

PM Shehbaz orders quick rescue efforts for Astore flood-stranded tourists

PM Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has instructed the authorities concerned on Thursday to ensure the rescue of tourists stranded in floodwaters in Astore, Gilgit-Baltistan. The prime minister telephoned the Chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to inquire about the Astore flood situation.



Every Pakistani is worried about expensive electricity: Liaqat Baloch

Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a historic public meeting in Multan today. Every Pakistani is worried about expensive electricity. Due to cruel contracts made with IPPs, today the nation is getting expensive electricity. Jamaat-e-Islami will provide relief to the people in every way. Petrol prices fell by more than Rs 15 due to Jamaat-e-Islami's sit-in. Liaqat Baloch Naib Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan talking to media... (Details on Page 2)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Great reception

RAWALPINDI: Army Chief General Syed Asim Munir receives reception in honour of Army Veterans.



Photo: ISPR

COAS Asim Munir hosts graceful reception for Pak Army veterans on Independence Day

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff (COAS), NI (M), hosted a graceful reception in honor of Pakistan Army veterans on the occasion of Independence Day. The event brought together a multi-

tude of retired army officers and soldiers.

COAS paid heartfelt tribute to the contributions of the retired personnel, lauding their dedication and instrumental role in shaping the nation's history. He emphasized the paramount importance of unity and resili-

ence in the face of challenges, urging veterans to continue playing a vital role in Pakistan's progress and development.

COAS also cautioned against the insidious threat of fake news and propaganda being perpetrated by inimical elements to weaken the bond between

the people of Pakistan and the Armed Forces. He reassured that the unwavering support of the nation, including the veterans will fail all such futile efforts.

Veterans expressed faith and confidence in the leadership of the Pakistan Army, pledging

their support in combating both internal and external security challenges.

The event served as a testament to the unbreakable bond between the Pakistan Army and its veterans, united in their commitment to the nation's prosperity and security.

First case of monkey pox reported in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reported a suspected case of monkeypox, prompting health authorities to issue a high alert across the country. The suspected case involves a young man from Dera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, who recently returned from the Gulf region.

According to the Ministry of National Health, the individual has displayed mild symptoms and has been isolated. Samples have been sent to the National Institute of Health for confirmation.

Contact tracing has been initiated, and

further samples are being collected from potential contacts. The Ministry has instructed all provinces to designate focal persons for monkeypox surveillance and has directed border health services to implement strict monitoring at all entry points.

The Ministry confirmed that this is the first suspected case of monkeypox in Pakistan this year. The country has recorded 11 confirmed cases of monkeypox in the past two years.

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared monkeypox a global health emergency on Wednesday.

Gen Bajwa threatened to impose martial law, Asif claims

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defense Minister Khawaja Asif has alleged that former Army Chief General (Retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa threatened to impose martial law in the country.

Asif made these claims during an interview on Geo News' program "Capital Talk."

He revealed that General (Retd) Bajwa had spoken about martial law not only in private conversations with him but also in public gatherings.

When asked by the program host, Hamid Mir, whether General (Retd) Bajwa should be held accountable for threatening martial law, Asif responded, "Who are they to hold Bajwa accountable?"

Asif further stated, "My memory



is fine. I may not remember something from a long time ago, but I remember the past. Malik Ahmad is talking about a different situation, and I'm talking about a

different situation. There is no difference between my narrative and Malik Ahmad's. General (Retd) Bajwa was seeking a six-month to one-year extension during the caretaker government."

He added, "General (Retd) Bajwa brought the PTI founder and ran the show for four years. General (Retd) Bajwa and Faiz Hamid have a very close relationship."

The Defense Minister further stated that the PTI founder had taken action against Nawaz Sharif and his family. He questioned why the PTI founder did not consider a judicial commission at that time and why he is now constantly demanding a judicial commission. He stated that the government can form a judicial commission on the Faiz Hamid matter if it wishes.



Atta Tarar commends Army's accountability measures

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar Thursday commended the Pakistan Army's accountability measures in

connection with the arrest of General Faiz Hameed, saying the detention proved link between Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and the elements hatching conspiracies to destabilise the country.

Talking to the media here at Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Secretariat Model Town, he noted the recent developments in the country, saying the self-accountability process was a welcome move and crucial for preventing further unrest in the country. He said the accountability process was expanding and three more retired officers of army had been arrested, as revealed in an ISPR press release. The arrests were part of the investigation into General Faiz Hameed's

actions, demonstrating a significant step in curbing the destabilisation attempts.

With detention of army officers, it had been established that a political party and its leader had coordinated with General Faiz, resulting in attempts to create unrest and instability in country. He also pointed out that during the no-confidence motion, General Faiz and his associates were actively involved in political activities.

PM Shehbaz lauds armed forces' over successful Kurram operation against Khawarij terrorists

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif lauded the armed forces on Thursday for their successful operation in Kurram District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which led to the death of seven Khawarij terrorists besides the arrest of five others.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's media office, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that the armed forces of Pakistan

had worked tirelessly round the clock to rid the country of the Khawarij terrorist threat.

The prime minister stated that the entire nation, including himself, had paid tribute to the brave officers and soldiers of the Pakistan Army, who had carried out their duties selflessly, risking their lives for the integrity of Pakistan.

The prime minister said that the entire nation stood by the Pakistan Army in its determination to rid the country of the menace of terrorism.

Intelligence operation in Kurram District

Kills seven Khwarij, disposal of weapons, explosives

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 15 August 2024, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Kurram District on reported presence of Khwarij.

During conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the Khwarij's location, as result of which, seven Khwarij of Fitna Al Khawarij were sent to hell, while five of them got injured.

Khwarij's hideout was also busted and a large quantity of weapons, ammunition & explosives was recovered.

The killed Khwarij remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces as



well as the innocent civilians.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism from the country.

Three retired officers in military custody over FGCM probe into military affairs

City Desk

Three retired military personnel were taken into custody for their alleged link with former Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Chief Faiz Hameed who is facing court-martial proceedings, the military's media wing announced in a press release on Thursday.

According to a statement from the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), three retired military officers are currently in military custody for "actions prejudicial to military discipline" in connection with the field general court martial (FGCM) proceedings against Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Faiz Hameed.

The statement further said that ongoing investigations are looking into certain other retired officers and their accomplices for allegedly fomenting instability at the behest of and in collusion with vested political interests, according to ISPR.

"In connection with the FGCM proceedings of Lt Gen (Retd) Faiz Hameed,

three retired officers are also in military custody for their actions prejudicial to military discipline," the military's media affairs wing said.

The Pakistani army had previously announced the arrest of General Hameed on allegations of violating the Army Act. According to a source, Hameed was taken into custody a few days earlier after being summoned for a meeting by a senior military official.

The arrest was prompted by allegations of misconduct made by the owner of a private housing society. This shattered the long-held perception that spy agency chiefs in Pakistan, where the military wields significant influence, are untouchable.



Jawanwala massacre: 'Failure to Provide Justice to the Victims of Jaranwala'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: "Failure to Provide Justice to the Victims of Jaranwala Even After a Year is a Government Failure," says Akmal Bhatti, Chairman MAP

"The Jaranwala tragedy is a black mark on the face of Pakistani society. The fact that the victims have not yet received justice is a mockery of the claims made by government and police officials. 99% of the accused in the Jaranwala incident are free, mocking the government and the helplessness of Christians. The investigative officers and their committees have failed to fulfill their constitutional role, and at present, only 11 individuals are behind bars."

On the solemn occasion of the one-year remembrance of the Jaranwala incident, Minorities Alliance Pakistan (MAP) held a press conference to honor the victims of

the tragic violence that struck the Christian community on August 16, 2023, in which nearly 10,000 people were breaking the crosses on every church and cemetery across approximately a 10-kilometer area in and around Jaranwala, demolishing and looting homes. Twenty-six churches were set on fire, burning thousands of copies of the Holy Bible. Around 250 families were left homeless, and thousands fled the city, fearing for their lives.

On the first anniversary of the tragic events in Jaranwala, we come together to remember and honor those affected by the devastating incident on the 16th of August 2023, in a horrific display of religious intolerance. The scars of that day remain deep, but the resilience and courage shown by the survivors continue to inspire hope and calls for justice.

Chairman Minorities Alliance Pakistan in his statement said that

the Jaranwala incident serves as a stark reminder of the ongoing challenges faced by religious minorities in Pakistan. It is imperative that the government not only brings the perpetrators to justice but also takes concrete steps to protect vulnerable communities from future attacks. It is appalling to see the authorities' slow response and inadequate measures to bring the perpetrators of this heinous crime to justice. On this anniversary, we once again urge the government to ensure justice for the victims and to implement policies that protect religious minorities from discrimination and violence.

The remembrance event is open to all members of the community and the public, reflecting a commitment to fostering interfaith dialogue. On this occasion we will also wear black armbands and host black flags on homes as a mark of protest against the violence and injustice meted out to the victims of Jaranwala.



Press conference

FAISALABAD: Provincial Minister for Minority Affairs Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora holding a press conference along with CPO Kamran Adil in Operations Complex at Police Lines.



Photo: Online

Plantation campaign was launched on the occasion of Independence Day



Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: In the context of the Independence Day celebrations and environment-friendly policy, a two-day plantation drive was launched in International Islamic University Islamabad under the leadership of Ms. Maryam Idris, the Chairperson of the organization, in which the Rector of the University, Prof. Dr. Samina, in collaboration with the Global Human Rights Network. Malik, President Professor Dr. Mohammad Sarwar, Vice President Dr. Abdul Rehman, In-charge of Women Department Dr. Samia Chaghatai, Dr. Sadia, Dr. Kausar Fayyaz Khawaja, and a large number of students including professors participated, the participants appreciated the efforts of Global Human Rights Network. Said that the plantation drive will help in mitigating climate change and promoting biodiversity.

The plantation drive reflects the university's commitment to environmental responsibility and its commitment to contribute to global initiatives against climate change. Dr. Sumia Chaghatai, in-charge of the Women's Department, encouraged the students and staff by emphasizing the important role of environmental sustainability. Encouraged and asked them to actively participate in plantation efforts. More than two hundred saplings were planted in the Jamia in the tree planting campaign. Dr. Sadia Saleem, the student advisor, expressed her special thanks to the participants and the Global Human Rights Network, saying that they have fully supported in making this event possible. It should be planted, Chairperson Global Human Rights Network Maryam Idris said that planting is the guarantee of a clean and green Pakistan, the more trees we plant, the more airy, pollution-free and clean our environment will be.

