



Political sanity need of hour: Musadik

Dr. Musadik Malik, Federal Minister for Petroleum, emphasized the need for political sanity and tolerance to tackle Pakistan's pressing issues. In an interview with a private news channel on Wednesday, he highlighted the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) economic policies, which he claimed reduced inflation from 38% last year to 12%.



Weather conditions make K2 extremely dangerous and difficult to summit: Dr. Ngo Hai Son

Vietnam's First-Surgeon Climbs K2-Dr. Ngo Hai Son Treated Colleague Mountaineers During Highly Dangerous Expedition/Vietnam's first mountaineer climbed Pakistan's tallest as well as complex and extremely dangerous peak K-2 in a recent expedition. He hoisted the flag of his great country and allured more mountaineers and tourists of his country toward Pakistan. (Details on Page 7)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of GSM Association calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Ex-PM Khan to offer 'conditional apology' for May 9 events

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan has decided to offer a conditional apology for May events—the day when violent protests broke out following his arrest from the Islamabad High Court premises in a graft case.

"We are the victims of May 9 as more than 10,000 workers of our party were arrested and we were not allowed to contest elections," he told journalists in an informal conversation at the Adiala Jail on Wednesday.

"We want justice. If I was afraid of May 9 events then I wouldn't have called for a judicial commission to probe the riots."

In May, the military's spokesperson said that any dialogue with the PTI could happen only if it "earnestly apologises publicly in front of the nation", promises to adopt "constructive politics" and forgoes "politics of anarchy". This had come after the PTI's demand for talks with the establishment.

Inter-Services Public

Relations Director General Major General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry was also asked a similar question in a press conference earlier this week. He reiterated the military's previously stated position on the May 9 riots, saying there has been no change and there would be no change in the stance.

"If any of my party workers was found to be involved in the May 9 riots, I will expel them from the party and I will offer an apology if our crime was proven through CCTV footage," Khan said and reiterated that his party would not talk to the incumbent government.

"The army is a national institution and its security is our responsibility," the PTI chief said.

Khan claimed that the ISPR should examine its actions as the people have turned against the institution. "The people are on one side and they are on the other," he said, referring to the government and the military. The Swabi rally, according

Govt. allocates historic budget for growth of IT, Telecom sectors: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that the federal government had allocated a historic development budget in the current fiscal year, for the promotion of Information Technology and Telecom sectors.

He said the incumbent government was prioritizing steps for increasing country's IT export.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with a four-member delegation of GSM Association, led by its Asia Pacific head Julian Gorman, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for IT and Telecom Shaza Khawaja Fatima,

Chairman Pakistan Telecommunication Authority Major General (retired) Hafeezur Rehman and other relevant senior officials.

The prime minister observed that GSMA had significant and vital role in the digitization processes and welcomed holding of

Digital National Summit in Islamabad for the promotion of telecommunication and IT.

He said the mechanism processes for IT sector reforms and digitization was being implemented and the focus was made on common man's better access to Internet, digital infrastructure, E-Governance, professional training of youth in the digital skills and innovations, besides promotion of business in this

sector.

"Our vision envisaged access to smart phone by every individual, broadband Internet facility to every household and facility of QR Code for all businesses," the press release quoted the prime minister as saying.

The delegation apprised the prime minister of GSMA role throughout the world, including Pakistan, over promotion of telecom services and expressed its keen interest in enhancing cooperation with the government in IT and telecom sectors.

President for discouraging fake news, disinformation

City Desk
Islamabad: President Asif Ali Zardari has underlined the need for discouraging the spread of fake news and disinformation

by promoting a culture of fact-checking and verifying information. He said that the media should uphold the highest standards of journalism and play its role in promoting tolerance, unity and ethical values in the society.

The President expressed these views while talking to Chairman Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA), Mr Muhammad Saleem, who called on him and presented PEMRA Report 2021-23, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today.

Talking to Chairman PEMRA, the President said that modern communication technologies had opened up new challenges and the media needed to play a responsible and constructive role in shaping public opinion.

He said that a code of conduct regarding the spread of misinformation and propaganda should be observed.

The President stressed the need to improve the capacity of PEMRA by adopting modern tools and technologies and building a pool of talented human resources. He remarked that the media should also raise awareness about socio-economic issues, besides promoting a soft image of the country.

Chairman PEMRA briefed the President about the role and performance of PEMRA in the regulation and development of the media landscape of the country.

The President affirmed his support to further strengthen PEMRA.

Bangladesh revives ties with Pakistan after Hasina's ouster, appoints new envoy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh has decided to appoint an experienced High Commissioner to serve in Pakistan in a bid to revive its relations with Islamabad shortly after pro-India Sheikh Hasina was ousted from power.

Pakistan has accepted the nomination of Muhammad Iqbal Hossain as the new Bangladeshi High Commissioner to the country.

According to a press release issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Tuesday, the experienced diplomat Muhammad Iqbal Hossain will be replacing Ambassador Md. Ruhul Alam Siddique

as the Bangladeshi High Commissioner to Pakistan.

Hossain is expected to travel to Pakistan soon to take up his new role as the Bangladeshi High Commissioner.

Bangladesh's relations with Pakistan could be best described as formal under the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina Wajid, who leaned heavily towards India.

Pakistan's foreign office has expressed solidarity with the people of Bangladesh after Hasina's removal from power through massive agitation. The reports about Pakistan's expression of solidarity were given prominent coverage in the Bangladeshi press on Wednesday.

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister's meeting with the OIC Secretary General

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today met with OIC Secretary General Hissein Ibrahim Taha on the sidelines of the Open-Ended Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Executive Committee in Jeddah. They discussed the situation in Gaza and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

The Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister discussed with the Secretary General the ongoing genocide of the Palestinians and dire humanitarian situation in Gaza and the West Bank. They stressed the urgency of a ceasefire and unhindered supply of humanitarian assistance for the Palestinian people. The Deputy Prime Minister praised



the OIC for its efforts for peace in the Middle East and expressed full support of Pakistan for its initiatives.

The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister appreciated the historic role of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir and the Special Envoy for Jammu and Kashmir for supporting the legitimate right of self-determination of the Kashmiris as reflected in various OIC resolutions and statements.

Islamophobia, discrimination, and violence against Muslims were also discussed in the meeting. The Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister also lauded the appointment of OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy on Islamophobia and expressed the hope that the Special Envoy would steer the campaign to address this important issue.

Parliament converted a rule into law to stop floor crossing as envisaged in Constitution: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar said on Wednesday the Parliament was a supreme institution and through the Election (Amendment) Act it had converted a rule into a law to stop floor crossing as envisaged in the Constitution.

Addressing a press conference here, he said that Bilal Azhar Kayani of Muslim League (Nawaz) had presented the Election Act Amendment Bill in the National Assembly whereas Senator Talal Chaudhry moved it in the Senate.

The minister said that the bill was passed by the National Assembly and the Senate by majority votes and became an act.

He maintained that the



Constitution and law were clear regarding floor crossing and the new piece of legislation and further elaborate the matter.

According to the rules, he said an independent candidate had to join any party within three days after the announcement of official results of the elections. The minister posed a question if a member's party could be changed after submitting an affidavit for joining a party.

He said that two Supreme Court judges had raised important points and questioned that even after 15 days, the detailed decision was not issued by the majority judges in the bench.

Tarar said that the PTI-backed independents joined a party that did not exist in Parliament, how could that party get any seat as those seats were given on the principle of proportion.

Moreover, he said under proportional representation rules, it was binding on each political party to display its candidates lists for both women and minority seats.

He said one fails to fathom the logic and stance of the PTI leadership that they should not hold intra-party elections without any legal action or punishment on that account.

About the situation in Bangladesh, he said that the government and people of Pakistan stood with the people of that country. He appreciated the determination and resilience of the Bangladeshi people for standing up against the regime marred by corruption.

Pakistan advances anti-trafficking efforts with Launch of Phase II of Trafficking in Persons project

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Phase II of the Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Reporting Enhancement project, funded by the Government of Australia, will advance Pakistan's fight against human trafficking by strengthening the TIP hotline and referral system with upgraded infrastructure and a secure data management system.

Additionally, it will build the capacity of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) through targeted training, enhancing its ability to respond effectively to trafficking cases.

The project was launched in a signing ceremony with H. E. Mr. Neil Hawkins, the Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan, and Mr. Geir Tonstol, the ILO Country Director for Pakistan. The Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency was also present at the occasion.

Phase II of the project builds on the successes of the first phase, which saw the establishment

of a Management Information System (MIS) for TIP reporting and developed a framework for a TIP facilitation center. The current phase will further strengthen the capacities of the FIA and users of the TIP Reporting Portal.

Geir Tonstol, the ILO Country Director for Pakistan said, "The ILO is excited to embark on the second phase of support to FIA, which aims to further enhance the capacities of provincial and federal entities in reporting on trafficking in persons, one of the worst forms of forced labour. Through scalable initiatives, we seek to demonstrate the effectiveness of a comprehensive response to trafficking in persons utilizing the approach that looks at prevention, protection, prosecution participation and partnerships."

He added "The ILO emphasizes the importance of enabling conditions, such as freedom of association, to achieve a world free of unacceptable forms of work. By adopting an inte-

grated approach to fundamental labour rights, we empower workers to voice their concerns and advocate for their rights collectively."

Neil Hawkins, Australian High Commissioner to Pakistan said, "Australia's support against human trafficking and modern slavery in Pakistan is about safeguarding human rights, advancing development, and boosting its global standing. Partnering with the International Labour Organization and the Federal Investigation Agency, we're all working towards a stronger, more coordinated response to protect vulnerable Pakistanis."

The project addresses the need for a coordinated response to human trafficking and smuggling, aiming to improve domestic and cross-border efforts. By enhancing communication and collaboration amongst relevant authorities, the strengthened TIP reporting system will play a crucial role in preventing trafficking and protecting vulnerable populations.



