



Internet slowdown caused by VPN use, Minister claims

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Khawaja claimed that the government had neither shut down the internet or slowed it down. She went on to claim that a majority of the consumers in the country were using VPNs to access some functions of social media sites, especially downloading. She added that the VPN use was putting 'pressure' on the internet causing it to slow down as a whole. (Details on Page 8)



Sindh governor urges provincial govt to provide Punjab-like relief in power bills

Fearing a 'sense of despair' among the people of Sindh, Governor Kamran Tessori on Sunday asked Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah to announce the Punjab government-like relief in electricity bills. Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif announced the two-month power subsidy relief for Punjab citizens two days ago which would be given to consumers using up to 500 units in August and September bills.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Tree plantation

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House as part of the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign, on Sunday.



President for enhancing national forest coverage to mitigate impacts of climate change

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari had called for enhancing the national forest coverage by planting more trees to help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming. He said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and global warming, and urged the youth and civil society in helping increase forest cover and planting more trees to mitigate their adverse impacts. The President expressed these views while planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House, Karachi, as a part of the annual Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign on Sunday (August 18) also marks the National Tree Plantation day in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, the President said that "Neem" was an environment friendly tree, offering numerous environmental benefits, such as clean air, cool

shade and acting as a natural mosquito repellent. He recalled that during Mohatma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's first tenure as Prime Minister, he had served as the Minister for Climate and had initiated a tree plantation campaign, wherein Neem trees were planted throughout the country. He said that the need to plant trees had become of paramount importance in view of the rising temperatures in Pakistan. President Asif Ali Zardari urged the nation, particularly the youth and civil society, to actively participate in the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign and plant as many trees as possible in their neighborhoods and surroundings for a better environment. The President stated that Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign was a great opportunity to enhance forest cover, increase greenery in Pakistan, and make our environment healthy and clean.

Supreme Court delists Election Tribunal case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan has officially delisted the Election Tribunal case, citing the unavailability of Justice Jamal Mandokhail as the primary reason.

A notice regarding the delisting was issued earlier today. The case was originally scheduled to be heard on August 19 by a five-member bench led by the Chief Justice of Pakistan. However, due to the absence of Justice Jamal Mandokhail, the hearing will not proceed as planned.

PTI's lawyer, Salman Akram Raja, had previously filed a request for adjournment. In his application,



he noted that senior lawyer Hamid Khan is currently out of the country until September 6.

Given this situation, Hamid Khan had also submitted a leave application, requesting that the hearing on the case be postponed until his return.

The Supreme Court's decision to delist the case means that a new date for the hearing will be set once the bench is fully available and the involved legal teams are present.

PM vows to tackle power issues, streamlining energy matters on priority

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed the government's resolve to stop electricity theft, reduce line losses, and improve the power distribution system across the country.

He informed that recently the government had appointed new board chairmen and members in five power distribution companies (DISCOs) through a transparent process. He hoped that these appointments would further improve the performance of DISCOs.

Presiding over a meeting held here to review the matters of Power ministry, the prime minister directed the Power Minister and Secretary Power Division to coordinate with the provinces concerning halting the



electricity theft, performance of DISCOs and other matters of the sector.

"A whole of the government approach should be adopted to resist power theft across the

country," the prime minister said. He directed the provincial governments to maintain the number of police force and Tehsildars as per the DISCOs' needs. He also ordered the concerned

authorities to deal with the corrupt elements in the power distribution companies with an iron hand and take strict action against them.

He directed DISCOs to make the kutchehri system more effective and result-oriented for public complaints.

PM Shehbaz said that the steering committee formed to shift agriculture tube wells to solar energy in Balochistan should convene immediately.

The meeting was informed that the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) regarding the transfer of agricultural tube wells in Balochistan to solar energy had been notified to the Steering Committee. The meeting was further informed that a package was being prepared regarding the acknowledgement of officers who had shown good performance.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Power Awais Khan Leghari and other officers of the relevant ministries and divisions.

Priority is to restore economy: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Ahsan Iqbal, on Sunday said that the restoration of Pakistan's economy was the government most significant challenge.

Speaking to a private news channel, he said that with dedicated efforts, the country would return to a path of progress and development within the next two to three years.