Catholic Commission for Inter-Religious and Inter-Church Dialogue celebrates Independence Day



Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Catholic Commission for Inter-Religious and Inter-Church Dialogue Pakistan organized a ceremony in connection with the Independence Day at Bishop House, which was presided over by the Bishop of Multan and Catholic Commission for Inter-Religious and Inter-Church Dialogue Pakistan, Bishop Yusuf Sohan.

A large number of people belonging to the Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities participated, including National Executive Secretary Catholic Commission for Interfaith and Inter-Christian Dialogue Samuel Clement, Allama Dr. Muhammad Arshad Ali Baloch, Professor Abdul Majid Wato, Allama Syed Mujahid Abbas Gardizi, Allama Abdul Hanan Haidari, Shehbaz Nazim, Sarfraz Clement, Hina Salman, Maryam Ghazi, Amroz Gul, Shazer Gul and others participated in this occasion while discussing the Catholic Commission for Inter-Religious and Inter-Church Dialogue of Pakistan.

Bishop Yusuf Sohan has said that Pakistan is the most beautiful country in the world which has no precedent in the world. We are proud to be Pakistanis. We should value our country and freedom. We have to get out of the exams unitedly, today the time has come that we need to play our role as a patriotic Pakistani, regardless of religion and belief.

For inter-faith and inter-church dialogue, representatives of the Muslim, Christian and Hindu communities are celebrating the independence of Pakistan in the celebration of independence organized by Pakistan. Efforts are needed.

Scholars of all religions living in Pakistan are striving hard for social and religious harmony, which is a good initiative.

Every Pakistani is worried about expensive electricity: Liaquat Baloch

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jamaat-e-Islami will hold a historic public meeting in Multan today. Every Pakistani is worried about expensive electricity. Due to cruel contracts made with IPPs, today the nation is getting expensive electricity. Jamaat-e-Islami will provide relief to the people in every way. Petrol prices fell by more than Rs 15 due to Jamaat-e-Islami's sit-in. Liaquat Baloch Naib Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan talking to media on Humayun Road Multan said that Jamaat-e-Islami forced the government to give relief to the people by staging a peaceful dharna on Murree Road for 14 days. There is scope for a further reduction of 32 rupees in the current price of petrol, similarly there is scope for a reduction of 28 rupees in the price of electricity.



He further said that 52 percent of the country's IPPs belong to the government, while 32 percent belong to China and 21 percent to Pakistanis. He further said that the government should give relief to the people. Today

in the public meeting, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Hafiz Naemur Rahman will announce the future plan of action. Today, the meeting of August 16 will be a public meeting. Liaquat Baloch said that according

to the international laws and the charter of the United Nations, the case against wrong and anti-people agreements can be fought and strongly defended in every court of the world. It is the duty of the government to oblige all the IPP owners to solve this problem by themselves keeping the greater interest of the country in front. In the same way, the payment to the power generation plants of sugar mills should be stopped in dollars and the pattern of Russia and Saudi Arabia with IPPs should be reviewed and examined. Amir Jamaat-e-Islami South Punjab Rao Muhammad Zafar, Soheb Amar Siddiqui, Dr. Safdar Hashmi Amir Jamaat-e-Islami District Multan, Hassan Akhwani Central Deputy Media Coordinator Jamaat-e-Islami were also present on this occasion.

Tribute to the Sacrifices of intelligence Agencies and Police Personnel

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Central Chairman of Traders Pakistan Organization, Khawaja Sulaiman Siddiqui and Traders Leader Rana Owais Ali has said that our seniors made sacrifices for the establishment of Pakistan, but we did not appreciate them. The government has to take practical steps to get rid of the more than 26 crore poor people of the country. Millions of small businessmen should play a role in giving full relief to the expensive electricity, medicine, gas, food and consumer prices, and standing side by side with the law enforcement agencies to pay homage to the sacrifices of Pakistan Army and Police personnel for the eradication of terrorism. As a result of the struggle and many sacrifices of poet Mashrikh Allama Muhammad Iqbal and other nobles, Pakistan became a separate



homeland, on behalf of the business community, I congratulate the entire nation on the occasion of Independence Day. Market president Rana Owais Ali

said that August 14 reminds us of the sacrifices of the elderly and we should value freedom. On the occasion of the flag-hoisting ceremony in connection

with the Independence Day, South Punjab President Sheikh Javed Akhtar, SHO Dilshad, Multan President Khalid Mehmood Qureshi, Meher Mazin Chavan, Makhdoom Zahoor Hussain Shamsi, Rana Muhammad Ali alias Mimi, Malik Usman Khokhar, Imran Qayyum Bhatta, Kamran Bhatta, Mazhar Abbas Khakhi, Rana Hashim, Rajab Ali Siddiqui, Malik Muazzam, Haji Ghafoor, Irfan Siddiqui, Arsalan Bukhari, Sheikh Haris, Asif Hassan, Hamid Bhatta, Rana Yusuf Ali, Rana Salim Sarwar, Rana Kaleem Sarwar, Rana Umeer Sarwar, Rana Haleem Yousuf, Rana Ali Raza Yousuf, Rana Atif Ali, Liaquat and others participated in large numbers and sweets were distributed on the occasion while progress and prosperity for the beloved Pakistan. And a special prayer was made for the establishment of peace and order.

ISLAMABAD
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:00 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 4:57 pm
Maghrib 6:53 pm
Isha 8:23 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 16
& 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

14 Aug Celebrations -

RIPHAH International University distributed free plants among the citizens of Islamabad

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: RIPHAH International University Celebrated the independence day by distributing free plants among public.

Today's Morning, at the Zero Point—the heart of Islamabad, DG Environment CDA, Ms. Nazia Abrar Khan (PAS) with Ms. Maleeha Jamal (PAS) Deputy DG Environment & Mr. Akhtar Rasool Director Environment were welcomed by Mr. Mehr Ali, Ms. Samia Akbar, Mr. Waqas Haroon and the RIPHAH Team, for the Tree Plantation.

After the tree Plantation by the Chief Guest, Fruit, and Flower Plants along with Pakistan Flags were also distributed among the public to share the celebrations with Citizens of Islamabad.

Later on the Chief Guest and Guests

of Honor arrived at RIPHAH Knowledge Park H-8 Islamabad where a graceful ceremony of Flag Hoisting was held.

The Marketing team was joined by Dr. Kashif Zaheer (RIPP), Mr. Dawood Niyazi and Mr. Mikael Hassan Khan. PAKISTAN and RIPHAH flags were raised.

The participants prayed for the prosperity and progress of the country afterwards, the event concluded with a Cake Cutting ceremony.

Ms. Nazia Abrar highly appreciated the Community Development-CSR initiative of RIPHAH International University. In her remarks, she mentioned that true essences of Independence Day Celebrations is doing something meaningful for the country and RIPHAH is truly contributing in Nation's Development in terms of academia as well as public betterment.



EFP, UFE Sign Agreement Under Commerce Minister's Leadership

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Federal Commerce Minister, Jam Kamal Khan, expressed the hope that employer organizations must work in harmony to promote business relations and invest in other countries. The initiative taken by EFP and UFE will surely be a harbinger of more collaboration, cooperation, and camaraderie between two important organizations. His Ministry has accorded high priority to trade with African countries and requested the Ugandans to promote Pakistani exports not only in Uganda but in other African Countries.

Federal Commerce Minister was speaking at the signing of a Memorandum of Collaboration, Cooperation, Advocacy, and Lobbying between Employers Federation of Pakistan and Federation of Uganda Employers on the side-lines of the FoodAG exhibition. Syed Nazir Ali, Secretary General of Employers Federation of Pakistan, and Douglas Opio, Executive Director Federation of Uganda Employers, signed the Memorandum on behalf of the respective organizations. Chief Executive of TDAP, Zubair Motiwala, Majid Aziz, Former President of EFP, Nooh Mayambala, Chairman of Islamic Chamber of Commerce of Uganda, Shaffi Manafa, Head of Marketing UFE and A. Q. Khalil, Former President KCCI, also witnessed the signing ceremony.

Annual Urs

ISLAMABAD: Annual Urs of Hazrat Syed Abdul Latif Kazmi alias Bari Imam Sarkar kicked off in Federal Capital. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar already directed extraordinary security arrangements on the occasion of Urs and asked administration and Capital Development Authority to provide shuttle service to the pilgrims. The annual Urs of Hazrat Bari Imam will continue till Aug 17.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan President Honours Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin with the Sitara-i-Imtiaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In an announcement on Pakistan's Independence Day, President Asif Ali Zardari awarded the Sitara-i-Imtiaz to Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, Aga Khan University's (AKU) President and Vice-Chancellor for his contributions to the advancement of education and quality of life in Pakistan.

The Sitara-i-Imtiaz is the third-highest civilian honour in Pakistan and is conferred by the President of Pakistan to recognize individuals for their exceptional contributions in various fields, including the arts, literature, sports, science, and social services. The award aims to honor those who have made significant achievements that contribute to the progress and development of the country.



Dr Shahabuddin will be conferred the award at an investiture ceremony in Islamabad on March 23, 2025.

Since his appointment by His Highness the Aga Khan as President of AKU, the University has achieved remarkable growth, making significant contributions to education, research, and healthcare in Pakistan. This impact has positively affected millions of lives, positioning AKU as a beacon of excellence. During President Shahabuddin's tenure, AKU has witnessed an increase in the number of students and fellows, and impact in research, education, and policymaking. Under Dr. Shahabuddin's leadership, AKU has achieved the top position in Pakistan for research, evidenced by the prolific publication of highly cited studies on an international scale. The University is globally acknowledged for its academic prowess.

PHRN-RDF: Azadi Plantation Drive

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Human Resource Network (PHRN), in collaboration with Rural Development Foundation (RDF) and supported by Capital Development Authority (CDA), successfully organized the Azadi Plantation Drive, a tree plantation drive marking the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan.

The event was successfully organized by Mughiza Imtiaz, Secretary General of PHRN, who played a key role in bringing together PHRN, RDF, and CDA to promote sustainability and environmental stewardship.