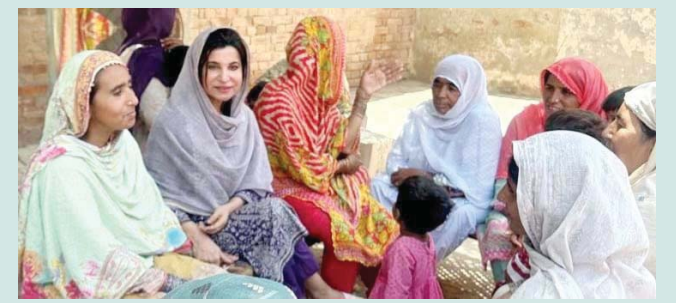
Strike

LAHORE: A view of shops closed during strike at Urdu bazaar against inflations and taxes, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Rubina Akhtar says Bangladesh proves people can fight for their rights



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Leader of Tehreek-e-Insaf, NA-148 Constituency candidate Dr. Rubina Akhtar has said The Overthrow of The Former Prime Minister Hasina Wajid's Government By the Youth in Bangladesh is a Matter of Concern. If the Present Government in Pakistan Does Not End the Inflation and Unemployment, Then it Should Remember its Fate. She Further Said that in Bangladesh, Hasina Wajid and her followers had inflicted so much injustice on the people that there was such a strong reaction that Mujibur Rehman today. Not only the statues are being broken, but her name is also being erased, the cruelty that Hasina Wajid did to her people and the opposition, today she is suffering the consequences, as a result of this, she has been removed from the chair of the Prime Minister and have been deported, Dr. Rubina Akhtar further said that our present Pakistan government should learn from the current situation in Bangladesh that when you are forcing the people, then they stand up for their rights on their own. He added that there is still time for the present government to provide relief to the people by getting rid of the problems they are facing. They are tired of hearing about the risk of default and the difficult economic conditions. They want a solution to the problems, otherwise the responsibility of the results will be on the government. What did

Customs Collectorate Multan Destroys foreign smuggled goods worth Rs 18 Crore Rupees

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Customs Collectorate Multan Destroyed Foreign smuggled goods worth Rs 18 crore Rupee

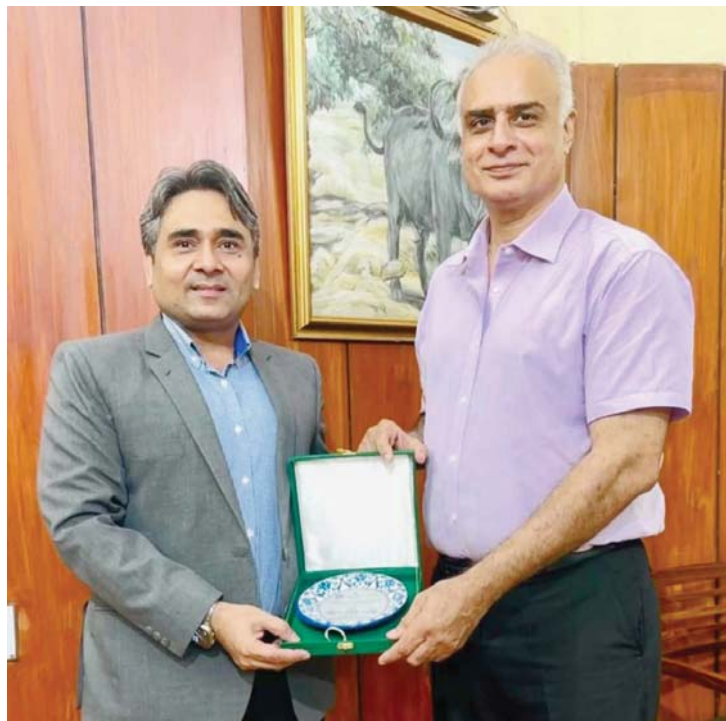


According to the details Customs Multan held a ceremony to destroy the smuggled goods on the decision of the goods seized in the last two years at the dry port, in which illegal smuggled goods Collector Customs Imran Sajjad Bukhari, Additional Director Customs Intelligence Dr. It was destroyed in the presence of Ali Mumtaz, Deputy Director of Customs Intelligence Umair Zahid, Deputy Collector of Customs Maryam Jamila, Assistant Collector of Customs Zaghham. The area magistrate was also present on this occasion who was informed about all the proceedings and the details of the goods. Collector of Customs Maryam Jamila gave a briefing. Collector of Customs Imran Sajjad Bukhari said that 907 bottles of smuggled foreign liquor worth crores of rupees, 1100 mobile phones, 1650 kg of salt along with drone cameras and other items were ordered illegally. Said that no one will be allowed to do illegal work.

Museum to be modernized for better service of the people: Tariq Ismail

Chaudhry Nabeel Shakir

BAHAWALPUR: Museums play an important role in the promotion and revival of education, research and culture. Bahawalpur Museum is an authentic platform of key importance as a research center that connects the evidence of history and civilization with the present and future. Is. These views were expressed by Director Public Relations Bahawalpur Muhammad Tariq Ismail along with a delegation on the occasion of a visit to Bahawalpur Museum. Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani and other administrators of Bahawalpur Museum were present on this occasion. Bahawalpur Public Relations Director Mohammad Tariq Ismail said that the artefacts in the Bahawalpur Museum are a blend of the magnificent culture of the Bahawalpur region and the story of the glorious past of Bahawalpur state is displayed here in an admirable manner. Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani while speaking on the occasion said



that several projects are under consideration to provide maximum facilities to the visitors coming to Bahawalpur Museum. He said that various steps are being taken to develop the Bahawalpur Museum on modern lines and digital technology and soon it will have a collection of artefacts, royal buggies, vehicles and steam locomotives based on the 250 years of glorious history of Bahawalpur state. Besides, the items used by former Nawabs of Bahawalpur will be displayed. Meanwhile, Director Public Relations Bahawalpur Muhammad Tariq Ismail and the delegation were visited by Bahawalpur Museum's various galleries on behalf of Bahawalpur Museum management and they were given a tour of Bahawalpur Museum. He was also informed about the academic, literary, cultural and research activities organized in the museum. Earlier, Director Bahawalpur Museum Muhammad Zubair Rabbani also presented a commemorative souvenir from Bahawalpur Museum to Director Public Relations Muhammad Tariq Ismail

Azadi Marathon will be biggest marathon in the history of Punjab province: Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that the upcoming Azadi Marathon will be biggest marathon in the history of Punjab province; he said this during his visit to Liberty Chowk where he inspected the arrangements for Azadi

Marathon and Family Fun Race here on Wednesday.

Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal was accompanied by Director Admin M Kaleem, Director Sports Yasmeen Akhtar, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed, Chief Sports Consultant Hafeez Bhatti and other officials during his visit.

During his visit, DG Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal reviewed the registration process of athletes at the registration booth established at the Liberty Chowk.

Talking on this occasion, Director General Sports Punjab Pervez Iqbal said that more than 5,000 male and female athletes are participating in



Azadi Marathon. "Apart from Punjab, the athletes from other provinces will also participate in the Azadi Marathon," he added.

Director General Sports Punjab

Pervez Iqbal further said that top standard arrangements are being made for Azadi Marathon and Family Fun Race scheduled to be organized August 11 at 7.00am.

"A large number of young girls and women will also participate in Azadi Marathon and Family Fun races," DG Sports Punjab elaborated.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES
Namaz Timings
Fajr 3:51 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:03 pm
Maghrib 7:02 pm
Isha 8:35 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

AIOU closes MS, MPhil, PhD admissions on Aug.20

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will close admissions to its BS (face to face), Ms/Phil and Ph. D programs for Autumn, 2024 Semester on August 20, says a press release.

According to the Directorate of Admissions, prospective students can access admission forms and prospectuses on the university's website, application process being entirely online. Admissions to BS and MBA programs will be based solely on merit, while candidates for MS, MPhil, and PhD programs must pass an entry test. The entry test schedule, set for August 22 to 24, has already been released. Admissions for Matric, FA, and I. Com programs will remain open until September 5. Additionally, the second phase of Autumn 2024 admissions will commence on September 1, including associate degree (BA/B. Com), Associate Degree in Education, 1.5, 2.5- and 4-years B. Ed., BS (ODL) programs, and Postgraduate Diploma programs.

Launch of Digital Nation Pakistan & Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy at the Digital Nation Summit Islamabad-2024

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Ministry of IT & Telecom and GSM Association (GSMA) successfully launched Digital Nation Pakistan Initiative in the Digital Nation Summit 2024 in Islamabad today. The event brought together key stakeholders to formally accelerate the process of digital transformation in Pakistan.

Digital Nation Summit is GSMA's initiative that facilitates the most important industry discussions, cultivates regional engagement and advances the impact of mobile technology for the development of sustainable and inclusive digital nations.

PTA and the MoIT&T also launched the implementation of Pakistan's first-ever of Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy. The strategy aims to empower women

in the digital space, bridging the gender gap and fostering equal opportunities in the tech industry.

Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister of Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives presided over the summit. In his remarks he emphasized on embracing digitalization and ensuring equal access for all as the government is laying the foundation for sustainable future. He commends the efforts of the PTA, GSMA and all stakeholders involved in this significant initiative.

During her address, Minister of State for IT&T, Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted the comprehensive measures being taken under the Prime Minister's direction to ensure digital transformation across the country.

Speaking at the occasion, Chairman PTA, Major General (R) Hafeez ur Rehman, said that



in collaboration with relevant stakeholders we will continue to drive sector for enhanced connectivity by offering advanced technologies and services to the people of Pakistan. Chairman PTA also presented the Pakistan's first-ever Digital Gender Inclusion Strategy for its implementation to the Government

at the Summit. In his address, Julian Gorman, Head of Asia Pacific, GSMA stated that Pakistan is on the cusp of a digital revolution, and events like the Digital Nation Summit are critical in shaping the future of the nation's ICT landscape. He ensured GSMA's commitment to supporting

Pakistan's digital ambitions and benefits of connectivity and technology for all.

Visiting Pakistan has been a wonderful experience," said Lara Dewar, Chief Marketing Officer, GSMA. She added, "Three pillars—inclusion, investment, and partnerships—are essential for a successful digital nation. I

encourage Pakistan to embrace these, leveraging the wisdom and will of everyone involved here today.

The Digital Nation Summit serves as a platform to highlight Pakistan's commitment to embracing digital technologies and fostering innovation in the ICT sector.

Golf Championship

Commander Karachi Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem inaugurates 28th CNS Open Golf Championship 2024 at Karachi Golf Club.



28th CNS open golf championship teed off at Karachi golf club

Sports Report

KARACHI: The Opening Ceremony and Media Brief of 28th Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship, scheduled from 08 Aug 24 to 11 Aug 24, was held at the picturesque Karachi Golf Club (KGC). Commander Karachi, Rear Admiral Muhammad Saleem graced the occasion as Chief Guest and inaugurated the championship. During the media brief, Patron Pakistan Navy Golf (South), Cdre Rashid Mahmood Sheikh apprised the audience on salients of championship and its conduct in various categories.

