demonstrated the country's macro-economic stability.

Iftikhar Khan asserts that improving economic openness and privatising all public enterprises as soon as possible will reduce the amount of reliance on loans and save trillions of rupees.

The Ministry of Finance's most recent consolidated report shows that during the fiscal years 2021 and 2022, the country's state-run commercial companies suffered losses totaling an astounding Rs1.395 trillion.

He stated that there are opportunities for



economic growth; these prospects require the removal of barriers to help the nation realize its vast potential and become self-sufficient. Businesses and the government face challenges, but there are also opportunities for economic progress. Reports indicate that the authorities in Pakistan are now evaluating five bids submitted by Chinese enterprises to assist in raising funds through Panda bonds before making a final choice at this time, which is very encouraging, he said.

Serena Hotels Organised Tee to Triumph Golf Training Programme for Young Girls

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, in collaboration with Margalla Greens Golf Club, is pleased to announce the successful completion of the Tee to Triumph Golf Training Programme, which took place from 22 July to 1 August 2024. This esteemed initiative, aimed at nurturing young female talent, saw the participation of 25 girls aged between 7 and 18.

Throughout the programme, the participants benefited from comprehensive training led by experienced golf coaches, who provided expert instruction on both the fundamental and advanced aspects of the game. The sessions were designed to enhance the girls' skills, build confidence, and promote teamwork.

The event was honoured by



the presence of Ayesha Fauzan, a distinguished golfer and a source of inspiration for aspiring young

golfers. As the guest of honour, Ms Fauzan's participation added a significant motivational boost

to the programme, encouraging the young players to pursue their golfing dreams with dedication

and enthusiasm.

The Tee to Triumph programme culminated in a special closing ceremony where the girls were recognised for their achievements. Medals were awarded in various categories, celebrating the remarkable progress and skill development showcased by the participants. The final day of the programme provided an opportunity for the girls to demonstrate their newly acquired abilities and receive accolades for their hard work and commitment.

Serena Hotels and Margalla Greens Golf Club extend their sincere congratulations to all the participants and express their gratitude to Ayesha Fauzan for her invaluable support. This collaboration highlights a shared commitment to fostering young talent and advancing the sport of golf among young women.

Sports Gala inaugurated at Faisalabad Sports Complex for promotion of healthy activities



Sports Desk

FAISALABAD: The three-day Independence Day sports gala organized by FDA has started at the Sports Complex FDA City and was inaugurated by Director General FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhry. Directors Yasir Ejaz Chatta, Asma Mohsin, Junaid Hasan Manj, Sohail Maqsood Pannu, Manager Sports Complex Rizwana Kamal and other officers were present on this occasion. Director General FDA cut the inaugural ribbon and witnessed the matches between the players in the various courts. On this occasion, it was informed that in the sports gala, around 100 athletes belonging to the members of FDA Sports Complex and private clubs participated in swimming, lawn tennis, basketball, table tennis, squash, snooker and badminton, some of the sports of the gym.

Taking part in events competitions. DGFDA while appreciating the full participation and interest of private clubs and members in the sports gala said that the establishment of FDA City Sports Complex for the promotion of healthy activities is nothing less than a blessing. He said that in order to organize the Sports Gala every year, it will be given the status of a regular program in the future.

He said that this initiative will not only promote healthy activities but also make citizens aware of the excellent facilities of FDA City Sports Complex. He directed that the best arrangements of the three-day sports gala be maintained. The athletes participating in the competitions should be strongly encouraged.

Pakistani youth teams qualify for semi-finals in Norway Cup

KARACHI: Continuing their impressive journey in the ongoing Norway Cup 2024, the Pakistani Youth teams — U15 side from Better Future and U17 side from Muslim Hands FC — made their way into the semi-finals of their respective competitions.

In a breathtaking match, the Pakistan Street Child Football Team defeated Germany's JSG Leintal 3-2. The Green Shirts won the match by scoring a last-minute winner.

A brace was scored by Mohammad Kashif while Mohammad Junaid netted one goal as celebrations erupted among the Pakistani community in Norway following the victory.

The U17 team will now face Norway's Forde IL in the first semi-final which will be played later today.

On the other hand, the U15 team named Better Future Pakistan thumped Norway's Forde IL 13-0 in the quarter-final and made their way to the semi-final.