The tree plantation drive was graced by esteemed guests, including Mr. Younas from Motorway Police, Brigadier Aslam Khan from RDF, Ijaz ul Hassan from CDA, Zil Ur Rehman, Director RDF, and Ms. Maria Rafique, President of PHRN.



Brigadier Aslam Khan emphasized the importance of tree plantation, saying, "Trees are the lungs of our planet, and it's our responsibility

to protect them. Let's join hands to make Pakistan greener and healthier." Zil Ur Rehman, Director RDF, distributed green shirts to the participants

with a slogan of "Climate Justice and Independence" to motivate and promote the cause. He emphasized the need for collective efforts to address environmental challenges and promote sustainability.

Ms. Maria Rafique, President of PHRN, stressed the need for check and balance on the growth of these plants, saying, "Planting trees is just the first step. We need to ensure their survival and growth by regularly monitoring and maintaining them. This will guarantee the long-term benefits of our efforts."

Mughiza Imtiaz, Secretary General of PHRN, said, "According to a recent survey, every individual in Pakistan needs at least 10-15 plants to maintain a healthy environment. We aim to add one plant per individual by ourselves to make a significant impact. We encourage everyone to join us in this initiative and take responsibility for their environment."

Systems Limited wins Forbes Asia's Best Under a Billion 2024 for fifth time

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Systems Limited, a global digitally native company focused on reinventing businesses through innovative technology solutions, has been honored with the Forbes Asia's Best Under a Billion 2024 award for the fifth consecutive year.

Leading among the three companies from Pakistan, with a market value of \$485 million, \$188 million in sales, and \$31 million in net income, Systems Limited, the fastest company in Asia, has yet again solidified its status as a leader in the industry.

Mr. Asif Peer, Group CEO and MD of Systems Limited, expressed, "Our resilience, consistency, and perseverance have enabled us to build a thriving ecosystem that not only meets but consistently exceeds performance benchmarks. Our consistent pursuit of innovation excellence has positioned us as the only IT company from Pakistan to be honored by Forbes Asia over these last five years, in addition to being recognized as the fastest-growing company in Asia last year."

He further commented, "Our commitment to nurturing creativity, human-centric solutions, and a forward-thinking mindset forms the foundation of our success. This approach has enabled us to forge enduring global partnerships and establish a legacy of leadership in the digital age. This honor from Forbes reflects the passion, collaborative spirit, and resilience that our employees bring to the forefront of the digital revolution every day. We pledge to continue this momentum of business excellence, delivering innovative, customer-focused solutions across the globe, and maintaining our record of outperforming in all metrics."

Karachi set to host 21st Edition of Pharma Asia to Shape the Future of Pakistan's Pharmaceutical Industry

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The stage is set for the 21st edition of Pharma Asia, Pakistan's premier pharmaceutical industry exhibition, to be held from August 20-22, 2024, at the Karachi Expo Centre.

Organized by Ecommerce Gateway, this year's event promises to be the most impactful yet. With more than 200 companies showcasing their latest products, technologies, and services across 750 booths, the exhibition floor will be a vibrant hub of activity and networking. With delegates and exhibitors from 15 countries, including a major pavilion from China, Pharma Asia 2024 will offer unparalleled opportunities for international collaboration and business development.

Kicking off on the first day, the convention will feature distinguished speakers and thought leaders. Mr. Asim Rauf, CEO, Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) will be the Chief Guest for the convention, who will share insights on the regulatory landscape and future trends in the industry. The convention will also address the significant shift in pharmaceutical production from multinational corporations (MNCs) to local companies. This transition has enabled local pharmaceutical manufacturers to meet the majority of Pakistan's market requirements, underscoring the growth and resilience of the domestic industry.

77th Independence Day celebrated with enthusiasm at NARC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A prestigious ceremony was held by Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) to celebrate 77th Independence Day of Islamic Republic of Pakistan at National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC).



Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman, PARC and Dr. Shahzad Asad DG NARC, Sr. Management along-with employees of NARC gathered to hoist national flag, followed by recitation of Holy Quran and National Anthem. Dr. Ghulam Muhammad Ali, Chairman, PARC emphasized to remember the unforgettable sacrifices of our ancestors for create Pakistan, and now, it is our prime duty to make Pakistan more prosperous, progressive and forwarding in every sphere of life. Dr. Ali reiterated the council's unwavering commitment to contribute towards the Green Pakistan initiative, emphasizing the importance of environmental conservation and sustainable practices in agriculture. Dr. Ali said that through research and development, PARC is dedicated to introduce cutting-edge technologies and sustainable practices to boost agricultural productivity, improve farmer livelihoods, and ensure food security for the nation. Chairman PARC also initiated plantation drive by planting a tree.

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Arrest of Lt. Gen (R) Faiz Hameed: What's Next?

The arrest news of Faiz Hameed and court martial proceedings against the former DG, ISI, and Corps Commander Peshawar on allegations of corruption, financial irregularities, and misuse of authority, particularly linked to the Top City housing scheme, took the nation by utter surprise. Since the inception of Pakistan, such action against a retired general is unheard of. Even if such actions had been taken, they were not made public or spun in the media.

The surprise was not due to the charges of land extortion, graft, making illegal money, or political maneuvering, which have been frequently leveled in the recent past against many high-ranking officers, including General (R) Qamar Javed Bajwa and Lt. General (R) Asim Saleem Bajwa, among others. Yet, no such warranted action had been taken against any of them.

Analysts believe and hope that this highly critical, long-awaited, and correct step by the army leadership, unlike in the past, will not stop with this prominent arrest but will continue until all military ranks and files are completely clear of this menace.

The tone and tenor of the current leadership also indicate that the army will take a deeper look into the nexus between the military, civilian business, commerce, and trade, which ultimately results in allegation of gratification. The leadership might also delve deeper into allegations of the military's involvement in supporting, abetting, and facilitating smuggling, illegal liquor, and narcotics trade. The army may also take decisive steps to isolate itself from the social, cultural, and economic management of the border areas, leaving this

responsibility to the civilian administration and politicians.

It is perhaps time for the army leadership to require generals and high-ranking officers to publicly declare their assets and those of their immediate family members every year. This requirement should also extend to all civil servants, including members of national and provincial assemblies and the senate. While the income tax return of a business person may have some reason to be kept private, there are no apparent reasons for civil and army officers and public servants to keep their income and wealth tax declarations secret.

In addition, the data from NADRA and other statistical data gathered at national and provincial levels, as well as internationally, should be linked to trace any business transactions, property deals, company formations, or investments in stock exchanges made by all public and civil officers and their close relatives. This information should be made public every year without fail. Any discrepancies should be disclosed, and both public and civil servants should be held accountable for accumulating wealth beyond their known means of income.

Analysts are also confident that the current military leadership will investigate the children of all public and civil servants (both army and civilians) who are studying abroad at exorbitant costs. They believe that many of these individuals cannot afford such expenses based on their known sources of income. This scrutiny

aims to ensure transparency and accountability across all levels of public service.

It is an admitted fact that the indulgence of Pakistan Army into business commerce, trade, banking, agriculture, construction, real estate and large scale manufacturing has contributed immensely in the progress and development of the country, besides absorbing retired armed forces personnel in gainful employment and in providing relief to the families of the martyrs. However some shortsighted critics argue that retired comrades and the families of the martyred receive generous pensions, significant official benefits, including financial compensation and education allowances. Therefore extensive involvement of the military in civilian commercial activities is without any justification.

They further argued that such indulgence distorts the market due to their access to resources and influence not available to private competitors. This, according to them, creates an uneven playing field and potential conflicts of interest and diverting focus of the army and resources from primary defense responsibilities. They believe that due to these compelling reasons, the army leadership should consider alternative models to achieve the same goals more transparently and equitably like many other countries who achieve the same objectives through pension funds, insurance programs, and government-funded support systems without extensive business ventures. They conclude that addressing these concerns

would help ensure that the military's focus remains on its primary role of national defense while maintaining public trust and economic fairness and minimize their indulgence in corruption of corrupt practices.

Analysts, whether in favor or against the army's role in civilian businesses, universally praise the army leadership for initiating a comprehensive accountability process following the May 9 mayhem, where critical military installations were attacked by a violent mob. They believe these accountability measures, started for whatever reason, should continue unabated until the army, considered the most disciplined, revered, and respected institution in the country, is completely purified of corrupt elements.

The implications of this arrest are profound, signaling a move towards greater accountability and transparency within the military. It sets a precedent that even high-ranking officers are not above the law and can be held accountable for their actions. This arrest could serve as a deterrent, indicating that corruption and misconduct will not be tolerated regardless of rank or position. Additionally, this action may positively impact public perception of the military and reinforce high standards of integrity. The hope is that this arrest marks the start of a broader effort to address corruption at all levels within the military, with consistent and fair enforcement of accountability measures being crucial to maintaining momentum and achieving lasting change.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

WHO declares mpox virus a public health emergency of global concern

The U. N. World Health Organization Wednesday declared mpox a global public health emergency after several health officials from countries around the world continued to warn about the risk of its spread.

The WHO issued an emergency for mpox virus for the second time in two years, following an outbreak of the viral infection in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) that has spread to neighbouring countries.

An emergency committee of WHO, which is based in Geneva, met early Wednesday to advise WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on whether the disease outbreak constitutes a "public health emergency of international concern," or PHEIC.

A PHEIC is the highest level of alarm under international health law.

The WHO chief called for the meeting last week to seek advice on whether the mpox – previously monkeypox – outbreaks are cause for international concern.

On Tuesday, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) declared the situation a public health emergency.

"The Emergency Committee's advice to me, and that of the [Africa CDC], which yesterday declared a public health emergency of regional security, are aligned," Tedros said in a post on the social media platform X, formerly Twitter.

Mpox cases have been spreading throughout many countries in Africa, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and neighbouring Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. The potential for further spread in Africa is worrying, said the WHO chief.