The Golf Championship will be played in Professionals, Senior Professionals, Junior Professionals, Amateurs, Seniors, Veterans, Ladies Juniors and Pro Amateurs categories. The media was also briefed on the awards and cash prizes in various categories of the championship. A special prize of "Toyota Fortuner" will be awarded to the player scoring 'Hole in One'.

Pakistan Navy instituted Chief of the Naval Staff Open Golf Championship at Karachi Golf Club (KGC) in 1995 to add a national level golf event in the calendar of Pakistan Golf Federation. Ever since, it has become a regular and major event of national golf circuit. Such events provide a unique opportunity to showcase Pakistan's positive image to world as a peace and sports loving nation and also promote healthy activities in society. The regular conduct of this event is the manifestation of PN's commitment towards promotion of golf at national and international levels.

The Opening Ceremony was attended by sponsors, golf players and media representatives.

Pakistanis released after 16 years in Oman

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Oman has deported 03 Pakistani prisoners who were imprisoned in Yemen in 2008 were released after 16 years and last night the three Pakistanis have reached their loved ones in their beloved homeland. Among these three prisoners, Saleem and Imam Bakhsh belong to Karachi whereas Khudad belongs to Gwadar. The three were fishermen by profession and they had illegally entered Yemen's territorial waters by using a launch to catch fish.

The release/deportation of these Pakistanis became possible due to close working relationship between FIA Link Office Muscat & International Organization for Migration (IOM), Yemen.

Gang involved in thefts busted, looted booty recovered

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Fatehjang Police on Wednesday busted a gang involved in thefts and arrested their three members besides recovered looted booty from their possession. According to Police spokesman, acting on a tip off, a police party raided at the den of the gang known as "Walandri gang" and arrested their three members identified as Hamza Sultan, Sajid Hussain Shah and Rizwan Qayyum alias Qalandri. Police recovered looted booty including cash, cell phone and motorcycle from their possession and further interrogation initiated.



Exhibition "Beautiful Pakistan" held at PAC

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Punjab Arts Council organized one day painting exhibition titled "Beautiful Pakistan" in connection with Independence Day Celebrations. Member Punjab assembly Malik Iftikhar Ahmad and Malik Mansoor Afsar was the chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony. Director of Arts Council Sajjad Hussain, Deputy Director Muhammad Shakoore, and Assistant Director Muhammad Suleman were also present with him on this occasion. The exhibition featured artworks by Khurram Shehbaz Babri, Muhammad Younas Romi, Tabinda Batool, Wajjha Raja, Samina Basharat, Laiba Khan, Nazhat Brear, Aiman Mehmood, Khadija Obaidullah, Kiran Fatima, Muhammad Waqas, Saima Aamir, and Shanze Noreen. Special guest, Malik Iftikhar Ahmed, said that Allah has



blessed Pakistan with attractive and beautiful natural landscapes, scenic valleys, historical heritage, and captivating cultural traditions. Fine arts present a beautiful and balanced picture of any society. While Malik Mansoor Afsar said that Pakistanis are not lacking in talent; they need

confidence. The special guest further stated that it is essential to continuously hold such art exhibitions. Director of Arts Council Sajjad Hussain said that artists always play a positive role in society. Our younger generation should also be inclined towards art. Parents need to focus on extra-

curricular activities alongside academic activities for their children. The platform of the Arts Council is always available for young artists. At the end of the ceremony, the special guest also distributed certificates of appreciation among the participants.

Chevening Scholarship Application Window Opens for Future Pakistani Changemakers

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission invites ambitious mid-career Pakistani professionals to apply for a fully funded one-year master's degree in the United Kingdom.

Applications to the UK's prestigious Chevening Scholarship have now opened. Tuition fees, living expenses and travel costs are all fully covered through the scholarship.

Applications are open until November 5, 2024. The scholarship is open to any Pakistani mid-career professional with at least 2 years of work experience. More information on eligibility requirements, and the appli-

cation portal, can be found on www.chevening.org.

Applications to the South Asian Journalism Programme, a short-term fellowship with the University of Westminster where mid-career professionals can hone their skills and meet leaders in UK journalism, are also open. They close on 5th October 2024. As are applications to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies fellowship, where fellows gain access to leading scholars focussing on the Islamic world while completing a 5-month research project. Applications close 5th November 2024.

Chevening scholars have gone on to become prominent leaders in Pakistan. Successful applicants will join a pool

of nearly 2,000 Pakistani Chevening alumni who are leaders across a range of sectors.

High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, encourages potential applicants:

"Chevening produces changemakers and leaders. It offers an exceptional academic opportunity and helps connect emerging leaders from across the globe. I urge those looking to elevate their careers to seize this opportunity and apply."

Amal Durrani, Chevening scholar 2022 and alumni of SOAS, University of London said:

The Chevening scholarship, a highly competitive opportunity, opens doors



to world-class education and brings incredible networking and career opportunities—making you stand out!

It made my dream of studying in the UK a reality and helped me secure a role at UNDP within three months of

returning. You should apply if you're passionate about making a difference and achieving your dreams.

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Historical youth revolution in Bengal

Bangladesh has a rich history and culture and has a Muslim majority population in the country. Bengal always remains under discussion regarding political changes and the system of government. They did not allow any hegemonic power to rule their country and adopted a zero-tolerance policy against them. People always believe in meritocracy, morality, social welfare, and high standards of democracy. Democracy is the true face of people, their voices, and their attitudes towards government. The government is elected by the people, and representatives run the affairs of public office. Masses are legitimate authorities and the supreme power of the country in a democracy.

In addition to it, a political party, the Muslim League, was founded in Dhaka and aims to raise awareness among Muslims in the sub-continent about the need to get freedom from British rules. Bengali was the first to join the struggle with the Muslim League (ML) to get basic rights. Even though the headquarters of ML were in Dhaka, they played a vital role in changing the fate of the Muslim community. They produced many political leaders, poets, and educationists.

Furthermore, Bengal came into existence in December 1971, which was the political failure of the country. Sheikh Mujiberehman was the founder of Bangladesh and announced a separate homeland for Bengalis. The ousted Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, was the daughter of Mujib, who was the founder of Bangladesh. The statute of the founder was dismantled by masses across the country. She left the country and stepped down as Prime Minister without a farewell speech. Protesters took over her official house.

Moreover, early in July, university

students launched nonviolent protests calling for the removal of civil sector employment quotas, of which one-third are held by the families of veterans of Bangladesh's 1971 war for independence from Pakistan. The campaigners had maintained that the current system needed to be changed since it was discriminatory. Even though much of their desire was granted, the demonstrations quickly expanded into a larger anti-government movement. According to Dr. Samina Luthfa, an assistant professor of sociology at the University of Dhaka, "it's not

[just] students anymore; it seems that people from all walks of life have joined the protest movement." She said this to the BBC last month. Conflicts erupted as the movement gained traction, and the disturbance claimed the lives of nearly 300 people. Protesters and the media in Bangladesh accused the police of the alarming death count. However, the government insisted that officers never be fired except in cases of self-defence or to defend state property. In addition to imposing a statewide curfew and regularly cutting off internet connections in some areas of the country, Ms. Hasina called the people protesting against her "terrorists" who were trying to "destabilise the nation." However, the civil disobedience movement that had gained traction did not appear to be slowing down. Additionally, there was rising concern that greater violence would result from a protracted standoff.

The protests went beyond students even after the top courts overturned the quotas because Ms. Hasina's government was the target of increased resentment

due to the harsh crackdown. Bangladesh had changed under her leadership, with new factories, bridges, roads, and even a metro train, but there were also claims of widespread corruption. As more than 25 million people were pulled out of poverty over a 20-year period, per capita income tripled in the last ten years, according to the World Bank. However, many believed that the rise mostly benefited individuals in the PM's Awami League. "We are seeing a great deal of corruption," Dr. Luthfa stated, notably among individuals who are connected to the governing party. For a very long period, corruption has existed without consequences.

Bangladesh's recent use of social media Talks concerning corruption charges against some of Ms. Hasina's former top officials—including a former army chief, an ex-police chief, senior tax officers, and state recruitment officials—have taken centre stage in recent months. Benazir Ahmed, a former police commander and perceived close supporter of Ms. Hasina, was the subject of an ongoing investigation by the anti-corruption commission for accumulating millions of dollars. He refuted the accusations. Ms. Hasina acknowledged that she had fired a home assistant for allegedly stealing \$34 million in state funds, despite her vow to combat corruption. Ordinary Bangladeshis, who had been struggling with the rising expense of life, were not immune to such stunning findings. Rights advocates noted that under Ms. Hasina's leadership, there had also been less room for democratic engagement; the government was charged with suppressing criticism, silencing the government's critics in the

media, and imprisoning or removing its most vocal opponents.

However, the clergy refuted the accusations. According to Dr. Luthfa, "the resentment towards the ruling party and the government has been building for a long time." "People are now expressing their rage. When they are left with no other options, people protest.

Last but not least, the student union rejected the army rule and demanded a fresh mandate for the government. They proposed to dissolve the Assembly and set up a caretaker government in Bangladesh. Professor Yunus has been nominated by the student union to run the caretaker set-up in Bengal. He accepted the proposal that was given by the protesters. The youth come up with an agenda for the prosperity and development of the country. The dialogue between protesters and other stakeholders has been successful regarding the interim government. Army Chief General Waqar ensured that they would hold a neutral investigation against the culprits. He committed to restoring peace in Bangladesh and was ready to work with an interim set-up. So, Bangladeshi people and students proved that they would not surrender their rights. They changed their political system democratically. Democracy believes that all matters should be resolved in a peaceful environment. In a democratic country, rulers are elected by the people, and the people have the right to change their heads of state. Unfortunately, the elected Prime Minister adopts an undemocratic attitude towards his people, which is unfair and immoral in democracy. The people are the supreme power and the real custodians of the country.

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Analysis

Ejaz Khan

Senate to establish grievance desk for unregistered universities

The Chairperson of the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training, Senator Bushra Anjum Butt on Wednesday directed the establishment of a grievance desk to assist students with document attestation and related queries.

She was chairing the Senate Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training convened at the Old PiPs Hall, Parliament Lodges.

The meeting was attended by Senators Irfan-Ul-Haq Siddiqui, Falaz Naz, Fawzia Arshad, Ashraf Ali Jatoti, Syed Masroor Ahsan, Kamran Murtaza, and Khalida Ateeb. Senior representatives from relevant departments were also present.

The committee extensively reviewed several issues, including unregistered universities, the attestation of degrees for affected students, teacher reinstatement, and the affiliation policy introduced by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The committee also addressed the issue of unregistered universities. Representatives from the University of New Port Institute of Communication and Economics Karachi, South Asian University Lahore, and Preston Institute of Management Science and Technology Karachi, Lahore, and their affiliated branches presented their cases. The committee discussed mechanisms for degree attestation to prevent fraudulent degrees, as previously outlined in meetings with the HEC.