Mutual respect shines bright at Paris Olympics

Xinhua

PARIS: In a world sometimes divided by boundaries and differences, sports have a unique power to bring people together. This phenomenon is vividly displayed at the ongoing Paris Olympics, where athletes not only compete fiercely but also showcase deep mutual respect.

The table tennis mixed doubles competition concluded on Tuesday, with China's Wang Chuqin and Sun Yingsha taking gold over Ri Jong Sik and Kim Kum Yong of DPR Korea, while the bronze went to Lim Jong-hoon and Shin Yu-bin of South Korea.

After the award ceremony, the Chinese duo suggested a group selfie. Lim held up his phone to capture the moment that transcended the competition. It was a perfect portrayal of sports' capacity to unite, as the athletes' smiles illuminated the sentiment that triumphs and titles, though important, are not the only takeaways.



"I congratulated them when they were introduced as silver medalists," Lim told Korean media. The selfie has been repeatedly aired by South Korean broadcasters, with many commenta-

tors reflecting on the significance of this unusual moment of harmony.

In another inspiring moment, Azerbaijan's judo world champion Hidayet Heydarov showed profound respect after

winning a grueling final against the host nation's Joan-Benjamin Gaba.

Despite the exhausting 9:24 bout, Heydarov, in a touching gesture, kissed Gaba's forehead in tribute. "I was very happy when I won the gold medal. When you kiss the forehead of somebody, it shows respect to them," said Heydarov. "He did a very great contest with me. He did everything to win the gold medal, and I wanted to show my respect to him."

23-year-old Gaba echoed this admiration, stating, "I believed in myself. I have huge respect for my adversary in the final. He is excellent, and I'm going to get back to work so at the next Olympics, I can get the gold medal."

In the pool, a heartfelt moment was shared by Chinese swimmer Zhang Yufei and Rikako Ikee of Japan at the Hangzhou Asian Games. Ikee, who made a monumental comeback after being diagnosed with leukemia in 2019, achieved a bronze in the women's 50m butterfly at Hangzhou Asia.

When world's best meets world's only

Xinhua

PARIS: Amid the roaring applause at the South Paris Arena, 61-year-old paddler Ni Xia Lian waved to the crowd with tears of emotion glistening in her eyes, as if she had clinched an Olympic gold medal.

The Luxembourg veteran, however, had just been gracefully defeated in the women's singles round of 32 at the Paris Olympics by China's world No. 1 Sun Yingsha, thus concluding her remarkable Olympic journey in the French capital.

Yet Ni's mere presence on the grand stand, her sixth Olympic appearance, and being the oldest table tennis player at the Games, was a powerful inspiration to peers and fans around the globe.

After the 23-year-old Sun secured a decisive 4-0 victory, Ni warmly embraced her, visibly more jubilant than her counterpart, just like a seasoned elder showing admiration for a remarkable youth.

"Auntie Ni is a role model for

many of us younger Chinese table tennis players. She embodies a resilient athletic spirit," Sun said before their match, affectionately referring to the Shanghai-born Ni as "Auntie Ni," highlighting her respect and their close bond.

Just the day before, Sun, alongside her teammate Wang Chuqin, triumphed in the mixed doubles final, defeating the enigmatic DPR Korea duo and securing China's first-ever Olympic gold in the event—a redemption for China's loss at Tokyo 2020.

Ni, with her unique left-handed, long-pimpled technique, similar to DPRK female player Kim Kum Yong, actively served as a sparring partner for the Chinese pair, helping them prepare for the unfamiliar playing style.

"I'm very lucky to have this opportunity to give back to the Chinese team. I'm very happy I was able to help. I wish them all the best," the veteran stated.

Starting her table tennis journey at the age of seven in China, Ni made the national team in 1979

and captured two gold medals at the 1983 World Championships in Tokyo. Then she left the team in 1986 to study abroad and eventually settled in Luxembourg in 1991. She even carried the flag for Luxembourg during the Paris Olympics opening ceremony.

"I came to Luxembourg, but I never thought, I want to play in the Olympics. It was my goal at one time, but I never thought I could make it," Ni reminisced. "Luxembourg wanted me to coach, and I was 26 at that time. Then they realized I could play, and I too realized I could still play, so I just continued and after 10 years I was really good."

Ni's Olympic debut came at the 2000 Sydney Games, before Sun was even born. Their match at the Paris Games was humorously dubbed by many Chinese fans as a "grandmother-granddaughter duel."