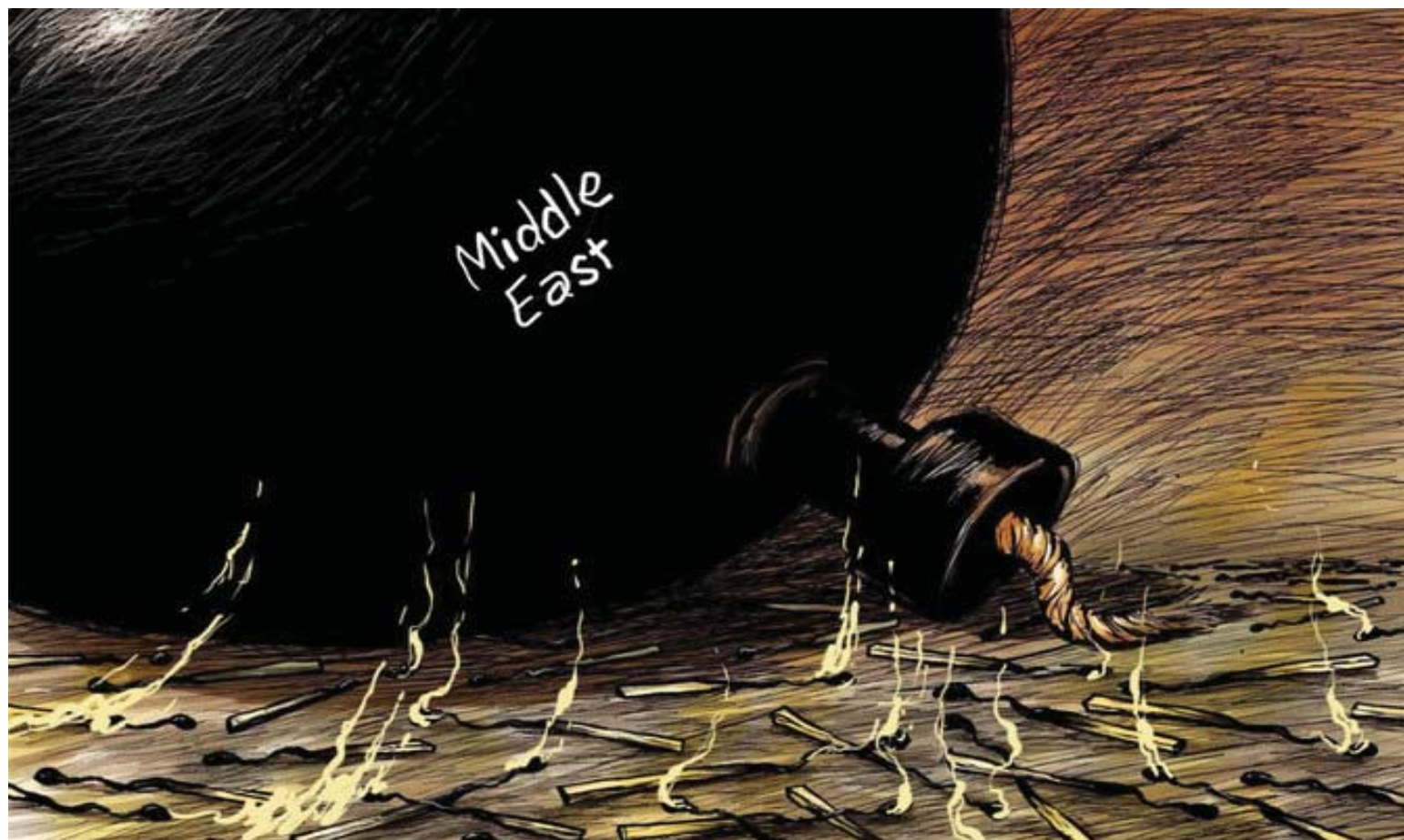
"In addition to other outbreaks of other clades of mpox in other parts of Africa, it's clear that a coordinated international response is essential to stop these outbreaks and save lives," Tedros said.

This year already saw over 14,000 reported cases of the virus with 524 deaths, a significant increase in reported cases from 2023, it was pointed out.

Tedros previously mentioned that the mpox outbreaks have occurred due to different viruses called clades.

At Wednesday's meeting he said there was transmission of the so-called clade 1b virus in the DRC last year which was caused "mainly through sexual networks." This clade is reportedly deadlier and more easily transmitted from person to person.

Clade 1 has been circulating in the DRC for years while clade 2 was responsible for the global outbreak of 2022 which was declared an international public health emergency.



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

Voice of the People

Urgent Need for Inclusion of Physical Activities in Education

Respected Sir,
 I write to you as a concerned student and citizen who is deeply inspired by the recent victory of Arshad Nadeem who won a historic gold medal at the 2024 Olympics. This remarkable achievement has brought immense pride to Pakistan and highlights the incredible potential of our youth. However, it also brings to light a pressing issue that requires immediate attention which is the lack of encouragement and infrastructure for physical education in our country.
 Being a student, I have personally experienced less importance placed on physical activities within our education system. For instance, during the first semester, we have a course titled "Physical Education", which ironically, involves no physical activities whatsoever. Instead of engaging in sports or games, students are confined to memorizing the rules of sports as well as learning about the internal and external organs of the human body without any practical applications. This approach not only negates what physical education stands for but also discourages student participation in these activities.

Arshad Nadeem's success story demonstrates the power of determination and perseverance even with limited resources and a lack of proper facilities and governmental encouragement. His journey serves as an inspiration and a reminder of the potential of our youth.

Therefore, the concerned authorities should integrate physical activities into the curriculum across all levels including

primary, secondary, and higher education. Sport and physical education need not only be theoretical but also practical which can help in creating a healthy society. In this way, we can ensure that our children will be both academically and athletically competent individuals who can represent Pakistan at the international level.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Yumna Hassan Latki
 Student of Bahria University
 Karachi Campus, Karachi, Pakistan
 yumnahassan604@gmail.com

Karachi's Annual Agony: Flooding, Destruction and Loss of life

Dear Editor,
 I am writing to express my concern about Karachi's infrastructure struggling to cope with the annual monsoon rains, resulting in devastating floods that claim lives and cause widespread destruction. The city's roads, already in disrepair, become impassable, leaving residents stranded. This year's rainfall has been particularly severe, with over 10 inches of rain recorded in just a few days. The consequences have been catastrophic, with numerous deaths, injuries, and significant property damage.

According to reports, the 2022 floods affected over 80% of the city, with 15 inches of rainfall causing widespread chaos. Similarly, in 2023, 12 inches of rain resulted in 50 fatalities.

It is imperative that the authorities take immediate action to address the root causes of this recurring disaster.

Investing in flood-resistant infrastructure, improving drainage systems, and enhancing emergency response mechanisms are critical steps towards mitigating the impact of future floods.

I urge the government to prioritize Karachi's infrastructure development and take concrete measures to prevent such tragedies from occurring again.

I would be grateful if you could publish my letter and help awareness about this critical issue.

Sincerely,
Falak Muhammad
 Falakshykh132@gmail.com
 Karachi, Pakistan

Effect of climate change on Agriculture

Sir:
 Through the columns of the newspaper I want to highlight an important issue that is the downfall of agriculture in Pakistan.

Pakistan is an agriculture country and agriculture plays an important role in the country economy. Sixty percent of population of Pakistan is directly or indirectly reliant upon rain fed agriculture. With climate change effecting all over the world, it has also affected our agriculture system. Currently all-arable land is under cultivation in Pakistan as the country strives to meet the food need for rapidly growing population. Climate change has increased temperature resulting in changes in rainfall pattern which is closely linked to agricultural production. Rainfall distribution and intensity have change drastically. This has also resulted in floods that damage fertile land. Many parts of the country are receiving less than 250 mm rainfall per annum that

requires further enhancement of farming and irrigation infrastructure including water canals dams for water storage.

Climate change is threatening the crop production of our major food crops. According to 2020 report of global climate risk index, Pakistan is the fifth among the countries highly vulnerable to global warming and climate change. Many studies suggested that the temperature increase will shift Pakistan cropping seasons and could permanently erase some crops. Pakistan need to develop and adopt climate smart crop management strategies. Water conservation measures are need to implement as well as using the best irrigation scheduling technologies. With changing temperature all over the world Pakistan need to develop strategies and techniques to overcome its challenges.

Yours sincerely
Muzammil Bin Nasir
 Islamabad
 Email: muzammil.2003n@gmail.com

Should I continue my education?

The Editor
 Recently, I graduated from GSCWU BAHAWALPUR in English. I secured 3.53/4.00, which is good enough, in my opinion. I decided to continue and take admission in Mphil English from Islamia University Bahawalpur, but I was in shock when I heard about the fees. The fee is RS 87545/- per semester. Is it possible for any middle-class student to pursue his/her education dream at that rate. The Government should pay attention to the education system as the education of youth is the priority. Instead of distributing laptops and bikes among

a few selected students there must be fee discount for each and every student. The scholarships should not be for a few selected students but for each student so that no student feel peft out. Being in the shoe of each of that student who is always unable to receive any financial aid, I can relate to the stress about pursuing education. The universities should also provide relief in fee structure that is going higher and higher with each passing day because In this era of inflation and poverty a student from middle or lower class always wonder about one thing that is: "SHOULD I CONTINUE MY EDUCATION?"

Thanking you.
Yours sincerely,
Areej Younis,
 areejabc11@gmail.com

Balancing Hospitality and Security: Managing Pakistan's Afghan Refugee Challenges

Dear Editor,
 I am writing to address the ongoing Afghan refugee crisis and its substantial impact on Pakistan. As one of the largest host countries for Afghan refugees, Pakistan faces significant challenges, including security concerns, economic strain, and issues related to social integration.

It is crucial to acknowledge both the humanitarian needs of Afghan refugees and the legitimate concerns of Pakistan regarding security and resource allocation. While Pakistan has generously hosted millions of refugees, there is an urgent need to develop a more sustain-

able and secure approach to managing this crisis.

Historically, the influx of Afghan refugees has exerted considerable economic pressure on Pakistan's resources, affecting housing, education, and health-care services. The UNHCR reports that Pakistan is home to approximately 1.4 million registered Afghan refugees, placing a significant burden on public services.

Furthermore, security concerns have escalated due to associations with insurgent activities and cross-border smuggling. Recent increases in cross-border incidents and reports of radicalisation among some refugee groups highlight the necessity for enhanced security measures.

To address these challenges, I urge policymakers to implement a comprehensive strategy. This should include strengthening border security and surveillance, enhancing economic and social integration programs for refugees, and establishing clear legal frameworks for their status. Additionally, increased international cooperation and aid are essential to share the burden and support Pakistan's efforts. Long-term solutions should also focus on peace-building initiatives in Afghanistan to address the root causes of displacement.