For attestation, a commission will draft a checklist for universities, including student fee details, which may include bank statements from the University, admission forms, transcripts, and other required documents and approval from the Board of Governors.

Universities must provide an affidavit guaranteeing the accuracy of the data. Once the data is verified, the checklist will be cross-checked with student records before attestation is granted.

The chairperson instructed the HEC and universities to collaborate on drafting the data form and student checklist, and to update the committee in the next meeting. Additionally, she directed the establishment of a grievance desk to assist students with document attestation and related queries, and sought a follow-up on this initiative.

In discussing the implementation of the notification dated October 27, 2023, regarding the reinstatement of 137 lecturers by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, the committee provided an opportunity for all stakeholders to present their cases. Following a detailed review, it was determined that the October 27 notification for employee reinstatement was valid and should have been implemented fully. The chairperson emphasized the need for collaboration among institutions to avoid court delays. She noted that timely and collaborative action could prevent issues from escalating to the courts.



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

Bloodshed in Parachinar: A call for action - I

Ayesha Fatima

Parachinar, the capital of Kurram district kpk has again gone under global scrutiny following a catastrophic sectarian assault. In the first part of 29 July 2024, Shia community of Parachinar was exposed to a horrendous attack that has left hundreds dead and many more injured. The assault marks one of the deadliest episodes of partisan brutality in the area. The continues partisan struggles which have tormented Parachinar for decades is featured by this heartbreaking occasion. The district keeps on being a hotbed for Shia Sunni clashes notwithstanding different military operations like operation Sher-e-dill, Rah-e-raast, Rah-e-Nejat and so on nearby local civilians frequently enduring worst part of savagery.

Kurram agency is of very significance in FATA, both geographically and demographically. Parachinar is the capital of Kurram agency having a very porous border with Paktia, Logar and Nangarhar province of Afghanistan where the non-governmental organizations like Tehreek-e-Taliban Afghanistan (TTA) are more active. Ethnically Parachinar consists of a large population of Shias which mainly belong to Turi tribe. Due to sectarian affiliation, and being surrounded by Taliban it is often prone to violence.

The recent attack is believed to be erupted over the dispute of the ownership of a land that eventually engulfed the entire district. According to reports, the tribes involved in clash were Sunni and Shia. While individuals with IIRG training and ties to Iran are fighting alongside Shias, other Taliban members have sided with Sunnis. These 5 days conflict has so far resulted into 80 deaths and more than 188 injured. The main Parachinar-Peshawar

Road has been shut off by authorities which has resulted into the shortage of food and basic medical aid.

The history of violence and conflicts in Parachinar is not new. Since the time of independence Kurram agency has been suffering due to its being only agency with Shia majoritarianism on one hand and its proximity to Afghanistan on other hand. Even before independence in 1938 when sectarian riots emerged in Laknow of sub-continent. Then second worst incident happened in 1966 in Satta during the procession of Muharram. Following another event happened in 1977 over the dispute of the minaar of mosque. Sectarian violence increased in 1980s. Shia political consciousness rose in the wake of Iranian revolution in 1979 and this had consequences for all of Pakistan's Shia community. The Afghan soviet war 1979-1989 also had a significant effect during this time. Local sectarian tension was increased due to the influx of Afghan refugees which distorted the demographical balance of area and the presence of multiple armed groups.

Moreover, Iran's willingness to support Shia community around the world might also be interpreted. In past Iran has encouraged Shia militancy specifically in Pakistan. But these days Tehran's words and deed about the suffering of Pakistani Shias are frequently at odds. Many Shia activists are dissatisfied with Islamabad for what they see as a lack of Iranian pressure to defend Shia communities and put an end to sectarian bloodshed. Senior Shia clergy members and several Iranian analysts also criticized this position. Iran aggressively backed Shia organizations in Pakistan during the 1980s and 1990s, with Supreme Leader Khomeini issuing a fatwa to aid the Shia population in Pakistan. But by the mid-1990s, geopolitical factors had diminished Tehran's support, including the proxy conflict with Paki-

stan-backed Sunni Pashtun mujahideen in Afghanistan. A large-scale riot occurred when the Turi people who are mainly Shiite blocked Sunni mujahideen from entering Afghanistan. Together with local Sunnis, General Zia ul Haq permitted Afghan mujahideen to purge the Shiite. In 1988, Allama Arif Hussain al-Husaini, who was considered as the so far most influential person in Shia community and also known as Khomane-e-Pakistan for his activities which earned him the reputation of being the most prominent advocates of Shia Muslims of Pakistan, was killed. The Shiite blamed Zia for this as per article by Maryam Abou Zahab.

Following the 9/11 attack, US-led invasion of Afghanistan and the subsequent War on Terror had profound spillover effects on Pakistan. The 2001 attack of US on Afghanistan sought to destroy the Taliban government and eradicate Al-Qaida from the region. This led to a large-scale influx of Taliban and members of Al-Qaida to Pakistan's tribal areas specially Kurram District. With the arrival of these militants emerged a new wave of bloodshed and extremism. In response to this influx, Pakistan Tehreek e Taliban (TTP) emerged as a significant militant force in Pakistan. TTP aimed to overthrow Pakistan's government and establish the government of Taliban with a strict interpretation of Sharia. Activities of the group swiftly extended to Kurram district and other parts of Pakistan. Kurram district's strategic location combined with its rough terrain made it an oasis for a variety of militant factions. To create bases and enlist local militants, the TTP and its interlinked groups took advantage of region's porous borders and tribal dynamics. These groups launched attacks against rival sectarian groups and Pakistani security personnel from Kurram.

To be continued

Sheikh Hasina: The Rise and Fall of a Political Titan

Sheikh Hasina, the daughter of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Bangladesh's founding leader, has been a towering figure in the nation's political scene for decades. Her journey in politics began in the aftermath of the tragic assassination of her father and most of her family members in 1975. Following years of exile, she returned to Bangladesh in 1981 and took up the mantle of leadership as president of the Awami League, the party established by her father.

Her first significant political triumph came in 1996 when she led the Awami League to victory in the general elections, thus becoming Bangladesh's Prime Minister for the first time. Her administration focused on improving the country's economic performance and infrastructure, but her tenure was also marred by political instability and allegations of corruption.

After losing the 2001 elections, Hasina made a political comeback in 2009, following a period of military-backed caretaker governance. From 2009 onwards, her leadership was characterized by remarkable economic growth and ambitious development initiatives, including major infrastructure projects and social programs. Her government sought to enhance relationships with neighboring countries and attract foreign investment.

Hasina's Awami League secured wins in subsequent elections in 2014 and 2018, though these victories were overshadowed by allegations of electoral fraud and repression of opposition parties. Despite these criticisms, her government retained power by capitalizing on economic successes and

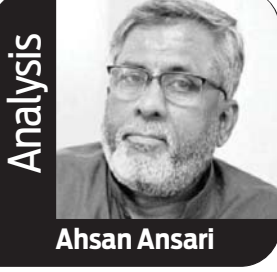
implementing policies focused on poverty reduction.

The downfall of Sheikh Hasina's government in 2024 was triggered by widespread unrest and growing dissatisfaction with her administration. In June 2024, protests erupted over a controversial public sector job quota system, quickly evolving into a larger movement against Hasina's perceived authoritarianism and alleged corruption.

These protests were led mainly by students and youth groups, expressing deep frustration with government policies and a lack of democratic freedoms. As violence spread and clashes with government forces intensified, the situation became increasingly untenable. The rising death toll drew significant international attention and demands for Hasina's resignation.

On August 5, 2024, the Bangladeshi military, led by Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman, intervened by announcing the formation of an interim government. This military decision to side with the protesters marked a critical turning point, resulting in Hasina's resignation and eventual departure from the country.

Sheikh Hasina's political career is a testament to her resilience and her ability to navigate Bangladesh's complex political landscape. Her rise to power was marked by substantial achievements in economic growth and social development. However, her fall highlighted the difficulties of maintaining democratic governance amid accusations of authoritarianism and electoral malpractice. The events leading to her resignation underscore the volatile nature of Bangladeshi politics and the enduring demand for democratic reforms.



Analysis

Ahsan Ansari

ISSI holds Roundtable on 'Pakistan-ASEAN: A Growing Partnership' on eve of ASEAN Day

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The China-Pakistan Study Centre (CPSC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a round table titled "Pakistan and ASEAN: A Growing Partnership," as part of commemoration of ASEAN Day (8 August) that deliberated upon various facets of the multilateral partnerships among the member states.

The distinguished speakers included Heads of Missions of ASEAN member states in Islamabad and Pakistan's Heads of Missions in ASEAN capitals. Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific), MoFA, was the Chief Guest. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI, made remarks at the event, whereas Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director CPSC, moderated the session. Prominent civil servants, diplomats, academicians, civil society members, and media personnel attended the event, a news release said.

Speaking as the chief guest, Additional Secretary (Asia Pacific) Ambassador Imran Ahmed Siddiqui highlighted the significant achievements of ASEAN over the past 57 years, emphasizing the successful cooperation among member states towards the shared vision of "One Vision, One Identity, One Community."

He also underscored the potential for Pakistan to enhance collaboration with ASEAN in trade, economic, political, security, and social and cultural domains, drawing also on shared heritage such as the Gandhara Civilization and Islamic culture. Future avenues for enhanced cooperation were identified including tourism, climate change, counter-terrorism, combating Islamophobia, and cyber security.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized the growing partnership between Pakistan and ASEAN, highlighting the collaborative efforts with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the ASEAN Committee in Islam-



abad (ACI).

He acknowledged the leadership of ACI, which is presently chaired by H. E. Col. (Retd) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah Bin Pengiran Haji Ahmad and the valuable contributions of ASEAN Heads of Missions. Ambassador Mahmood underscored ASEAN's global salience, noting its economic prowess with a GDP of \$3.67 trillion and its strategic relevance in maintaining regional stability and economic integration, including through initiatives like the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

Ambassador Mahmood elaborated on Pakistan's historical engagement with ASEAN, being the oldest Sectoral Dialogue Partner.