"What a rare opportunity this was. She is the best in the world. Meeting and competing with her at the Olympics is such a heart-



warming moment. I feel so moved, so happy that I got this chance to play 'Shasha,'" Ni remarked, referring to Sun by her nickname.

"We are all inheritors of the

spirit of Chinese table tennis. While many [former Chinese players] are scattered around the world, our hearts are always together," she added.

Throughout the rivalry, Ni's eyes sparkled with excitement. She leaned in frustration over missed points and frequently smiled, thoroughly enjoying every moment

with vibrant energy.

"This is the Olympic spirit. Winning or losing is secondary; what matters is passionate love for a sport," commented a Chinese web user after watching their match.

"I know I am not the youngest, but I always say, 'Today I am younger than tomorrow. If you set your mind on something, age will not be an obstacle,'" she stated in an interview.

Like a young dreamer, Ni remains hopeful about the limitless possibilities ahead when it comes to considering if Paris would be her Olympic swansong. "If we make it, great; if not, then we gave it a shot," she said.

After her Wednesday's match, Ni's coach and husband, Tommy Danielsson, whispered words of encouragement and gave her a soft kiss.

"He told me I played well. He always uses these opportunities to give me a kiss," Ni shared with a shy smile, reminiscent of a young lady just falling in love.

Olympics | "Swimmer in stands" shocks world as "flying fish"

Xinhua

PARIS: Breaking through the waves reveals true gold. At the moment Chinese swimmer Pan Zhanle touched the wall and broke the record, all doubts, grievances, and frustrations vanished.

"Awesome! It feels incredible!" exclaimed Pan after roaring to China's first swimming gold in Paris with a world record time. His explosive speed left his competitors far behind. He finished nearly a full length ahead of the second-place finisher, veteran Australian swimmer Chalmers.

"I carried everyone's hopes. I felt it all right up to the moment I hit the water!" Pan said.

Just as Usain Bolt is the fastest man on the track, China's Pan has now become the fastest man in the water. The Chinese swimmer, who will celebrate his 20th birthday on August 4, gave



himself and the world a perfect gift: an Olympic gold medal and a dazzling new world record.

The freestyle specialist clocked 46.40 seconds in the men's 100m freestyle, improving his own world record by 0.4 seconds to secure the thrilling Olympic victory.

He did not become ecstatic over his personal achievement. "In fact, this gold medal doesn't

mean that much to me personally, because life has to go on. However, it is of great significance for Chinese swimming. This is the first time a Chinese swimmer has won gold in the men's 100m freestyle, which is a truly remarkable and joyous accomplishment."

The applause at the Paris La Defense Arena was thunderous when people saw Pan's result. Pan made history as China's first gold

medalist in the men's 100m freestyle at the Olympics and secured China's first swimming gold in Paris.

"I felt a great deal of pressure before the race because many of my teammates had not performed well and did not win the medals they were aiming for," Pan said. "Today, I did not expect to break the record. It's a perfect result and a big step for me and the Chinese swimming team."

Pan's old Weibo handle no longer suits him. He previously called himself "the swimmer in the stands," a name he chose during the 2021 World Short Course Championships in Abu Dhabi when he was always in the stands. From a former spectator to an Olympic champion, Pan achieved this transformation in just three years.

Pan began swimming at age four when he was selected into Wenzhou Youth Swimming School in Zhejiang province due

to his exceptional physical attributes. His training was supported by his grandfather, who took on the role of his dedicated transporter. "He would take me to training in the morning and pick me up afterward. Rain or shine, he was always there," Pan reminisced.

During those formative years, Pan's grandfather witnessed his tireless efforts. "He is hard-working and has the spirit of a fighter, which has helped him mature quickly," he observed.

While most coaches increase training intensity for under-performing swimmers, Wang Shi, Pan's coach during his youth, took a different approach. "I would punish him by not letting him get into the pool, and he would be very uncomfortable because he just loves swimming so much," Wang said.

Thanks to his dedication and hard work, Pan gained prominence in the swimming world at

just 10 years of age. At the 2014 Zhejiang Provincial Games, he won seven gold medals in five days, including four individual titles and three relay championships.

Advancing through his career to the provincial and national teams, Pan entered a new chapter in 2023. With the refinement of high-level competitions, his performance soared rapidly. In May, he set a new Asian record in the men's 100m freestyle at the Chinese National Championships with a time of 47.22 seconds and further improved his record at the Hangzhou Asian Games, winning the title in 46.97 seconds, just 0.11 seconds off the world record.