The government was committed to address these issues and steering the country towards stability, "he said.

The current economic difficulties are because of the reason when the country was handover to an "inexperienced individual" in 2018, he added.

Despite the challenges, the Pakistan Muslim League (PML-N) will overcome these financial hardships, as they done in the past.

Heavy rains cause widespread destruction across Pakistan, 25 killed

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Heavy rains have caused widespread destruction across Pakistan, with several areas experiencing flooding and landslides. The downpours have resulted in the deaths of 25 people across the country in the last 24 hours.

Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan have been particularly affected by the heavy rainfall, with some areas experiencing torrential downpours. In Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Hyderabad, and Larkana, the rain has caused widespread flooding, while landslides have blocked roads.

In the mountainous areas of Rajanpur and Dera Ghazi Khan, the heavy rains have caused rivers and streams to overflow.

In Balochistan, the areas of Toba Achakzai, Toba Kakri, Qila Abdullah, Pishin, and Ziarat have been affected by flash floods, damaging crops and injuring 10 people when walls and solar panels collapsed.

The railway track in Chaman has been washed away by floodwaters, while a gap has appeared in the railway track in Noshki, disrupting rail links between Pakistan and Iran.

Near Garhi Kheiro in Jacobabad, a 70-foot wide breach has occurred in a

canal, submerging rice crops. Torrential rains have also been reported in Khairpur, Sukkur, and surrounding areas.

Sukkur recorded the highest rainfall at 172 millimeters yesterday, while power outages have been reported in several areas due to the rain.

In South Waziristan, flash floods have caused widespread destruction after heavy rains. The floodwaters have entered the Jandola Bazaar, causing damage to agricultural land.

The Wana Gomul Zam Road has been blocked at several points due to landslides caused by the heavy rains, disrupting traffic flow.

Chairman Senate says Olympian Arshad Nadeem is international hero of Pakistan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN/ MIAN CHANNU: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has said Olympian Arshad Nadeem is International Hero Of Pak Pakistan He Said that all possible steps are being taken to provide relief and basic facilities to the people, I hope that very soon we will get the country out of crisis and on the path of development. All political parties should play their own role for the development and prosperity of the country. He expressed these views while addressing the annual convocation ceremony of a private college in Mian Channu here on Sunday. Yousuf Raza Gillani said that I congratulate the students who got degrees to their parents and teachers.



Especially to those students who have received medals for their excellent performance. Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said that the young generation should be a source of pride for the country and nation with their acquired

education and skills, the young generation along with their families. To become an integral part of the country's economic development, the educated young generation has to bring a significant change in the society

with the education they have acquired, the educated youth has to introduce new research and inventions in their respective fields, the educated young generation has to use the natural resources of the country. To create employ-

ment opportunities by doing research.

Our young people are not less than anyone in their ability. He said that Pakistani athlete Arshad Nadeem from Mian Channu is a national hero, I pay tribute to him for winning the gold medal for the country in the Paris Olympics. He said that We are among the builders of Pakistan, my forefathers were closely related to the founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam and the Pakistan Movement, Pakistan Peoples Party has made great sacrifices for the restoration of democracy, giving the constitution of 1973 by former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed is a great achievement. Disagreement is the beauty of democracy, but everyone has to play their role for the country's interests.

Indian election commission's bid for Kashmir plebiscite as farce: PMAJK

Bureau Report

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq, while terming Indian election commission's announcement of holding polls in occupied Kashmir as farce, has said that such an exercise was not a substitute to a UN-promised plebiscite to determine the region's future. He said that an election drama being staged in presence of over a million military and paramilitary forces was nothing but a futile attempt to hoodwink international community on Kashmir. "India after abolishing the region's special status and granting fake domicile certificates to millions of outsiders is now trying to throw dust in the eyes of world by conducting fake elections", the PM said, adding that such exercises were meaningless for the Kashmiri people who want freedom from India. Describing Kashmir as internationally recognized disputed, he said that the issue needs to be resolved in line with the UNSC resolutions that guarantee right of self determination to the people of Kashmir. He said that India cannot mislead the world or deflect its attention away from the real issue by staging a drama in the name of elections. Kashmiris, he said, were fighting for their legitimate rights and nothing short of plebiscite can satisfy their collective aspirations.