He highlighted the expanding scope of collaboration, including trade, counter-terrorism, security, and people-to-people exchanges, with bilateral trade

reaching nearly \$11 billion in 2022. Emphasizing the need for accelerated progress, he pointed to the importance of implementing Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) and exploring linkages with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

He also stressed the importance of moving towards graduating the Sectoral Dialogue to Full Dialogue Partnership. Lastly, Ambassador Mahmood reiterated ISSI's commitment to reinforcing efforts for strengthening Pakistan-ASEAN relations through ongoing ISSI-ACI dialogue, the 'ASEAN Corner', and ISSI-ASEAN think-tank network, fostering deeper ties for mutual prosperity and regional stability.

Col. (Retd) Pengiran Haji Kamal Bashah Bin Pengiran Haji Ahmad, Chairman ACI and High Commissioner of Brunei Darussalam, highlighted the bloc's commitment to stability, mutual

cooperation, diversity, and inclusivity, which have been instrumental in fostering a resilient region. Ambassador Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, High Commissioner of Malaysia, emphasized the robust bilateral trade that has reached \$1.5 billion in 2023-24.

In her remarks, Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, the Philippine Ambassador to Pakistan, highlighted severe impact of climate change on both the Philippines and Pakistan, advocating for robust climate action with ASEAN's support.

Ambassador Wunna Han, Republic of the Union of Myanmar, stressed the strong and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and ASEAN member states that includes collaboration in areas such as education, religion, cultural exchanges and regional cooperation.

Ambassador Pham Anh Tuan of the



Socialist Republic of Vietnam underlined long-standing relations between ASEAN and Pakistan including in areas of mutual interest such as politics, culture, science, technology and education. Charge d' Affaires of the Republic of Indonesia, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma, and Ms. Kamolawan Sriposil, Charge d' Affaires of the Kingdom of Thailand, also spoke about growing Pakistan and ASEAN relations.

Muhammad Faisal shared an academic perspective, emphasizing ASEAN's success in fostering regional economic support and good relations, serving as a valuable lesson for South Asia. He advocated for stronger dialogue partnerships and bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and ASEAN countries.

Pakistani Heads of Missions posted in ASEAN capitals made interventions at the event.

Ambassador Ameer Khurram Rathore, Ambassador to Indonesia and ASEAN, emphasized the critical importance of ASEAN for Pakistan, highlighting the region's role in maintaining peace, security, and economic integration.

Ambassador Zaheeruddin Babar in Cambodia shared growing bilateral

trade between Pakistan and Cambodia and highlighted efforts for the opening of a resident Cambodian mission in Islamabad.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Malaysia Syed Ahsan Raza Shah highlighted the increasing number of Malaysian tourists visiting Pakistan and the robust investment relationship between the two nations.

High Commissioner to Singapore Rabia Shafiq underlined that strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and Singapore serve as a crucial gateway to the ASEAN market.

The roundtable concluded with remarks by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI, who highlighted the evolution and significance of ASEAN over its 57-year history, emphasizing its role in promoting connectivity, trade, and investment in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Earlier, in his remarks, Dr. Talat Shabbir highlighted the evolving partnership between Pakistan and ASEAN.

He emphasized Pakistan's status as a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN since 1993 and highlighted Pakistan's efforts to become a Full Dialogue Partner as part of the "Vision East Asia" policy.

Vietnam President To Lam takes top job as Communist Party chief

By Spokesman Report

Vietnamese President To Lam was named to the nation's top position, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, on Saturday, replacing Nguyen Phu Trong, who died two weeks ago.

Lam, 67, had temporarily taken over the duties of party chief on July 18, a day before Trong's death as his health was deteriorating.

Party delegates unanimously supported Lam's nomination, officials told a press conference.

Addressing the delegates, he vowed to inherit and promote Trong's legacy, make no changes to the Southeast Asian nation's foreign policy, focus on achieving its socioeconomic development goals and continue Vietnam's anti-graft campaign.

"In the coming time, the work on anti-corruption will be continued fiercely," Lam told the press conference. "Personally I feel fortunate that I have much experience in handling anti-graft campaign during the time I worked at the police ministry."



Vietnam, a major destination for manufacturing investment, has long been favoured by multinational corporations for political stability but in recent months it has experienced major political turbulence, which officials said was fuelled by the anti-corruption campaign.

The nation does not formally have a paramount leader, but the head of the party effectively plays a more prominent role than others after Trong

strengthened the powers of the role during his 13-year tenure.

Lam, a career security officer, had been seen as long aiming to become party chief, with experts calling the presidency a stepping stone for the top job.

It was not immediately clear whether he would keep both top jobs until the end of this legislative session in 2026, or whether a new president would be chosen.

Lam was elected president in May after leading the sweeping campaign of high-profile investigations against corruption as police minister. He replaced Vo Van Thuong, who had been in the job about a year when he quit amid accusations of unspecified wrongdoing.

Multiple officials and diplomats said the party had discussed possibly naming a new president so that Lam could focus on the party chief job. Discussions may still be under way, one diplomat said on Saturday.

If Lam keeps wearing both hats, he may boost his powers and possibly lead the country to a more autocratic style of leadership, officials have said, similar to that of Xi Jinping, who is China's party chief and state president.

That would be a change for Vietnam, which, unlike its far larger neighbour, has engaged in more collective decision-making, with leaders subject to multiple checks.

It would not, however, be unprecedented. Trong held both top jobs for nearly three years until April 2021 after the death of a former president.

Indonesia remained staunch supporter of stronger ASEAN-Pakistan ties: Rahmat Hindiarta

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia to Pakistan, Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma on Wednesday said that Indonesia has always remained a staunch supporter of stronger ASEAN-Pakistan ties to bring tangible benefits to their peoples.

Association of South East Asian Nation (ASEAN) and Pakistan have great potential for cooperation in various sectors, such as agriculture, education, fishery, IT, infrastructure, machinery, tourism, etc.

Speaking at the Roundtable "Pakistan and ASEAN: A Growing Partnership" in Commemoration of 57th ASEAN day at Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said, "I express my sincere gratitude to the ISSI team for their kind collaboration and support in organizing this forum."

He said the ASEAN Day celebrated on August 8 every year reflects the firm commitment of ASEAN member countries to raise its effectiveness by promoting mutually beneficial cooperation and positive contribution in the community of nations through peaceful engagement.

The envoy said this year's theme "ASEAN: Enhancing Connectivity and Resilience" highlights the spirit



of work and grow together that offers tremendous potential for new ventures, partnerships in promising and expanding sectors.

In view of the wonderful friendly relations between ASEAN and Pakistan, I trust this is the right time to move ahead for more comprehensive and durable relations since the Southeast Asian region is becoming epicenter of economic growth and predicted to be the future hub of world trade, he said.

Rahmat Hindiarta Kusuma said the diversity of cultural, economic, political and social systems of the ASEAN countries is the additional attraction of this vast integrated market.

He said the ASEAN's centrality has contributed to the preservation of

peace and stability in the region and the focus of its external relations lies on equal partnership, mutual benefit, dialogue and cooperation.

He said that realizing the importance of bringing the people of two regions closer to each other, the Indonesian Embassy has also taken various initiatives such as establishing the 'Indonesian Corner' in National Library of Pakistan and National Book Foundation together with offering Education Scholarships for the Pakistani to strengthen the connectivity as well as to further foster the people-to-people interaction.

"Our great engagement with Ulemas and Muslim scholars from different denominations and extensive visit to various madrasahs in Pakistan have both shown the importance of Indonesia and Pakistan as the two largest muslim countries in the world to build stronger relationship, since the madrasahs in both countries have similarities in practicing the classical Islamic curriculum called nizam-e-madrasah," he said.

Charge d'Affaires said that Pakistani madrasahs have deep understanding in Islamic knowledge in all of its branches, while Indonesian madrasahs have excellent concept in contextualizing those into the local archipelagic life across Indonesia.

At the business-to-business level,

considering Indonesia as among the largest Pakistan's economic partners, the Indonesian Embassy has increased wider engagement with business players outside its traditional partners, he said.

"We approach Business communities in provinces of the Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan, not only as partners in economic diplomacy but also as close friends" he said.

It is expected, those engagements will help the two countries' relations increasingly more relevant, both in bilateral level or regional level between Pakistan-ASEAN, he added.

The envoy said that the establishment of one of the world's largest noodle companies from Indonesia in Faisalabad is expected as milestone for other Indonesian investments to come into Pakistan.

He said that at the government level, there is active interest to enhance efforts for mutual dialogue and strategic cooperation for regional and global peace, stability and trade and investment.

He said, "I believe that the necessary positive indicators are there and with the joint efforts of our governments and the peoples, the cooperation between ASEAN and Pakistan will have an even brighter and more harmonious future."

Interim Bangladesh government to be sworn in on Thursday: army chief

By Spokesman Report



DHAKA: The swearing-in ceremony of the interim Bangladesh government would be held on Thursday (tomorrow), the country's army chief said.

The ceremony is scheduled to take place at 8pm, according to Dhaka Tribune.

"Armed forces will provide all possible support to Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus," General Wakeruz Zaman said while addressing a press conference at the army headquarters.

"The members of the interim government may be as many as 15 members. One or two people may be more."

This comes a day after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and fled the country following a violent crackdown on a student-led uprising. On Tuesday, Nobel Peace Prize laureate Muhammad Yunus was named chief adviser of Bangladesh's interim government on Tuesday.

Yunus was appointed to the post by Bangladesh President Mohammed Shahabuddin after he held meetings with student leaders and chiefs of the three military services, local media reported late on Tuesday, citing a statement and officials from the president's office.

Hasina's flight ended her 15-year stint in power in the country of 170 million people, which she had ruled for 20 of the last 30 years at the helm of a political movement inherited from her father, state founder Mujibur Rahman, after he was assassinated in 1975.

Since the early 1990s Hasina had feuded and alternated power with her rival Zia, who inherited her own political movement from her husband Ziaur Rahman, a ruler himself assassinated in 1981.

Khaleda Zia urges protesters to set aside 'thirst for revenge' after release

Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chairperson and former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia has expressed gratitude to the student protesters and people for ending the 15-year rule of Sheikh Hasina Wazed of Awami League, and urged them to put away their thirst for revenge.

In a phone call to The Daily Star, BNP's secretary general Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir said that she has also asked everyone to be patient.

"I saw her after a long time. She seemed sound in mind; however, she looked a little tired," said Fakhrul.

He added: "The BNP chairperson has received her passport. The government was making it difficult for her to access it for days. We are preparing to take her abroad for better treatment. However, her doctors here have not yet permitted her to fly. Nevertheless, they are monitoring her condition, and arrangements will be made as soon as we get their clearance."

Fakhrul also mentioned that Khaleda's treatment location is yet to be determined.

When asked if Khaleda observed the recent political reformation, Fakhrul said she observed and knows the whole matter.