In conclusion, while Pakistan has demonstrated commendable hospitality, the Afghan refugee crisis requires a balanced approach that ensures both security and humanitarian support. By implementing these measures, Pakistan can better manage the current situation and work towards a more stable and secure future for both its citizens and the refugees.

Sincerely,
Kainat Tashfeen,
 Islamabad

ISSI holds webinar on 'Interim Afghan Government in Power-Three Years on'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted a webinar, titled "Interim Afghan Government in Power-Three Years on." The webinar was moderated by Ms. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. Speakers included Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Director General ISSI; Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman BoG, ISSI; Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb, Charge d' Affaires/Minister Counselor, Afghanistan Embassy, Islamabad; Ambassador Ayaz Wazir, Former Pakistani Diplomat; Dr. Mandana Tishehyar, President of the Iranian Peace Studies Scientific Association; Dr. Ye Hailin, Director, Center for South Asia Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing; Dr. Zamaraeva Natalia Alekseevna, Senior Researcher Center for the Study of the Near and Middle East, Russia; Adam Weinstein, Deputy Director of the Middle East Program at

the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft, Washington D.C. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood stated that while the Taliban have consolidated power over the past three years, significant concerns persist regarding their governance, respect for human rights and women's rights, and counter-terrorism measures. He acknowledged positive developments such as improved security and certain economic indicators like increased revenue and exports, but noted that these were overshadowed by ongoing challenges in other domains. He mentioned that potent threats from groups like ISKP and TTP continue to challenge the Taliban's authority and stoke regional tensions. Ms. Amina Khan noted that the Taliban have solidified their status as the de facto political authority, though not de jure. They have established a fair degree of stability and security, along with efforts to stabilize the economy. In a significant diplomatic shift from the 1990s, the Taliban have

been engaging in diverse regional and global interactions, including 18 active political missions internationally. Sardar Ahmad Shakeeb stated that the Interim Afghan government has maintained internal unity, restored political and security stability, and saved the economy from collapse through infrastructure projects. Efforts have also focused on eliminating corruption, combating narcotics, and reforming bureaucracies while creating a new, corruption-free army that has generated youth employment. Ambassador Ayaz Wazir acknowledged the Taliban's control in Afghanistan despite lacking formal recognition. He expressed concerns about governance issues, including girls' education, human rights, and the need for inclusivity. Ambassador Wazir urged the international community to recognize the Taliban's reality and engage with them to ensure regional peace. Dr. Mandana Tishehyar observed that despite the Tali-



ban's claim of defeating the U.S., they face governance challenges, raising security concerns for neighbouring countries. Economic talks have progressed, but the Taliban's lack of recogni-

tion was due to the abandonment of the constitution and unclear foreign policy. Dr. Ye Hailin discussed China's focus on Afghanistan which was based on non-interference,

respect for Afghan sovereignty and social economic development. He said that Beijing's engagement was not based on conditionalities, but rather engagement with the Taliban for the welfare of the

masses. While expressing her views, Dr. Zamaraeva Natalia Alekseevna stated that the best approach towards Afghanistan was through engagement with the Taliban. She said a common approach was required towards the group that would ensure the Taliban addressing regional concerns. Adam Weinstein highlighted that since the Taliban took over Afghanistan, while violence has decreased, threats emanating from transnational terrorist groups such as ISKP and the TTP continue which are not just threats for the region but for the wider international community as well. These presentations were followed by a Q&A session. While concluding, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood acknowledged progress under the Taliban rule, noting improvements in security and economic realm. He also stressed the importance of addressing issues like refugee management and terrorist threats.

WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months; speakers



Rafullah Mandokhail

ZHOB: Speakers at a seminar highlighted the importance of breastfeeding for babies' mental and physical development and protecting them from infections and gastrointestinal infections. The seminar was organized under the auspices of the Al-Shifa Foundation with the financial support of the World Food Programme (WFP) here in Zhob. Doctors, health staff, and mothers in a large number attended the seminar. Speaking on the occasion,

District Coordinator Al-Shifa Foundation Tahir Shah Sherani said that organizing the seminar is aimed at highlighting the importance of breastfeeding and creating awareness in society. "During the week-long breastfeeding campaign, mothers in every nook and cranny of the district have been informed about the importance of breastfeeding through awareness sessions and the dissemination of global breastfeeding messages," he said. Highlighting the importance of breastfeeding, DHO

Dr Muzaffar Shah, MS Teaching Hospital, Dr Akhter Muhammad Mandokhail, and others said that breastfeeding is incredibly important for babies, offering them numerous benefits for their physical, emotional, and cognitive development rather than the formula or bottle milk. "Breast milk provides the babies with a perfect mix of proteins, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals, promoting healthy growth and development. It also contains antibodies that help protect the babies from

infections and diseases," adding that the World Health Organization recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, with continued breastfeeding along with solid foods until at least two years old. They emphasized. It is worth mentioning that, supported by WHO, UNICEF, WFP, and other partner organizations, every year the first week of August is marked as 'World Breastfeeding Week'. This year, 2024, the theme is 'Closing the Gap: Breastfeeding Support for All'.

Professor Tahir-ul-Qadri to address international conference in Japan on September 1



Muhammad Saqib-ur-Rahman

TOKYO: Dr. Professor Tahir-ul-Qadri, the founder of Minhaj-ul-Quran International and an international Islamic scholar, will arrive in Japan on August 28. He is scheduled to deliver a detailed address on the topics of global peace and humanity on September 1. He has previously spoken at major gatherings in Australia, Malaysia, and Singapore, and will now arrive in Japan after South Korea. The members of Minhaj-ul-Quran Japan Chapter will welcome him. On this occasion, President of the Asian Council, Mian Ali Imran, will also be accompanying him. This information was shared by Malik Mumtaz, President of the Japan Chapter, in a press note. Malik Mumtaz also stated that the international conference will be held at G-Maiken's Ota Shi-Soku Hall in Japan, which will be attended by hundreds of individuals. Dr. Professor Tahir-ul-Qadri will also meet with the Pakistani community and traders in Japan. He mentioned that the conference on peace and humanity in the current global context will be a milestone.

Celebration of Independence Day at Chowk Ghanta Ghar



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the occasion of 77th Independence Day organized by PC World News at Chowk Ghanta Ghar, Chief Guest Central President Cloth Board Etihad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra, Labor leader Mian Ijaz Ahmed and team of PC World News cut the cake and A special prayer was offered for the safety and security of the beloved country. The event was hosted by senior journalist Ghulam Dastgir and photojournalist Abdul Majid. Chief guest Alhaj Naseer Yusuf Wahra has said in his special message that I congratulate the entire Pakistani nation on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan, Independence Day is the peak of the historical political struggle of Indian Muslims for the right of self-determination. The establishment of Pakistan through a peaceful and democratic struggle is a unique and unparalleled chapter in history. We pay tribute to the leaders, workers and our forefathers of Tehreek-e-Pakistan, who have sacrificed so much for Pakistan, and by referring to the current situation in Palestine, we shed light on the importance and value of freedom. Obtained by sacrificing their lives. Cameraman Muhammad Irfan Qadri and Miss Maria were also present at the Independence Day ceremony. The special participation of businessmen, citizens and children holding the national flag and flags added to the ceremony.

Explore These 4 Enchanting Year-Round Destinations in Saudi

Spokesman Report

A land of diverse landscapes, from majestic green mountains to pristine beaches, Saudi is home to beautiful valleys and lush green parks, along with an array of all year-round destinations for travelers to explore. The cloud-shrouded valleys of Taif and the various highlands of the Aseer region, like Abha, Al Namas, and Rijal Almaa, provide the perfect retreat for those seeking a cooler climate in the summer. Upon arrival, travelers can embark on a journey through destinations brimming with authentic cultural experiences and historical marvels. From exploring the enchanting rose farms of Taif, where the air is perfumed with the scent of blooming flowers, to delighting in the charming allure of Al Namas, a quaint haven offering unique activities that captivate every visitor, each location promises unforgettable moments for travelers seeking both adventure and tranquility. Taif has long served as a more temperate retreat for Saudi families and today, it is one of the top summer destinations within the country for locals and expats alike. Home to over 2,000 rose farms, travelers visiting Taif can learn more about the roses the destination is famous for. When in Taif, don't miss the historical Souq Okaz, explore the Shubra Palace Museum, and take a trip to Al-Hada mountain, one of the most famous mountains in Saudi, and enjoy some treats from the Strawberry Farm. **Abha**, the enchanting capital of Aseer,



Abha

is the ideal destination to experience the invigorating cool breeze that refreshes one's spirit. This charming city offers a delightful atmosphere, with temperatures rarely exceeding 30 degrees celsius and refreshing rainfall occurring throughout the year. Stroll through Al Basta District's traditional market, before heading to Liwan Farm for a break from the hustle and bustle. Wander among the clouds at the Fog Walkway as you soak in the breathtaking views of the Tihama mountains or go to the Aryash Event and

enjoy its picturesque atmosphere, overlooking the entire city. When in Abha, do make time to take a leisurely stroll along the misty heights of the Aseer National Park Trail. Your visit to Abha will not be complete without hopping on the cable car ride that takes you up the Jabal Souda mountain, which has the highest peak in Saudi. **Rijal Almaa** Rijal Almaa village, dubbed one of the best tourist villages in the world by UNWTO, is situated just 45 kilometers



Al Namas

away from Abha, and offers a refreshing summer climate. Travelers should meet the Flower Men at the Rijal Almaa village, and admire the unique gingerbread-style architecture and mud brick houses, with buildings that reach up to 7 floors. Steeped in history, this hidden gem unveils the authentic soul of Saudi that presents a unique and immersive experience for those keen to delve deep into the Saudi culture. While in Rijal Almaa, take time to admire the breathtaking natural

scenery such as the Qasabat Al-Owus Tower or take a leisurely stroll through the lush green fields and savor over 40 different types of authentic Al-Ami honey produced at the Honey Cottage nestled within Rijal Almaa village. **Al Namas** Al Namas, locally known as the "City of Fog" as it is situated at the top of the Sarawat Mountains, is just a two-hour drive from Abha. It's beautiful green landscapes and moderate climate make it an ideal escape for nature lovers and

enthusiasts of unique experiences. Enjoy activities such as mountain climbing and camping in the forests among the picturesque mountains, valleys, and waterfalls. Al Namas also boasts a variety of tourist attractions, including parks, palaces, and museums built on top of the mountains, perfect for cooling off and having fun. **Connectivity and Visa** Saudi has recently eased tourist visa requirements with immediate effect, where Pakistani applicants can now submit a bank statement showing a minimum monthly credit amount of USD 750 or its equivalent. The Tasheer offices across Pakistan offer a convenient and user-friendly experience, including visa application guidance, biometric enrolment, status tracking, and passport delivery. Travelers can schedule an appointment on the Tasheer website prior to their visit. In addition, Saudi has introduced the transit visa which is available for travellers arriving in Saudi via Saudia and Flynas, where they can transit and explore Saudi for up to 96 hours. Visa on arrival is available for those travellers who hold a valid and used UK, US or Schengen visa. In the past year, Saudi introduced the one-year multiple entry visa for Pakistani travellers. This is a specific visa for those coming for personal visits such as attending weddings or functions or visiting friends or family. Holders of this visa can enjoy multiple visits to Saudi within a 12-month period, allowing them to explore the country's vibrant cities, cultural richness, and natural wonders all year round. Pakistani travellers with the one-year multiple entry visa can also perform Umrah, underscoring Saudi's commitment to fostering spiritual journeys and cultural exchanges.