Jamaat-e-Islami Zone -112 appoints Khalid Chaudhry as General Secretary

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: Central leader of Railway Premier Union Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry has been appointed General Secretary of Jamaat-e-Islami Zone PP-112. This decision was made by the District Amir Professor Mehboob-ul-Zaman Butt after the consultation of Zonal Amirmir Asif Islam. Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry took the oath of responsibility among the members of the Zonal Assembly in the presence of the District Deputy Amirmir Tahir Ayub. Speaking on the occasion, he said that Jamaat-e-Islami The trust that has been expressed in him, he will try his best to fulfill it and spend all his energy in advancing the cause of Jamaat-e-Islami. The District Amir of Jamaat-e-Islami, Prof. Mehboob-ul-Zaman Butt, while praying for his perseverance on being given the responsibility, said that Khalid Chaudhry will prove to be a valuable addition to the team of Jamaat-e-Islami due to his abilities and performance.

Youth marriages should be done on time: Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohar

Correspondent

FAISALABAD: The invitation of Haris Ashraf, nephew of Central President Cloth Board Ittehad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohar and president of Anjuman Tajran Medina Town and son of Pakistan's famous developer Chaudhry Ashraf Gujjar, was held at a local hotel. Eminent personalities participated in which General Secretary Cloth Board Ittehad Group Pakistan and former Vice President FCCI Chaudhry Talat Gujjar, Secretary General Pakistan Muslim League-N Ulama Mashaikh Wing Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad, Jamia Qasmia successor Maulana Muhammad Habib, M. N. Az, MPs, Members of Assembly Rana Atif Chaudhry, Chaudhry Nadeem Sadiq Dogar, Chaudhry Faqir Hussain Dogar, Chaudhry Latif Nazar, Rao Kashif, Chaudhry Asad Mehmood, Chaudhry Ijaz Work, Chaudhry Shafiq Gujjar, Chaudhry Atta Gujjar, Chaudhry Arshad Gujjar, Nabeel Gujjar, Umeer Ashraf, Muhammad Maaraj Ashraf, high-ranking member of Gujjar community, Chaudhry Abdul Hameed Gujjar (Punjab Gujjar community), Faisalabad District Jail Superintendent Chaudhry Akbar Ali Gujjar, high-ranking member of district administration, Punjab Police officers, DGs and COs of Faisalabad. Attended and congratulated Chaudhry Haris Gujjar, son of Chaudhry Ashraf Gujjar on his marriage.



Punjab Medical Association Convention Held in Multan For Doctors Rights

Quratul Ain Asim

MULTAN: Punjab Medical Association Convention of doctors from all over Punjab Held in Multan organized by Pakistan Medical Association Multan South Punjab Dr Masood Rauf Hiraj President Pakistan Medical Association South Well Come to All Doctors Delegation From All Over the Punjab Participants in Convention He Said Said Punjab Health Care Commission and press conference against doctor-killing policies. If the government does not accept the demands by September, PMA Punjab will launch a protest movement after September 15.

According to PMA Punjab details, a gathering of doctors from across Punjab organized by Pakistan Medical Association Multan was held yesterday in a private hotel in Multan. A large number of doctors from 25 districts of Punjab participated in the PMA Punjab convention.

Officials addressed the convention. Later, while holding a press conference, President PMA Punjab Dr. Col. Retired Ghulam Shabbir, President PMA Multan Dr. Masood Ul Rauf Haraj, President PMA Lahore Dr. Ashraf Nizami and others said that

Health care commission has started shutting down health care. No action against Atayat, doctors are being unfairly targeted, they blame locum recruitment, we demand that ad-hoc and contract doctors should be regularized through executive notification.

If the government does not fulfill our demands by September 16, we will go to protest movement and sit-in, 70% of health facilities are being provided by private sector. Doctors are working despite unfavorable conditions and FBRPOS is only being implemented in hospitals, PMA officials further said that revamping should be done only where needed and doctors should be considered as stakeholders, in Multan. Recruitment of doctors should be done in Nishtar-2.