"She has thanked the students and people of this country for toppling the autocratic Awami League regime. She also urged all to be patient and remain calm," mentioned Fakhrul, adding that the people have to put aside their urge for revenge and unitedly concentrate on rebuilding this country.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
77,114.49	77,191.34
Day's High	Day's Low
77,800.04	77,086.81
Index Value	Change
7,415,156,894	-76.85
Percentage	Time
-0.1%	7 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
8,166.88	+140.19
Percentage	Time
+1.75%	7 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
39,058.92	+61.26
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	7 Aug, 1:03 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
35,089.62	+414.16
Percentage	Time
+1.19%	7 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.25	186.15
Bahrain Dinar	739.5	745
Canadian Dollar	203.35	206.25
China Yuan	38.4	38.8
Euro	305.25	307.75
Indian Rupee	3.33	3.43
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	905	912
Malaysian Ringgit	58.85	59.65
Norwegians Krone	26.04	26.34
Omani Riyal	724.5	729
Qatari Riyal	76.39	77.09
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.60
Singapore Dollar	204.25	206.4
Swiss Franc	316	323
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.25
UK Pound Sterling	357	359
US Dollar	279.2	280.35

Energy security more important than food, water security: 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 Wednesday that national airlines, railways, and provincial transport companies are in a loss in a country with a population of 240 million which is unbelievable.

Among the failed state-owned companies in the country, not one notable company's downfall is due to its employees, as the masses are made to believe, he said.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that the destruction of state-run companies' results from policies aimed at grabbing their assets and land, rewarding business people who fund political parties, and looting under the guise of foreign investment.

Talking to the business community, the

veteran business leader said that the purpose of the companies that have employed more than required employees or neglected the eligibility criteria was also to get political benefits from these companies while increasing their financial burden.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that PIA was older and more famous than many good airlines and had profitable routes. This company has also become a burden on the national exchequer due to over-staffing, incompetence, corruption, and nepotism, and now it is time to privatize it.

Presently, there is no alternative to the sale of these companies as they have been damaged beyond repair, he underlined.

The business leader said that the story of Steel Mills is not different as many influential people are ready to plunder its resources.

He said that from the beginning, such a system of checks and balances was not allowed to be created in Pakistan, which could prevent politicians and other influential circles from colluding and bargaining for national inter-



ests. That is why the government should focus on making policies instead of doing business

because doing business is not the business of the government, he observed.

The government officials dealing with IPPs were incompetent in business affairs; they misused power and made the country vulnerable to losses.

Mian Zahid Hussain said that in the current situation, IPPs are the most obvious example, which has not been adequately monitored, and the cost of electricity has been increased because of capacity charges so much that it is beyond the reach of the commoner and the industry.

The economy is at stake; therefore, the FPCCI has to raise this matter in the Supreme Court.

He said that the people expect relief from the same elements who have imposed this punishment on the nation, which is surprising.

Mian Zahid Hussain further said that due to the policymakers' wrong priorities, the importance of energy security has increased more than food security and water security.

Price of Roti inside restaurants cannot be checked: Farooq Chaudhry

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mohammad Farooq Chaudhry President Restaurant Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association expressed his concerns about checking Roti inside restaurants and said that restaurants can never be compared with Tandoors, in restaurants we provide quality services to our customers. We Paid various taxes. The tariff of tandoor is 700 per mmbtu, while the tariff of restaurants is 3900 per mmbtu, so the price of Roti inside restaurants cannot be checked. Khawaja Shehzad Chairman District Price Control Committee agreed to concern of President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and said that a meeting will be held soon regarding the rates of Roti in the restaurants and this issue will be resolved.

On Wednesday, the private



members of the District Price Control Committee and Trades had an important meeting with Khawaja Shehzad, Chairman of the District Price Control Committee. In which Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry

President Restaurants Caterers Sweets and Bakers Association, Saleem Parvez Butt Patron General Grocery Association Punjab, Zahoor Bhatti President Flour Mill Dealers Association, Waqar Malik

President Malik Association, Zaheer Abbas Abbasi President Poultry Retailers Association, Javed Qureshi President Jamiat Al-Quraish, Naeem Qureshi Jamiat Al-Quraish, Raja Habib specially participated.

MoU Signing for Digital Healthcare Services Marks a New Milestone for KMBL



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Khushhali Microfinance Bank Limited (KMBL), Pakistan's first specialized microfinance bank, has recently partnered with oladoc to promote healthcare services for their customers. oladoc, a leading digital healthcare platform in Pakistan, is dedicated to making healthcare accessible, convenient, and affordable for everyone. Through its user-friendly app and website, oladoc offers patients a wide range of healthcare services. This partnership will enable KMBL customers to access a vast network of over 25,000 doctors via the oladoc app, website, and tele-helpline. The collaboration will facilitate KMBL customers

to book appointments, video OPD consultations with specialist doctors, and avail discounts on medical services such as lab tests, medicine delivery, and surgeries. The agreement was signed by Mr Aameer Karachiwalla, President & CEO KMBL, and Co-Founder & CEO of oladoc, Mr. Abid Zuberi. The signing ceremony was also attended by senior leadership from KMBL & oladoc - Mr. Saleem Akhtar Bhatti, Group Head Finance & Chief Financial Officer, Mr Muhammad Aftab Alam, Chief Business Officer, Ms. Saira Gabol, Chief Human Resource Officer, Mr Kashif Ahmed Khan, Head Liability and ADC Sales and Mr Syed Ali Sherazi, Head of Commercial at oladoc.

13 member Chinese businessmen delegation visits ICCI

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A 13-member Chinese business delegation, led by Chairman Pakistan-China Business Forum Ejaz Sheikh, visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) on Wednesday. The delegation was warmly welcomed by ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, former presidents, executive members, and prominent business leaders. During the visit, the Chinese delegation expressed strong interest in availing business opportunities in Pakistan, aiming to fortify bilateral business-to-business relations and exploring new avenues for cooperation.

During the meeting, the Chinese delegation brought to the attention of ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari the challenges they face while operating in Pakistan. Specifically, they highlighted the requirement to stay in five-star hotels, which can be cost-prohibitive for many Chinese business travelers. Additionally, they expressed concerns about the mandatory use of bulletproof vehicles for transportation, citing its impracticality for every Chinese businessman visiting Pakistan. The delegation sought



ICCI's support in addressing these issues which are proving hurdles in carrying out businesses in Pakistan.

ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari warmly thanked the Chinese delegation for their steadfast dedication to strengthening business-to-business ties between Pakistan and China. He assured the delegation that the ICCI would promptly bring the highlighted

issues to the attention of the Prime Minister of Pakistan, the Interior Minister, and all relevant authorities to ensure swift resolution and facilitate ease of doing business in Pakistan. Furthermore, President Bakhtawari warmly invited the Chinese business community to consider the ICCI as their home, welcoming them to visit and explore opportunities at their

leisure."

"Nasir Qureshi, Council Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, underscored the vast business and investment potential of Pakistan, emphasizing the exceptional relations between Pakistan and China.

The former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General

United Business Group (FPCCI, UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari emphasized the remarkable strength of Pakistan-China ties, reassuring the Chinese delegation that the ICCI would take concrete steps to address their concerns. He said that an ICCI delegation will meet the Interior Minister, aiming to apprise him of the challenges faced by Chinese businesses and collaborate on finding effective solutions to enhance the ease of doing business in Pakistan.

Tariq Sadiq, former President ICCI, praised China's pivotal role in Pakistan's development, highlighting the need for Chinese investors to prioritize SMEs development and technology transfer.

Ejaz Sheikh, Chairman of the Pakistan-China Business Forum, expressed his sincere appreciation to President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari and the ICCI team for their exceptional hospitality and warm welcome.

Those present on the occasion include Khalid Mehmood Chaudhry Ameer Hamza, Saif ur Rehman, Rizwan Cheenna, Waseem Chaudhry, Malik Bashir Awan, Zahid Qureshi, Nasir Chaudhry, Raja Fayyaz, Malik Mohsin Khalid and other.

Meezan Bank first bank in Pakistan to host Mastercard-led cyber security workshop

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's Premier Islamic bank, has become the first bank in Pakistan to host a Mastercard-led cyber security workshop, representing a significant advancement in cybersecurity preparedness for the country's banking sector. The workshop marked the launch of Mastercard's new cybersecurity service in Pakistan, which enables banks and other financial institutions to strengthen their resilience to cyber-attacks through real-world-scenario cyber simulations.

Mastercard's custom-built cybersecurity

exercise for Meezan bank drew participation of Mr. Irfan Siddiqui - Founding President & CEO of Meezan Bank, senior members of the Bank's management and its technical leaders. Mr. Irfan expressed his appreciation for the workshop, providing positive feedback on its impact and value.

"As the digital economy grows, it is important to enhance and optimize measures on cyber-security. In this complex digital landscape, Mastercard proactively works to build resilience and trust in the digital ecosystem. We are delighted to bring our global expertise to the Pakistani market with this groundbreaking initiative in partner-



ship with Meezan Bank. Our joint exercise

underscores the importance of preparedness and collaboration in mitigating cyber risks," said Arslan Khan, Country Manager, Pakistan, Mastercard.

According to Cybersecurity Ventures, cybercrime is predicted to cost the world \$9.5 trillion this year, making it the equivalent of the third-largest economy globally. The Middle East and Africa is a highly targeted region, with Pakistan one of the most frequently targeted countries. Cybercriminals are homing in on organizations in the public, technology, and financial services sectors, using malicious techniques such as malware, ransomware and phishing.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bank Alfalah, one of the leading commercial banks has been a trusted partner of Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) for over 12 years, dedicated to the digital social cash transfer programme since 2011. This year Bank Alfalah, along with another partner bank was awarded the contract to serve 7 clusters out of 15 across the country, attaining the largest portfolio as single contracting institution for the BISP. With the signing of the new contract, the Bank will serve 4.3 million beneficiaries, which is 47% of the BISP beneficiary base.

In a recent meeting at BISP Headquarters, between Atif Bajwa, President & CEO of Bank Alfalah, and Muhammad Yahya Khan, Group Head of Digital Banking, conferred with BISP Chairperson Senator Rubina Khalid. The two organisations discussed their mutual readiness for the new clusters with a strong emphasis on treating BISP beneficiaries with the utmost respect and dignity. The discussion also focused on the Bank, actively developing and implementing new innovative projects aimed at empowering beneficiaries financially as well as providing and continuously promoting financial literacy in order to enable them to become financially independent.