Rijal Almaa



Taif

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
78,105.98	77,877.41	
Day's High	Day's Low	
78,709.13	77,987.82	
Index Value	Change	
6,533,004,840	+228.57	
Percentage	Time	
+0.29%	15 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,347.35	+66.30	
Percentage	Time	
+0.80%	15 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
40,557.62	+549.23	
Percentage	Time	
+1.37%	15 Aug, 3:19 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
36,726.64	+284.21	
Percentage	Time	
+0.78%	15 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183.8	187.40
Bahrain Dinar	738.1	743.6
Canadian Dollar	202.8	207.15
China Yuan	38.29	38.69
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	303.70	305.90
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.35	910.50
Malaysian Ringgit	58.75	59.55
New Zealand \$	169.34	171.34
Norwegians Krone	26.14	26.44
Omani Riyal	723.4	728.5
Qatari Riyal	76.44	77.14
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.60
Singapore Dollar	202	204.00
Swedish Korona	26.27	26.57
Swiss Franc	319.5	324.50
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	76.6
UK Pound Sterling	357.8	360
US Dollar	279.30	280.40

ICCI celebrates Independence Day at Deosai, Pakistan's Highest Plateau

Spokesman Report

SKARDU: On the Independence Day of Pakistan, under the auspices of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, a flag hoisting ceremony was held at Deosai, one of the highest plateaus of the world. Along with the delegates of the National Tourism Summit, the Ambassadors of the European Union, Egypt, Myanmar, Yemen, Malaysia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan along with the representatives of Turkey and Portugal envoys participated in this history making event. On this occasion, Ambassadors and their families accompanied the participants in raising slogans of Pakistan ZindaBad. During this exceptional event, the participants were carrying national flags in their hands.

Speaking on the occasion, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Ahsan Bakhtawari said that he was proud to have the honor of celebrating independence day and hoisting the national flag at the highest venue of the country, adding that it was his heartfelt wish to celebrate the Day with Ambassadors at this most beautiful area of Pakistan which is important to highlight the positive image of the country.

Addressing the ceremony, the European Union Ambassador Dr. Riina Kionuka said



that on this happy occasion, she on behalf of the EU congratulates the brave and passionate Pakistani nation, vowing that we will strengthen cooperation in every field,

including Education, trade, Health, climate change etc. in the days to come.

Mazhar Bin Mazlan, the High Commissioner of Malaysia, said that Pakistan and Malaysia are best friends and are partners of good and bad times and that we are all proud of the achievements of Pakistan it obtained after its independence.

Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Khizr Farhadov extended heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of Pakistan on behalf of his government and the people.

Ambassador of Kazakhstan Yerzan Kristafin said that Pakistan is the most beautiful country and its brilliant people are its pride and that participation in the celebration is a source of joy and honor for him.

Former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari said that celebrating Pakistan's Independence Day at this most beautiful place is a matter of immense pride for all of us.

Vice President FPCCI Ms. Qara tul Ain paid tribute to ICCI President Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari for providing the opportunity to celebrate this important event in the most beautiful region of the country.

On this occasion a sumptuous luncheon was also hosted in honour of the participants.

Independence Celebration

ISLAMABAD: Metro Bus Service celebrated Independence Day with great pomp and show in the twin cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Kaspersky: cyberattacks in Q2 of 2024 'risk-raising'

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In the second quarter of 2024, Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team (GREAT) observed that, while some threat actors maintained their usual patterns, others have significantly updated their tools and broadened the scope of their activities. According to the company's telemetry, there has been a surge in sophisticated cyberespionage campaigns targeting various sectors, with government, military, telecommunications, and judicial systems facing the highest number of threats worldwide.

Kaspersky's GREAT highlights that the attackers took time to update their toolsets. As far as Geographical spread of cyberattacks is concerned, no single region stood out as a hotbed for APT attacks this quarter. Instead, activity was widespread, affecting all regions. This quarter,

APT campaigns targeted Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, highlighting the global reach and impact of these threats.

'APTs continuously evolve, adapting their tactics and expanding their reach, making them a relentless force in the cyber landscape. To combat these ever-changing threats, it's crucial that the cyber-community unites, sharing information and collaborating across borders. Only through collective vigilance and open communication can we stay one step ahead and safeguard our digital world,' comments David Emm, Principal Security Researcher at Kaspersky's GREAT.

To learn more about APT threat landscape in Q2 2024, visit Securelist.com. Kaspersky's GREAT actively share their latest findings and exclusive insights through the Kaspersky Threat Intelligence Portal (TIP).

JS Bank celebrates 14th August by donating electronic wheelchairs to the differently-abled

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Bank, one of the fastest-growing banks in Pakistan, marked the nation's 77th Independence Day with a heartwarming initiative by partnering with the Association of Physically Disabled Adults (APHA) to donate electronic wheelchairs to differently-abled individuals, empowering them to lead more independent lives. An event was organized by APHA to commemorate this special occasion, attended by Kazim Raza, Head of Distribution and Branch Banking, and Jamil Memon, Head of CSR and Administration at JS Bank, along with Sohail Jawad, Executive Director of the State Bank of Pakistan.

Speaking on the occasion, Jamil Memon reiterated that JS Bank continues to actively support various social causes across Pakistan through meaningful contribu-



tions and initiatives, embodying its mission to make a lasting impact on society.

JS Bank has consistently been at the forefront of reaching out to underserved communities in Pakistan, including the

differently-abled. As part of its corporate social responsibility (CSR), the bank is committed to strengthening communities by providing employment opportunities that reflect its core values.

Alibaba.com lowers barrier for Pakistan SMEs to Go Global

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Alibaba.com, a leading platform for global business-to-business (B2B) e-commerce, today announced the launch of its new Global Gold Supplier-Lite Package in Pakistan. This new, affordable membership program aims to allow Pakistan small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to tap into the vast global market with ease. The launch comes as local SMEs increasingly embrace digitalization, with a remarkable 88% surge in the number of sellers joining Alibaba.com in July 2024 compared to the same period last year.

Pakistan's digital ecosystem

is currently experiencing a significant growth. According to a report by Statista, Pakistan's e-commerce market is projected to reach approximately PKR 1.4 trillion (around US\$50 billion) by 2024 and the number of e-commerce users is expected to amount to 14 million users by 2029. This digital adoption, coupled with strong smartphone usage, has created fertile grounds for e-commerce businesses to thrive. SMEs are at the forefront of this digital revolution, recognizing the immense potential of online platforms to reach a global audience and expand their reach beyond domestic markets.

Mobilink Bank partners with Systems Limited to drive superior customer experience

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital microfinance bank, Mobilink Bank, has partnered with Systems Limited to leverage the power of Temenos Core, modernizing its core banking platform and boosting business and operational capabilities. Under this partnership, the Bank - being the first in Pakistan to upgrade its platform to R23, is positioned to deliver a premium customer experience, streamline internal processes, and achieve unparalleled agility within the ever-evolving financial landscape. Mobilink Bank is part of VEON group, a global

digital operator serving nearly 160 million customers across six markets (7% of the world's population).

Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, Interim CEO Mobilink Bank said, "Our partnership with Systems Limited will modernize our core banking infrastructure, enabling us to enhance customer experience through personalized digital offerings, based on the evolving market trends for unlocking new growth avenues. This partnership will further streamline our banking processes, optimize our technology roadmap and position us as a leader in the digital banking landscape."



"We look forward to upgrading and running the Core banking system on a Cloud Native Platform for Mobilink Bank. By lever-

aging our extensive experience and regulatory accelerators like Pakistan Model Bank, we are well-equipped to transform the Bank's plat-

form seamlessly to meet local regulations and practices. It's inspiring to witness Mobilink Bank's drive for innovation as they reimagine banking for

their millions of customers and foster economic progress in the country," said Ammara Masood, Global Industries GM BFS, Systems Limited.

Options Int'l deposits PKR 6 million penalty into national treasury

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Following the Supreme Court of Pakistan dismissed its appeal, M/s Options International deposited the PKR 6 million penalty under Section 40(8) of the Competition Act 2010 into national treasury.

This Supreme Court decision marks the end of a comprehensive legal battle that began with a formal complaint from STARBUCKS leading to an investigation and enforcement action by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP).

Cheezious launches Independence Day plantation drive across Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: Cheezious, a Proud Pakistani fast-food brand, is thrilled to announce the launch of its nationwide plantation drive in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority (CDA) in Islamabad and the Punjab Horticultural Authority in Lahore. This initiative is part of Cheezious' vision to create an eco-friendly environment and to contribute to a greener Pakistan.

As part of the drive, Cheezious will set up branded stalls and kiosks in key locations throughout Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar where free plants will be distributed to the public. The major activities will be conducted in Islamabad including a specialized kiosk at Cheezious' F-7 Branch, which will be featured for the entire week.

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GHQ to host reception for Arshad Nadeem today

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Army Chief will host a special ceremony at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi today to

honor gold medalist Arshad Nadeem and his family. The event aims to acknowledge and encourage the athlete's exceptional abilities.

According to a spokesperson, Arshad



Nadeem has lived up to the nation's expectations and brought pride to Pakistan.

He will serve as an inspiration for the country's youth in the world of sports,

the spokesperson said.