If POS is imposed only on us, we will leave work and go on strike. On this occasion, Dr. Zahid Maqsood, Dr. Zahid Khan, Dr. Najeeb Chishti, Dr. Saadullah Malik, Dr. Rai Arif, Dr. Tariq Waqar, Dr. Manzar, Dr. Sheikh Abdul Khaliq, Dr. Zulqarnain Haider, Dr. Imran, Dr. Mehboob Qadir, Dr. Waqar Niazi and others were present

Press conference

MULTAN: Punjab Medical Association President Dr Col RTD Ghulam Shabbir and President Pakistan Medical Association South Punjab Professor Dr Masood Rauf Hiraj and Others Addressing to the Press Conference in Multan.



Spokesman Photo by Asim Tanveer

Three days Urs Mubarak of Hazarat Chadar Wali Sarkar started in Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Three Days Urs Mubarak Of Hazarat Chadar Wali Sarkar Started in Multan While delivering the presidential address at the opening ceremony of the 39th annual Urs Mubarak of the great spiritual leader of the Indian subcontinent, Hazrat Syed Chadarwali Sarkar, Sajjada Nashin Dargah Aliya Sahibzada Pir Syed Ali Hussain Shah has said that the Astana of Chadarwali Sarkar is the center of enlightenment and guidance. Whoever comes here goes by receiving grace.

You preached and promoted Islam throughout your life. Your teachings are



not for any one school of thought, but for all humanity. He said that in these blessed

gatherings, only those who are approved by their Master come, despite the severity of the rainy season, the participation of thousands of pilgrims in Urs is strengthened.

He said that Hazrat Chadarwali Sarkar have always served for the unity of the Ummah, the nation and the nation. The rulers, despite all their efforts, cannot unite and unite the nation.

He further said that Murshid Kareem Huzoor Chadar Wali Sarkar raised the word truth and righteousness. Pir Syed Noor Hussain Shah along with thousands of devotees started the annual Urs Mubarak celebrations by bathing and covering Mazar Sharif.

All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to educate Kashmiris on Pakistan's path

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/DHIRKOT: resident of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the Muslim Conference did not make any compromise on the identity, identity and unity of the Kashmiri people of the state before and will not do so now.

The emotional connection of the state with Pakistan will not be allowed to weaken under any circumstances. The leadership of the Muslim Conference determined the destiny of the state by giving the slogan of Kashmir Banega Pakistan.

He expressed these views while talking to the media persons and party workers after reciting Fatiha and



visiting the graves of martyrs, Ghazis and Mujahids of Kashmir Freedom Movement together with the Workers

Muslim Conference in Dongi Gully and other places. It is the duty of every conscious Kashmiri, as the most literate party of the state, it is the responsibility of the Muslim Conference to enlighten the new generation with the brilliant history, struggle and sacrifices of the ancestors. Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said.

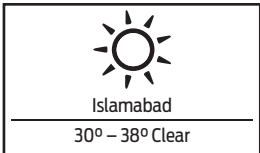
As the state of Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory according to the resolutions of the United Nations, the future of which is yet to be decided, the Kashmiri people have made eternal stories of struggle and sacrifices for their basic recognized right of self-determination for the last 76 years. During this seven-decade struggle, millions of Kashmiris laid down their lives, millions endured the hardships of imprisonment, thousands of chaste

women, children and the elderly faced difficulties for this movement, but this freedom movement was not weakened.

President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan directed the party officials, workers and the people of the state to ensure participation in the program to be held on August 24 at the historical place of Nila Butt.

Only the strength of the Muslim Conference can guarantee the completion of the Pakistan Movement and the Independence Movement.

On August 24, the pledge will be renewed once again from Nila Butt that the children of the state will not hesitate to sacrifice their blood for the freedom movement of Kashmir and the completion of Pakistan and until all of Kashmir is free.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:02 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 4:56 pm
Maghrib 6:51 pm
Isha 8:20 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 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
DHO 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261070-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886

Information Minister AJK Pir Mazhar says we have to follow the ways of the Holy Prophet