IS First Vietnamese Climber

Weather conditions make K2 extremely dangerous and difficult to summit: Dr. Ngo Hai Son

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

Vietnam's First-Surgeon Climbs K2-Dr. Ngo Hai Son Treated Colleague Mountaineers During Highly Dangerous Expedition/ Vietnam's first mountaineer climbed Pakistan's tallest as well as complex and extremely dangerous peak K-2 in a recent expedition. He hoisted the flag of his great country and allured more mountaineers and tourists of his country toward Pakistan. He is young Medical Doctor Plastic Surgeon Dr. Ngo Hai Son. He started the expedition from Skardu on June 24 and returned on August 2, 2024.

Dr. Ngo Hai Son is the first climber from Vietnam to summit K-2. The Embassy of Vietnam in Islamabad held an interaction with him on his successful return from the life risky expedition a few days ago. Dr Hai Son shared his experience with the journalists in this get together. Ambassador designate H. E Phan Anh Tuan, DHM Truong Van Thang were also present.

Dr Hai Son trekked for 5 days in a distance of 100 km from Skoli to Base Camp of K-2. He covered the distance from base camp to bottle neck (last end 8200m) in 52 days.

Sharing the details of his expedition, Dr Hai Son said, "The weather was very bad, the initial reports about wind, clouds and snow turned out to be completely wrong. Our several attempts failed. It was very difficult to prepare oxygen and install safety ropes.

He said, " We had to wait for 4-5 hours at the last end which is very dangerous and located in a dead zone. By summit day, no one had reached



Camp 3 (7300m) due to bad weather.

Unpredictable weather conditions make K2 extremely dangerous and difficult to summit. At the bottleneck, the sun was shining, yet we were bathed in snow falling from the sky like heavy rain. Dr Hai Son is highly impressed by the beauty of Pakistan and Gilgit Baltistan. He said, "Pakistan is a beautiful country, people are nice, Hunza is wonderful.

He expressed his gratitude to all departments and relevant authorities. He said that local officials and people cooperated with us during every step towards our destination.

This scribe asked him about his future adventure on Mount Everest. Dr Hai Son replied, " I wish to continue my upward journey and Mount Everest is next in this way."

To a question about the similarities

or differences between the mountains of Vietnam and Pakistan, he answered, " Vietnam's mountains are not so high. Their altitude is maximum about 3 thousand meters."

Before Nguyễn Thị Thanh Nhã the summit of Mount Everest, She is the first woman from Vietnam to reach the summit of Mount Everest, Earth's highest mountain above sea level (8,848.86 meters). Also known



as Celine Nha Nguyen, she's a lawyer from Saigon who was part of the Seven Summit Treks Everest Expedition 2022.

Photo by Sultan Bashir (Online)

China's Anti-Doping Agency condemns U.S. handling of Olympic runner Knighton's doping case for double standard

By Xinhua

BELJING: The Chinese Anti-Doping Agency (CHINADA) on Tuesday criticized the United States Anti-Doping Agency (USADA) for its handling of sprinter Erriyon Knighton's doping case, alleging a double standard by the U.S.

Knighton, a U.S. Olympic track and field team member, tested positive for the banned steroid trenbolone during an out-of-competition test on March 26. USADA decided not to impose any ineligibility on Knighton, claiming the positive result was due to contaminated meat. Knighton was allowed to compete in the Paris Olympics qualifiers.

"Hundreds of AAF cases for trenbolone have occurred around the world in recent years in total, and publicly available information shows that while the athletes involved in most of these trenbolone AAF cases were essentially given a four-year ineligibility, three American athletes have escaped sanctions by claiming food contamination," CHINADA said in a statement.

An independent arbitrator confirmed the contaminated meat in Knighton's case came from a Florida restaurant, but studies have shown that trenbolone is a potent anabolic agent and not a common contaminant.

"If there is indeed widespread beef contamination of trenbolone in the U. S. market, has USADA ever conducted an extensive market research and collected data? Has it warned the American athletes about the problem of meat contamination? Has it studied how much contaminated meat can cause a positive test?"

CHINADA questioned in the statement.

USADA publicly declared that "justice was served" before the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) had even reviewed the case and before the deadline for appeal had yet expired.

"What is even more suspicious is that this statement has now been removed from USADA's website, along with its previous statements and releases on no-fault contamination cases. What are they trying to hide behind this unusual action?" CHINADA questioned.

When it came to contamination cases involving Chinese swimmers, however, USADA took an entirely different attitude, accusing CHINADA and WADA of "covering up the truth" and demanding sanctions against Chinese athletes in spite of the repeated clarifications by WADA and an independent prosecutor's report.

Earlier this year, a contamination case involving 23 Chinese swimmers, whose private details were disclosed by U. S. media, drew significant attention. These swimmers were already cleared of doping and had committed no violations in 2021.

CHINADA criticized the double-standard of USADA, whose "rhetoric about fairness and clean sport runs counter to its actual practices", pointing out that doping is not uncommon among athletes in the U. S.

Major U. S. sports leagues, such as the Major League Baseball (MLB), the National Basketball Association (NBA), the National Football League (NFL), and the National Hockey League (NHL), and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), have anti-doping standards conflicting



with the World Anti-Doping Code.

"The NCAA, the cradle of the vast majority of the most successful American athletes, has not signed the Code," CHINADA noted.

WADA President Witold Banka noted in a recent meeting that "90 percent of American athletes, those in pro leagues and college sport, don't compete under World Anti-Doping Code." In addition, the Rodchenkov Anti-Doping Act, which took effect in 2020, asserts criminal jurisdiction over doping cases in international sports events outside its national borders, but excludes its domestic professional leagues, college leagues and other U. S. events.

"This is another obvious example of the double standards that the U. S. is practicing when targeting its anti-doping work towards American athletes and athletes from other countries," CHINADA stated.

"The U. S. has turned a blind eye to its long history of doping problems, but is obsessed with 'cross-border jurisdiction' and asserting sanctions against other countries.

"It seems that the accusation and attack on China and other countries is its tactic to deflect attention from the serious flaws in its own anti-doping work. This is sheer political manipulation and hypocritical double standards," CHINADA added.

In recent months, the U. S. Congress, USADA, and the U. S. media have taken a selective approach to contamination cases involving Chinese swimmers, attempting to mislead the international community and the public through fabrication and framing.

"They are trying to politicize anti-doping by urging the U. S. Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to initiate a 'long-arm jurisdiction' over this case by opening an investigation through domestic judicial and administrative means. Such disgraceful and despicable attempts are not only a stark double standard, but are also wanton violations of the principles of fairness and justice."

CHINADA urged USADA to stop fabricating narratives, politicizing anti-doping efforts, and manipulating public perception. They called on USADA to align with global anti-doping standards and maintain integrity in its practices to regain international trust.

"We call on USADA to review its approaches and principles in doping cases to ensure compliance with the global anti-doping system's goals, demonstrating due integrity and consistency in their work," CHINADA concluded.

"This is the right way to regain trust of the international community in its anti-doping work."

Olympics | Defending champion Quan storms to women's platform diving final

By Xinhua

PARIS: China's defending champion Quan Hongchan and teammate Chen Yuxi both cruised into the women's 10m platform diving final at the Paris Olympic Games on Monday.

Quan, 17, led the preliminary in the morning at ease before keeping her dominance in the semifinal to reach the final with a score of 421.05 points.

Three years ago, a 14-year-old Quan delivered three perfect marks in her five dives to claim her gold at the Tokyo Olympics.

The 18-year-old Chen, who followed Quan to finish second in the individual event in Tokyo, didn't perform at her best, but claimed the second highest score in the semifinal in 403.05.

"I still need time to get used to the rhythm of the Olympic Games," said Chen, who paired up Quan to win the synchronized platform event on Wednesday.

"I performed better in the semifinal than in the preliminary, but it's still not good. What I can do tomorrow is just keeping calm and carrying on," she added.

British teenager Andrea Spendolini-Sirieix finished third in the semifinal in 367.00, while Australia's fifth Olympian Melissa Wu also made the final.

"It could be better, but I'm super happy to be in the final at my fifth Olympic Games," said the 32-year-old Wu, who took the bronze medal at the Tokyo Games.

Pakistan squad for Bangladesh Tests announced

By Muhammad Arif Hafeez

"Saud Shakeel named as new Test vice-captain; impressive domestic performances earn Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Ali and Mohammad Hurraira call-ups in 17-member squad

Bangladesh due to arrive in Islamabad on 17 August for the ICC World Test Championship matches in Rawalpindi and Karachi from 21 August to 3 September

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board's men's national selection committee today announced a 17-member Pakistan squad for the ICC World Test Championship fixtures against Bangladesh. The first Test will be played at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from 21-25 August, while the second Test will be held from 30 August-3 September in Karachi.

The Pakistan Test side's training camp will commence at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on 11 August

and will be supervised by red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie and assistant coach Azhar Mahmood. The Bangladesh cricket team is scheduled to arrive in Islamabad in the wee hours of 17 August and expected to train in the same afternoon.

PAKISTAN SQUAD (ICC World Test Championship vs Bangladesh)

Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Aamir Jamal (subject to Fitness), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Hurraira, Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wicket-keeper) and Shaheen Shah Afridi

The 17-member Test squad will be led by Shan Masood, while left-handed middle-order batter Saud Shakeel has been appointed as vice-captain. Saud takes over

from Shaheen Shah Afridi as part of the selectors' strategic decision that is aimed at managing Pakistan's lead fast bowler's workload management during the period from 21 August 2024 to 5 April 2025 in which Pakistan is scheduled to play nine Tests, 14 T20Is and, at least, 17 ODIs.

Of the 17 players picked for the first Test series of the 2024-25 season, 13 players were involved in Pakistan's last series against Australia in December/January 2023-24. Mohammad Hurraira, Kamran Ghulam and Mohammad Ali have been rewarded for their consistent performances in the domestic circuit as well as for Pakistan Shaheens, while Naseem Shah is returning to the red-ball side after 13 months.

Kamran Ghulam aggregated 1,025 runs in 11 first-class matches in the 2023-24 season and then had scored 148 runs in three innings against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin last month, including

100 not out in the first match. He was part of the squad for the home series against New Zealand in December/January 2022-23 but didn't feature in the drawn two-match series.

Fast bowler Mohammad Ali has been recalled after last featuring in the opening two Tests against England in 2022. He took 24 wickets in six first-class matches in the 2022-23 season, followed by 47 wickets in 14 first-class matches in the 2023-24 season. In the two four-day matches against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin, Ali took nine wickets, including six for 63 in the second innings of the second match.