The ceremony will be a testament to the Army's recognition of Arshad Nadeem's achievements and his contribution to Pakistan's sporting legacy.

Jashn-e-Azadi Cycle Race Celebrates Independence with Thrilling Competition

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: In a vibrant celebration of Pakistan's Independence Day, the Punjab Cycling Association, in collaboration with Unique Group of Institutions (UGI), successfully organized the Jashn-e-Azadi Cycle Race for men and women. The event, which showcased a powerful blend of athleticism and patriotism, began at the Punjab Stadium and concluded at the UGI Head Office on Wahdat Road, drawing intense competition and enthusiastic spectators.

The race was officially inaugurated by Col. Jehanzaib Khan Niazi (Retd.), with Moazzam Khan Klair, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, also present to lend his support.

In the men's category, Awais Khan from WAPDA emerged victorious, securing



the first position. He was followed by Sanaulah from HEC, who took second place, and Muhammad Sharif from Punjab, who claimed third. The women's race was equally thrilling, with Sneha Khalid taking the top spot, Romna Rashid finishing second, and

Aswa rounding out the top three.

The event concluded with a grand closing ceremony, where Abdul Manan Khurram, Chairman of UGI, served as the Chief Guest and led a stirring flag-raising ceremony. Moazzam

Khan Klair, along with other distinguished guests such as Shahzada Butt, Waqar Ali, and Sakhawat Ali Shah, presented cash prizes and awards to the top finishers in both categories, recognizing their exceptional performances.

Urban Developers Cake Cutting Ceremony held



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Urban Developers Cake Cutting Ceremony was held at Central Park Housing Society, Lahore. On this occasion Ch. Muhammad Sarwar, Nasir Majeed, Waqas Ahmed, Umar Farooq, Col. Shahid Alam, Shahzad Amir, Muhammad Mehran, Sports Manager Muhammad Kalim, Touseef Zafar, Muhammad Qasim, Umar Farooq, Umar Awean, Sohail Bhatti, Tanveer, Umar Hameed, Muhammad Yousaf, and Jabbar Shehzad, Hassan, Kashif Tufail, Makid and M. Waseem were present. Urban Developers is doing dynamic work in Sports activities with Central Park Sports Department and has been organizing more sports events under the Chairmanship of Mian Tahir Javed and Patron in Chief Usman Anwar.

Huzaiifa Shahid's Remarkable Year Continues with Victory at Japan Junior Open 2024

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's rising squash sensation, Huzaiifa Shahid, continues to make waves on the international stage, securing the Under-13 title at the Japan Junior Open 2024. Huzaiifa delivered a stellar performance, defeating China's Yuan Xi Liu in the final with a commanding 3-0 victory, further solidifying his status as a dominant force in junior squash.

This latest triumph marks Huzaiifa's third major title in 2024, following his impressive victories at the Hong Kong Junior Squash Championship and the Australian Junior Open earlier this year. Sponsored by the Bilquis and Abdul Razak Dawood (BARD) Foundation, Huzaiifa's journey to success has been nothing short of extraordinary, showcasing his remarkable talent and unwavering determination.

Reflecting on Huzaiifa's continued success, Abdul Razak Dawood, the visionary behind BARD Foundation, expressed his pride, stating, "Huzaiifa's accomplishments are a testament to his dedication, hard work, and exceptional talent. Winning three major international titles in a single year is no small



feat, and Huzaiifa has truly proven himself as a formidable contender in the world of junior squash. We are honored to support such a promising athlete and look forward to seeing him achieve even greater heights in his career."

Mehreen Dawood, a driving force at BARD Foundation, echoed these senti-

ments, adding, "Huzaiifa's journey is an inspiration to aspiring athletes across Pakistan. His consistent performances against top international opponents have set a new standard for junior squash. At BARD Foundation, we are committed to nurturing young talent and providing them with the resources they need to excel. Huzaiifa's success is a shining example of what can be achieved with the right support and determination, and we are incredibly proud to be a part of his journey."

Huzaiifa's success extends beyond this year. In 2023, he made headlines by winning the Borneo Junior Open in Malaysia, further establishing himself as one of the most promising young talents in the sport. His achievements have not gone unnoticed, as he also secured a silver medal in the U-13 category at the Asian Junior Squash Championship held in Islamabad in June this year.

With each tournament, Huzaiifa Shahid continues to elevate Pakistan's standing in the global squash arena. His relentless pursuit of excellence and ability to consistently perform at the highest level make him a player to watch in the years to come.

Arshad's gold medal holds historic importance: AAF

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Asian Athletics Federation (AAF) President Dhalan Jumaan Al Hamad believed that the success of the Paris Olympics 2024 gold-medalist Arshad Nadeem holds historic importance not only for Pakistan but for Asian athletics as well.

In a letter written from him to Chairman South Asian and Vice President Asian Athletics Federation Maj Gen (R) Muhammad Akram Sahi he congratulated him, Athletics Federation of Pakistan (AFP) and Pakistani nation on the Olympic gold medal win, said a press release.

The success of the Pakistani athlete proves the usefulness of Asian athletics in the world.

Arshad's success is of historical significance not only in Pakistan but also in Asian athletics. I remember Sahi checking Arshad's talent many years back and supporting him, he said.

He said Sahi has played an important role in Arshad's training, treatment and all other matters.

This success of Arshad is in the name of Sahi and his colleagues who were with him every moment in this journey, he said. He



Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament begins from 18th August: Khalid Nafees

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Khalid Nafees Chairman RCAF Tournament Committee announced the Schedule of Master Oil Inter Club Cricket Tournament begins from 18th August at Various Cricket grounds of the City.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi With the collaboration of Master Oil Lubricants, in which 233 Clubs of Seven Zones of Karachi participating in the event.

All the matches will be played on 40 overs under PCB One Day Tournament Rules. A bowler can not bowled more than 8 overs.

All participating Clubs are advised to contact Zonal Officials or Muhammad Touseef Siddiqui Tournament Secretary for their Matches.

The following are schedule:

Sunday 18th August. Karachi Gymkhana vs Khizra Sports at Karachi Gymkhana. 19th August: Naya Nazimabad Gymkhana vs Al-Hussaini Colts at Naya Nazimabad. 20th August: Shiraz Sports vs Z. A Sports at Afza Ground, Kamran Cricket Club vs Dehli Boys at Landhi Gymkhana, Doab Cricket Club



vs Young Fighter at Young Fighter Ground, Students Sports vs Wireless Gymkhana at Student Ground, Dawood Sports Colts vs Aga Khan Gymkhana at Aga Khan Gymkhana. 21st August: Fazal Hussain vs Sadiq Gymkhana at Landhi Gymkhana, Orangi United CC vs Azad CC at Afza Ground, Karachi West cc vs New Nest CC at Students Ground, Young Fighter Colts vs Gulzar CC at Young Fighter Ground, 22

August: Shaheen Gymkhana vs. Al-Hussaini CC at Asifabad Sports Ground, Sun CC vs N. K. Rangers CC at Afza Ground, Shama Sports vs Taiser Town Tiger CC at KCCA Stadium, Paramount CC vs Karachi Eaglets at Landhi Gymkhana, 26th August: Late Ismail Jaffer CC vs Malir Sports at KCCA Stadium, Larosh CC vs Mahmood Khan CC Student Ground, SMS Gymkhana vs Recreation CC at Eid Gah Ground Nazimabad, 27th August: Farhan CC vs Punjab CC at Landhi Gymkhana, Rizvia Sports vs Mansoor Sports at Afza Gymkhana, Rehbar Sports vs Abu Rehan CC at Student Ground, Hamdam CC vs New United Gymkhana at Young Fighter Ground, Dacca Sports vs Orangi Muslim CC at KCCA Stadium, 28th August: Model c.c. vs Al Rehman CC at Young Fighter Ground, Hydri Gymkhana vs Commrade Sports at Landhi Gymkhana, National Gymkhana vs Pak Crescent at Afza Ground, Northshire CC vs A. A. S CC Zone-I at KCCA Stadium, 29th August: Good Luck C. C. vs Nazimabad Colts at Afza Ground, Ravi Gymkhana vs Baldia Gymkhana at KCCA Stadium, Al-Mumtaz CC vs Korangi Friends Colts at Landhi Gymkhana.

PCB, IBCC join forces to promote cricket in schools and colleges



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between IBCC and PCB, Inter Boards Coordination Commission (IBCC) has organized a consultation workshop here to discuss how to promote domestic cricket in schools and colleges level.

The workshop was attended by representatives from educational boards, focused on addressing the challenges faced by students, such as physical fitness, financial limitations, and access to proper facilities.

As a result, inter-school and inter-college cricket tournament is set to start in October 2024.

The winners of the tournament will compete in inter-provincial and national levels and the winner will have a chance to represent Pakistan internationally.

The collaboration will ensure that students receive athletic training, physical fitness sessions, and access to well-maintained cricket grounds.

Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will provide technical support, while educational boards will help identify young talent.

Executive Director IBCC Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah said, "This partnership is a huge step forward in supporting our youth. We are excited to see how this will help our players, both on and off the field."

Director PCB Abdullah Niazi said, "We are committed to finding and developing the next generation of cricket stars. With this initiative, we are laying the groundwork for a stronger future for Pakistan cricket."

As the tournament begins this October, we invite everyone to support these young cricketers, who could one day represent Pakistan on international level.

Rain washes out day three of first four-day match



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The third day's play of the first four-day match between Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh 'A' here at the Islamabad Club was washed out due to persistent rain.

The umpires called off the day an hour after the lunch was taken. Saad Khan and Kamran Ghulam will resume for Pakistan Shaheens tomorrow as they lead by 245 runs with six wickets in hand. The first ball on day four is expected to be bowled at 9:45 a.m.

Scores in brief: At close of play Day 3- Bangladesh 'A' 122 all out, 44.3 overs (Mahmudul Hasan Joy 65; Naseem Shah 3-24, Mir Hamza 3-33, Mohammad Rameez Jnr 2-41).

Pakistan Shaheens 367-4, 90 overs (Umar Amin 177, Saud Shakeel 76, Mohammad Huraiera 39, Saad Khan 31 not out, Kamran Ghulam 20 not out; Hasan Murad 2-49, Tanzim Hasan Sakib 1-67, Nayeem Hasan 1-81). Pakistan Shaheens lead by 245 runs.