After the race, Pan Zhanle remarked: "Without breaking the world record, you can't call yourself a 'flying fish.' My world record is something to look forward to." At the Doha World Championships earlier this year, he fulfilled

his bold promise by establishing a new world record of 46.80 seconds in the lead-off leg of the men's 4x100m freestyle relay and helping China win the relay gold.

The 100m freestyle, often referred to as the "Battle of the Titans," saw its world record set by Brazilian swimmer Cesar Cielo at 46.91 seconds in 2009, a record that remained until Romanian swimmer David Popovici surpassed it at the 2022 European Championships with a time of 46.86 seconds.

"I was afraid my record might be broken," said Pan before the Paris Games. "Actually, it would even reduce my pressure."

During training in Shanghai in early July, a reporter asked him about the sacrifices he had made to achieve his goal. He jokingly replied: "The hardship is already behind me. If you keep dwelling on the past, you're not moving forward. I have a poor memory and always look ahead."

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chairs meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCOP) on Friday.



Photo: PID

CCOP approves 24 entities for privatization programme

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCOP) Friday approved 24 entities for the Privatization Programme (2024-29) and decided that the inclusion of other State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the privatization programme will be taken upon completion of the review by the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSEs) regarding categorization of Strategic/Essential SOEs.

After deliberating on the privatization policy guide-

lines, the CCOP considered 84 SOEs reflected in the federal footprint SOEs consolidated report FY2020-22 in detail in light of the SOE Act and Policy.

The meeting of the committee was held here with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in the chair.

The meeting was also attended by other members of the committee including the Finance Minister, Minister for Privatization, Minister for Commerce, Minister for Power, Minister for Indus-

tries & Production, Minister of State Finance and Revenue besides Federal Secretaries of various Ministries and Division.

The CCOP was presented with a phased Privatization Programme (2024-29) by the Ministry of Privatization, based on the recommendations of the PC Board, in terms of Section 5(b) of the Privatization Commission Ordinance 2000.

The CCOP recommended that priority should be accorded to reducing the federal footprint in commercial space and limiting it to the

strategic and essential SOEs only. CCOP emphasized that even SOEs making profits would also be considered for privatization.

The entities not categorized as strategic or essential will be placed before CCOP for the decision regarding their inclusion in the Programme.

The CCOP also considered the proposal for the transfer of shares of OGDCL lying with the Privatization Commission to sovereign wealth fund or Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division). It was decided that the status quo may be maintained for the time being.

In addition, the CCOP also granted approval for the budget estimates of the Commission for the fiscal year 2024-25, amounting to Rs. 8,169 million.

The chairman while concluding the meeting re-affirmed the government's commitment to implementation of the Privatization Programme with transparency, efficiency and whole of government approach.

He emphasized the importance of support and cooperation from all stakeholders in the implementation of the programme.

Pakistan Navy and Turkish Navy Conduct Naval Drills In North Arabian Sea



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Upon completion of goodwill visit to Pakistan by Turkish Navy Ship TCG KINALIADA, Pakistan Navy and Turkish Navy ships conducted coordinated patrol and naval drills in North Arabian Sea. The drills comprised of various naval operations including defence against Asymmetric Threats, Visit Board Search & Seizure (VBSS) and Air Defence Exercises aimed to further hone professional skills and enhance interoperability between the two navies.

Earlier, during the port call, delegation of Turkish Navy led by Turkish Navy Chief of Staff, Vice

Admiral Ibrahim Ozdem KOCER called on Pakistan Navy Field Commanders and other dignitaries to discuss matters of mutual interest and further avenues for collaboration. Turkish Navy delegation also laid floral wreath at Mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam to pay homage to the Founder of Pakistan.

Pakistan and Turkiye enjoy historically very warm and brotherly relations, and the visit of Turkish Navy ship to Pakistan is a manifestation of strong bilateral ties between both countries. The recent visit will further enhance the existing ties between the two nations in general and collaboration between the two navies in particular.

Minister Finance chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet at Finance Division today.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Petroleum Mr. Musadik Masood Malik, Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Minister for Economic

Affair Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema, Governor SBP, Chairman SECP, Dy Chairman Planning Commission, MD PASSCO, Chairman TCP, Federal Secretaries, and other senior officials of the relevant ministries.

The Cabinet Committee approved the proposal of Ministry of Industries & Production for import of 100,000 MT Urea.