Hurraira stroked a sparkling double-century against Bangladesh 'A' in Darwin last month. He also had stellar last couple of first-class seasons. In the 2022-23 Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, Hurraira was the only batter to break the 1,000-run barrier, aggregating 1,024 runs in 11 matches for

Northern. In the 2023-24 first-class season, the 22-year-old right-hander scored 961 runs in 14 matches for the Faisalabad Region and Higher Education Commission (HEC). He was part of the squad for the tour to Sri Lanka in July 2023 but didn't feature in the series, which Pakistan won by 2-0.

Imam-ul-Haq, Faheem Ashraf, Hasan Ali (injured), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr (injured), Noman Ali and Sajid Khan were the players who failed to retain their places in the Test side.

Imam managed 57 runs in two Tests against Sri Lanka and then scored 94 runs in the Perth and Melbourne Tests, Faheem took one wicket in the Perth Test, Sajid claimed three wickets in the Sydney Test, while Nawaz and Noman didn't play in any of the Tests.



Saud Shakeel (captain), Kamran Ghulam, Mehran Mumtaz, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rameez Jnr, Mohammad Hurraira, Naseem Shah, Saad Baig (wicket-keeper), Saad Khan, Saim Ayub, Sameen Gul, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wicket-keeper) and Umar Amin

Player support personnel - Umar Gul (head coach-cum-manager), Ghulam Ali (batting coach), Fahad Masood (fielding coach), Dr Imtiaz Khan (physiotherapist), Faisal Rai (analyst), Yasir Malik (trainer), Shafiqat Shabbir (media and digital manager) and Malang Ali (masseur)

Saud Shakeel will captain Pakistan Shaheens in the first match against Bangladesh 'A'. The squad will also include Test team members Kamran Ghulam, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Hurraira, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub and Sarfaraz Ahmed.

For the four-day match, Pakistan Shaheens will commence their training session on Wednesday afternoon at the Islamabad Club under head coach Umar Gul. Jason Gillespie and Azhar Mahmood will assist Umar Gul before shifting their attention to the national side's camp on 11 August.

Call on

Commanding Officer of PNS YARMOOK called on Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohammad Ibrahim Al Bin Ali, during PNS YARMOOK visit to Bahrain.



Pakistan Navy Ship Yarmook visits Bahrain and conducts bilateral exercises with friendly Navies

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship YARMOOK visited port Mina Salman of Bahrain and conducted bilateral exercises with friendly navies during deployment on Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMSF).

Upon arrival at port, the ship was received by senior officials of Bahrain Navy and officials of Pakistan Embassy. Later, Commanding Officer of PNS YARMOOK called on Commander Royal Bahrain Naval Force, Rear Admiral Ahmed Mohammad Ibrahim Al Bin Ali, Commander Royal Bahrain Coast Guards, Brig Saqib Qamar and other senior officials of Bahrain Navy. The Commanding Officer also visited HQ Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) and called on Dy Commander CMF, Commodore Mark Anderson. During the interactions, professional matters of mutual interests were discussed and enhancement of bilateral ties in all spheres was re-affirmed.

During stay at port Mina Salman, Ambassador of Pakistan to Bahrain, Commander Maritime Coalition Forces, officials of Bahrain Navy, prominent businessmen, notables from Pakistani community, a large

number of diplomats and Defence Attaché of friendly countries visited PNS YARMOOK. Various activities, including exchange visits onboard ships and orientation visits of military installations were also undertaken.

Upon culmination of port visit, PNS YARMOOK conducted bilateral exercises with Royal Bahrain Navy Ship AL-MANAMA, US Ship DANIEL INOUE and Japanese Maritime Self Defence (JMSDF) Ship, JS SAMIDARE. The exercises were aimed to develop synergy and mutual understanding among partner Navies while rehearsing interoperability to undertake joint operations in the region.

Pakistan Navy is maintaining permanent presence in the Indian Ocean to keep the national and international Sea Lines Of Communications (SLOC) under surveillance. Pakistan Navy (PN) believes in collaborative efforts for maintenance of rule-based order at sea. PN actively collaborates with regional and international partners deployed in Indian Ocean to counter piracy and to undertake anti-narcotics operations for protecting global common interests.

PM kicks off monsoon tree plantation drive

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday launched the countrywide monsoon tree plantation drive by planting a sapling here.

Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister said he had directed the concerned departments and institutions to plant at least 100 million saplings across the country including Gilgit Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJ&K) to save the country from the impacts of climate change that badly hit the country in 2022. He said the tree plantation would also

help reducing air pollution.

The prime minister directed the relevant authorities in the federal and provincial governments to play their role in spreading the plantation drive to every corner to make Pakistan a green and pollution-free country.

He also asked all Pakistani citizens to help the government by fully participating in the plantation drive to save the country from climate change disasters and provide a healthy environment.

On the occasion, the prime minister was also briefed about the area-wise plantation targets across the country.



PTI challenges bill preventing independents from joining political parties in SC

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf filed a petition in the Supreme Court on Wednesday against a new bill that would bar independent lawmakers from joining a political party after a certain period.

The 'Elections (Second Amendment) Act, 2024' proposes changes to the Elections Act 2017, which appears to be aimed at circumventing the Supreme Court's recent ruling that granted the PTI reserved seats, making it the single largest party in the National Assembly.

The bill was introduced in the National Assembly by a PML-N lawmaker, Bilal Azhar Kayani, and was quickly passed through the Standing Committee on Parliamentary Affairs with

an 8-4 vote.

The legislation was then hastily passed by both the National Assembly and the Senate, without any substantial debate, by suspending the rules.

PTI MNA Gohar Ali Khan has now filed a petition in the Supreme Court, requesting the court to declare the newly passed amendments as "unconstitutional."

The PTI's petition, filed under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, argues that the impugned act subverts the democratic process and violates the fundamental rights of the people, as guaranteed by the Constitution.

The petition contends that "past and closed transactions" that have taken place in accordance with the existing Constitution and the Elections Act, 2017 cannot be

undone through the "deemed retrospectively" provisions of the new law.

It further states that the "expression of the will of the people once made cannot be retrospectively subjected to restrictions that were non-existent at the time, and that are in any case unconstitutional."

The petition asserts that such legislation "suffers from malice in law" and that "actions taken by the people and their chosen representatives in the exercise of their constitutional rights cannot be undone by parliament through legislation."

Pakistan, Algeria pledge to boost economic ties with increased trade, investment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Ahmad Attaf, the Foreign Minister of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, on Wednesday agreed to strengthen their economic partnership by boosting trade and investment.

According to a message shared by Foreign Office here, the meeting took place on the sidelines of an extraordinary Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) session in Jeddah, where both parties acknowledged the deep-rooted historic ties between their countries.

Dar, OIC chief demand ceasefire in Gaza as 'Israel making mockery of humanity'

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar met OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahimi Taha on Wednesday and discussed the ongoing Israeli genocide against Palestinians during a meeting.

The meeting took place on the sidelines of the Open-Ended Extraordinary Meeting of OIC Executive Committee in Jeddah.

Pakistani national in the US charged with plot to kill officials

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani man with alleged ties to Iran has been charged in the United States in connection with a foiled plot to assassinate a US politician or government officials, the Justice Department said on Tuesday.

However, the White House has rejected reports in the US press that Merchant was involved in a plot of assassinated former president Donald Trump.

Asif Merchant, 46, sought to recruit people in the United States to carry out the plot in retaliation for the US killing of Iran's Revolutionary Guards' top commander Qassem Soleimani in 2020, according to a criminal complaint.

Merchant, who prosecutors allege spent time in Iran before travelling to the US, was charged with murder for hire in federal court in New York's Brooklyn borough.

A federal judge ordered him detained on July 16, according

to court records.

"For years, the Justice Department has been working aggressively to counter Iran's brazen and unrelenting efforts to retaliate against American public officials for the killing of Iranian General Soleimani," Attorney General Merrick Garland said in a statement.

FBI investigators believe that former president Donald Trump, who approved the drone strike on Soleimani, and other current and former US government offi-

cial were the intended targets of the plot, CNN reported, citing a US official.

Court documents do not name the alleged targets of the plot. Merchant told a law enforcement informant that there would be "security all around" one target, according to the criminal complaint.

A Justice Department spokesperson declined to comment further. Trump's presidential campaign could not immediately be reached for comment.



DPM Dar, Malaysian FM discuss key issues in Jeddah



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar met with Malaysia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dato' Seri Utama Haji Mohamad Bin Haji Hasan on the sidelines of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Executive Committee of the OIC in Jeddah on Wednesday.

The two foreign ministers noted the positive trajectory of bilateral relations and robust cooperation in diverse fields.

They renewed their commitment to enhance bilateral trade and

investment, educational linkages, capacity building of workforce, and people-to-people contacts, a press release issued by Foreign Office said.

Underscoring the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as an important platform for fostering dialogue and cooperation among member countries, the two foreign ministers reaffirmed their commitment to OIC's principles of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual support.

They also highlighted the need for joint efforts to develop a coordinated response to emerging global challenges.

Investigators trace three suspects in PTI leader Shahid Siddique's murder

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Lahore police have claimed to have traced three suspects in the murder of PTI leader Dr Shahid Siddique Khan. It has been revealed that all three accused are "related to each other."

Dr Siddique, the owner of Iqra Medical Complex in Johar Town, was shot and killed last week as he was leaving a mosque in the city's Valencia Town area after Friday prayers. He succumbed to his injuries on the way to the hospital.

The absconding accused are a

father, son and nephew, sources within the police said. The accused are wanted by the police in multiple theft cases and the accused have already been chargesheeted in several car theft cases in Islamabad and Lahore.

The accused had also carried out the first fatal attack on Dr Siddique, they said and added that the accused are recorded in the criminal cases of theft.

Meanwhile, the police have also included the friend of the deceased's son, Qayum, in the investigation.

Ex-PM Khan to offer 'conditional apology' for May 9 events

Continued from Page 1

to Khan, has proven that the people know what they want. He said that if the army does not want to talk, "we will not talk either." Khan added that the "one who should apologise is the one who made a mistake, not his party."

While addressing the issue of protests, he said that the Constitution allowed for peaceful demonstrations in front of Cantonment Boards and general headquarters. He pointed to

the cases of former prime ministers Nawaz Sharif and Asif Zardari, who were granted NROs and had their multi-billion-rupee cases "forgiven," while his party, which won 20 seats, was "imposed" on the people through a "rigged" election.

Khan also claimed that Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had Rs500 million worth of property outside Pakistan.

Moreover, he did not respond to a question related to party lawmaker Sher Afzal Marwat.