Danyal bags Independence Tenpin Bowling Cup title

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Danyal Ijaz has won the 6th ITBA Independence Tenpin Bowling Cup at Leisure City Jinnah Park, Rawalpindi.

Danyal obtained first position with 370 points while Waqas Parekh got 2nd position with 330 points and Rana Shehzad remained 3rd. Players of Islamabad took part in the tournament.

General Secretary, Islamabad Tenpin Bowling Association, Saleem Baig who was the chief guest on the occasion distributed prizes among the players.

Ibrar focused on improving bowling skills



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan spinner Abrar Ahmed has expressed his commitment to enhancing his bowling abilities, acknowledging that team selection is ultimately decided by the management and captain.

"My role is to focus on improving my bowling and working hard daily. With many spinners being groomed, I've had experience playing on green pitches in the Quaid-e-Azam trophy.

My objective is to consistently bowl on line and length, regardless of the wicket," Ahmed said in a press conference at the Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi on Thursday.

Ahmed credited experienced players like Imad Wasim, Shadab Khan and Mohammad Nawaz for teaching him valuable lessons. "Even when I'm not playing, I learn by observing them and the players. My goal is to become the team's main spinner, and I'll strive to achieve it through hard work."

When asked about the team's preparation, Ahmed responded positively, saying, "Our training is going well, and we have a strong team." Meanwhile the Pakistan Test team also trained at the Pindi Stadium, Rawalpindi after one rest.

ECC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presiding over a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Minister Finance chaired the meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee

Commerce Desk

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

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Industries & Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Commerce Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Privatization Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, Deputy

Chairman Planning Commission, Federal Secretaries, and other senior officials of the relevant ministries.

The Cabinet Committee approved the proposal presented by the Industries & Production Division to continue the Prime

Minister's Relief Package for FY 2024-25 through Utility Stores Corporation with revised price and subsidy.

Furthermore, the ECC approved the request of Ministry of Industries & Production to declare Ware-

housing and Logistic Sector as an industry.

Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presiding over a meeting of Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) in Islamabad on 15th August, 2024.

Climate change ministry, BISP joins hands to boost country's forest cover

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam on Thursday said that engaging communities in tree plantation is vital for effective forest conservation and management, because their well-being is often intricately linked with the health of the forests they depend on, according to press statement issued here from the climate change & environmental coordination ministry.

The PM's climate aid said further that since local communities often have traditional knowledge and practices that contribute to



sustainable forest management, they can play an effective role in enforcing conservation, managing natural resources and protecting biodiversity. Given the effectiveness of community-based



forest management in forest protection and conservation, the climate change & environmental coordination ministry's Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme (UGPP) has launched an ambitious

tree plantation campaign in collaboration with the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) across all provinces, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit Baltistan to enhance tree cover

in the country.

Underlining the overarching aim of the partnership between the ministry and BISP, the PM's climate change coordinator Romina Khurshid said that partnership would aim to utilise large-scale nationwide network of the BISP financial aid beneficiaries and engage them in various tree plantation activities across the country.

"Such a large-scale involvement of the BISP beneficiaries in the tree plantation activities would help foster environmental stewardship and contribute to a greener Pakistan. Below is an overview of the activities and plans in each province," Ms Alam hoped.

Four new Special Technology Zones to help create jobs for Pakistan's youth

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In line with the vision of the Prime Minister and the Federal Government to enable job creation for the youth and prioritise the technology sector, Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) is pleased to announce the notification of four (4) new Special Technology Zones (STZs) with a focus on Business Process Outsourcing, Information Technology, High-tech Production, Research and Development, Tech Skill Development and Knowledge Products.

These four new zones consists of

1.4 Million Sqft high-quality tech infrastructure and 130 acres of land available for exclusive use of the technology companies. An investment of PKR 30 Billion has already been made in developing the specialised tech infrastructure by the zone developers while more than PKR 150 Billion investment is expected in next 2-4 years by local and foreign technology companies. The 4 new zones will have the capacity to house more than 50,000 professionals with an export potential exceeding US\$ 350 Million annually.

The newly designated zones

include the NUST Special Technology Zone and Tech7 Special Technology Zone in Islamabad, Mind-bridge Special Technology Zone in Lahore, and Capital Smart Technology Zone in Rawalpindi. These zones are notified strategically to foster innovation, drive economic growth, enhance technology exports and position Pakistan as a key player in the global technology arena. The accelerated roll-out of STZs are in-line with the economic pillars of SIFC and will increase the technology related local and foreign direct investment in the country.

In addition to the 12 existing zones, which are home to over 15,000+ technology professionals, the newly notified zones will offer state-of-the-art facilities, cutting-edge infrastructure, and high-speed internet connectivity, ensuring that enterprises can compete and thrive in the global market. Exclusively designated for technology sector companies under STZA policy, these zones also offer significant incentives, including 10-year exemptions on Income Tax and Customs duties, and forex benefits to licensed technology companies operating within them.

Fostering Peace: KP Governor's Independence Day event strengthens international ties

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani

PESHAWAR: The Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has done something quite praiseworthy that has drawn interest not only among Pakistanis but across the world. Much to the surprise of many people – especially those who are followers of international relations – Governor Kundi invited the Consul Generals of the United States of America, Afghanistan, and Iran to hoist the Pakistan flag at the Governor House in Peshawar. It was held to mark Pakistan's Independence Day.

It is symbolic to have foreign diplomats from three countries that have had conflicts, to be precise hostile relations with Pakistan in the past sharing a moment standing under the green crescent flag. It represents a message of envoy and acceptance, showing Pakistan's intention of coming together and living in harmony with neighbors



and superpowers of the world. This action can be explained as an attempt

to enhance relations with other countries and encourage further amicable

relations in the region.

The U.S. Afghan, and Iranian Consul Generals' attendance in such a significant ceremony is a sign of changes in the political and diplomacy in the area and even globally. Besides, it makes Khyber Pakhtunkhwa a representation of peace and a platform for different countries. It has been regarded as an example of progressive and non-partisan diplomacy by the governor Faisal Karim Kundi. In the long run, this can progress and disseminate a message of hope and togetherness, marking Pakistan's position for the acceptance of diplomacy and non-violent resolution. This ceremony is not a simplistic nationalist performance, but an indication of the first movements towards world integration. The message is clear: the world is one, inter-connected and as such there is a need to act as one in the best interest of all nations of the world.

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Govt updating existing web management system to firewall: Minister says

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Information Technology (IT) Shaza Fatima Khawaja has acknowledged complaints regarding slow internet speeds in Pakistan, emphasizing the crucial role of reliable internet access for the country's digital economy and digital governance.

Speaking to the media on Thursday, the minister stated that she has requested data from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) for the past two weeks to analyze internet traffic and determine the cause of the slow speeds.

She also highlighted the government's efforts to conduct 5G auctions.

Regarding the installation of a firewall, the minister clarified that it is a cybersecurity measure implemented to protect against cyberattacks, a practice common among countries



worldwide.

She explained that the government is upgrading the existing web management system to a firewall, emphasizing its importance in safeguarding against cyber threats.

The minister assured the public that they will be informed about the number of cyberattacks thwarted by the firewall in due course.

AJK declares 15 August as black day

Bureau Report

LONDON/MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry and prime minister Anwar ul Haq have said Kashmiri people have yet again proved that they do not accept India's illegal occupation of their motherland by celebrating India's Independence Day as a black day. In their separate statements issued here today, the

AJK president and prime minister said, "India has illegally and forcibly occupied the territory of Jammu and Kashmir in brazen violation of the UNSC resolutions". They said that after occupying the territory India has strengthened its imperialistic control through oppressive means and committing atrocities against Kashmiris. "By observing 15 August as a black day, the Kashmiri people conveyed a strong message to the global community making it abundantly clear that India's illegally control over their motherland wasn't acceptable to them under any circumstances", they said. India, they said, wants to change the demography of Occupied Kashmir and turn



Kashmiris into a minority in their own country.

In his statement the AJK premier Chudhary Anwar ul Haq said that Pakistan was the real ambassador of the Kashmiri people that has not only been advocating Kashmiris' cause at international level but supporting them politically, morally and diplomatically.

The PM Haq said that India was continuously violating the UNSC resolutions. "Kashmiri people will continue their struggle until they achieve the goal their forefathers had dreamed of 77 years ago", he said. He said that the government of AJK would devote all its energies to strengthen the Kashmiris' ongoing liberation struggle and highlight their plight at international level.

Director General FIA Ahmad Ishaq Jehangir to Receive Sitara-e-Imtiaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The President of Pakistan has approved the prestigious Sitara-e-Imtiaz for Director General FIA, Ahmad Ishaq Jehangir, PPM, PSP, in recognition of his exemplary service to the nation.

A distinguished officer of the 20th Common, Ahmad Ishaq Jehangir joined the Pakistan Police Service in 1992. As the Additional DG of the Cyber Crime Wing of FIA, he spearheaded the development and execution of innovative strategies to combat cybercrime, leading to the arrest of numerous offenders and the disruption of illegal activities online.

In recognition of his continued excellence in service, DG FIA, Ahmad Ishaque Jehangir was previously



awarded the President's Police Medal in 1995. The Sitara-e-Imtiaz will be conferred upon him during the official ceremony on March 23, 2025.

Govt promotes over 60 bureaucrats to grade 19

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a recent administrative reshuffle, more than 60 bureaucrats have been promoted from Grade 18 to Grade 19, as per a notification issued today.

As per the issued notification, Shireen Malik of the Office Management Group (OMGIBS-18) has been promoted to Grade 19 and appointed as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Energy.

Another key promotion includes Naqvi, who has been promoted to Grade 19 and assigned the role of Deputy Secretary in the Aviation Division.

Similarly, Muhammad Naeem, also promoted to Grade 19, has been appointed as Deputy Secretary in the Ministry of Defense.

Earlier this year in March, the Establishment Division notified several secretaries promotions after the approval of Prime Minister (PM) Shehbaz Sharif.



According to the details, a 22-grade officer Aizaz Aslam has been appointed as the Secretary of Climate Change.

A Grade 21 officer Ali Tahir, who was serving as Special Secretary in the Establishment Division, has now been appointed as Additional Secretary Incharge of Science and Technology.

Secretary of Science and Technology Ali Raza Bhutta has been directed to report to the Establishment Division

Separate notifications have been issued by the Establishment Division in this regard.