This decision is aimed at ensuring sufficient supplies of urea in the market. This will also ensure stability of prices of fertiliser during the cropping season.

BISP-NADRA to explore mutual avenues for enhanced collaboration

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Rubina Khalid Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), met with the Chairman of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) Lieutenant General Muhammad Munir Afsar at the NADRA Headquarters today. The meeting focused on exploring mutual avenues for enhanced collaboration between the two organizations.

During the meeting, the Chairman of NADRA commended the impactful initiatives undertaken by BISP, particularly highlighting how BISP has significantly complemented NADRA's nationwide efforts in registering women and juveniles.

The key areas of cooperation agreed upon during the meeting include NADRA's full support for BISP's initiative to deploy Mobile Registration Vans (MRVs) in remote regions, especially in Balochistan and Sindh. This collaboration aims



to enhance the accessibility of BISP services in these areas.

Additionally, BISP and NADRA staff will be collocated in Union Councils where NADRA is implementing its pilot project, which aims to amplify BISP's outreach and ensure increased beneficiary registration.

Furthermore, NADRA will provide requisite support at BISP Provincial Offices to address issues faced by BISP beneficiaries related to NADRA services.

This enhanced cooperation will further streamline operations, reinforcing the collective mission of both organizations to serve the citizens more effectively.

Senator Rubina Khalid expressed her gratitude for NADRA's support and emphasized the importance of this collaboration in improving service delivery to the citizens. The Chairman of NADRA reiterated his commitment to working closely with BISP to achieve shared goals.

Ji Ameer attends the funeral prayer of Ismail Haniyeh in Doha

Spokesman Report

DOHA QATAR: Amer-e-Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rahman attended the funeral prayer of Palestinian Mujahid, Hamas leader and former Prime Minister of Palestine Ismail Haniyeh in Doha, capital of Qatar, and expressed his condolences to his sons and the top leadership of Hamas. Amer-e-Jamaat had left for Qatar last night to attend the funeral prayer, he will return to the country tonight and participate in the Rawalpindi dharna. Asif Luqman Qazi, Director of Foreign Affairs Department of Jamaat-e-Islami, is also with him.

Amir Jamaat also met the leadership of Ittehad Ulama Al-Islami in Doha. In meetings with the leadership of Hamas and other leaders, he prayed for the elevation of Ismail Haniyeh

and expressed his belief that the territory of Palestine and Al-Aqsa Mosque will be freed from Zionist domination, the sacrifices of the Palestinian Mujahideen and the people will pay off and Israel and his followers will be defeated. He also conveyed the sentiments of the Pakistani people and the leadership and workers of Jamaat-e-Islami to the Palestinian leaders and said that the hearts of millions of Pakistanis beat with the people of Palestine. Jamaat-e-Islami fully supports the resistance of Hamas to liberate Palestine. He said that Muslim rulers need to stand firm against Israel's brutality, the feelings of the Ummah are not being reflected. He strongly condemned the support of Israeli aggression and terrorism by the US and some Western countries and urged the international community to take practical measures to stop Israeli atrocities.

Mohsin Naqvi conducts surprise visits of Khanna Police Station

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi made a surprise visit to Khanna Police Station, where he found the investigating officers absent from their offices, while complainants were present.

The duty sub-inspector was unable to respond to any questions and the front desk room smelled of cigarettes. Around 1500 motorcycles and several cars were parked at



the police station.

Mohsin Naqvi expressed displeasure at the deplorable condition of the police station.

He visited the front desk, clerk's room, and lockup and inquired about the cases of the accused in the lockup. He ordered the release of four individuals who were arrested for parking their carts in the wrong place after completing necessary legal proceedings.

The interior minister emphasized that there is no justification for parking such a large number of motorcycles in the police station. The motorcycles belong to citizens and must be returned to them.

He directed the immediate hearing of complainants and warned that making them wait unnecessarily would not be tolerated.

Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, was also present on the occasion.

Pakistan Japan Friendship Festival showcases Pakistani cuisine, crafts in Ueno Park, Tokyo



Hinza Asif

TOKYO: The Pakistan Japan Friendship Festival at Ueno Park, Tokyo (1-4 August 2024) brought together vibrant displays of Pakistani culture, cuisine, and crafts.

The event, inaugurated by the

Ambassador of Pakistan, featured a stall from the Embassy of Pakistan showcasing Texpo 2024 and other initiatives. Performers from Pakistan entertained the crowd with captivating musical performances, while attendees savored delicious national flavors.