Abdul Majeed Tahir

BIS BAGLA/ DHIRKOT: Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed has said that we have to follow the religion of Islam and follow the ways of the Holy Prophet. The ruler will be a member of the Light on the Day of Resurrection, take your right, but speak the truth, never go into the mud of immorality, I am the servant of Allah and the ummah of the Messenger. Allah is also a religion, if politics is for the service of creation, then it is a religion. He expressed these views while addressing the gathering held on the occasion of the ceremony of annual graduation of students at Madrasah Faiz Al-Qur'an Beis Bagla. Hazrat Maulana Doctor Mufti Zubair Ashraf Hamdani, Sajjada Nasheen Bakot Shareef Hazrat Sahibzada Hussain Ahmed Bakoti Maulana Osama Haqqani, Maulana Saifullah Hanafi, Maulana



Rafiq Jami and other dozens of scholars spoke on this occasion. The government minister said that twenty herons are the land of scholars, from here hundreds of students are studying the Holy Quran. After serving the religion, it is necessary that we should encourage the students of

these Madrasahs who are teaching religion in different parts of the state. Yes, but I am a student of religion first. Academically, I have been blessed by Anwar Shah Kashmiri, thanks to whom I am at this position today. He said that Palestine and Kashmir are the same states. India and Israel are oppressed in the name of humanity. Listen to their stories, they will not remain in the stories, he added that we all have to be united until the Muslim Ummah stands together against falsehood, then false forces will continue to crush us like this. Religious seminaries are the places from where religion spreads in the world. The strength of religious institutions will be the strength of Islam. Jews are gathering and doing actions against Muslims in the world. We have to gather against them. We will continue to oppress everyone like what is happening in Palestine and Kashmir.

Increased water flows bring joy to fishermen in Thatta and Sujawal Districts

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: The recent surge in water flows at Kotri downstream has brought smiles to the faces of fishermen in the remote areas of Thatta and Sujawal districts. According to credible sources, the increased water flows will enhance livelihood opportunities for local fishermen and contribute to the betterment of the Indus delta.



On Sunday, the water flow recorded at Kotri downstream was 187,549 cusecs, with the irrigation department predicting a further increase in the coming days. The rise in water flows heralds the return of the famous "Pallah Fish" species, a staple food in the Larr region and a vital source of income for fishermen.

Local residents shared that the deltaic region of Sindh had not received sufficient water over the past few years, leading to degradation of the Indus delta, sea intrusion, and losses in the agricultural sector. However, the increased water flows are expected to fulfill their needs, enabling them to work towards restoring the agricultural sector.

Fishermen are excited to venture into the sea to catch Pallah Fish and sell it at a good price in major fish markets, improving their economic conditions. Noor Muhammad Themore, representative of the Pakistan Fisher Folk Forum, stated that adequate water flows would mitigate the damage caused by sea erosion and benefit the tail-end areas of both districts. This positive development is expected to bring significant improvements to the lives of fishermen and farmers in the region.

Arshad Nadeem achievement and Political Parties

Respected Sir,

On Thursday, August 8, 2024 an Olympic Champion Arshad Nadeem won a Gold medal for Pakistan after 32 years in Olympics that was held in Paris France. After that everyone started own that person as own child. Our prime minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif shared a video through a social media platform and their ministers claimed after that video that Arshad Nadeem is product of Shehbaz Sharif vision.



But reality is more bitter because there is a long journey behind this achievement Arshad Nadeem started it with a stick throw in a local School ground. Father of Arshad Nadeem stated that i am a constructor of building line so i don't have any resources to facilitate my child.

Our state's politicians have no role in his achievement because now they act only for increase their numbers in public opinion. Respected editor its a fake face of our politicians that i want to publish through your platform. In our neighborhood states the executive branch of states ran after agitation as we saw in past a few years in Sirlanka, Afghanistan and Now in Bangladesh.

So if this fake reputation increased day by day and there is nothing for leyments then situation will be alarming for our state Pakistan.

I requested to you through this letter please publish this alarming situation in your newspaper that would be beneficial for public of Pakistan.

Yours sincerely

Umair Ahmad, Gujranwala
Email: ua1250165@gmail.com

Silent Screams

A call to action, in the shadows of our vibrant cultures and rich traditions, a dark and troubling reality persists- gender based violence. I am writing to draw attention to this alarming issue where from the cities to the villages women are surviving in the bustling fire of inhuman activities. This issue has been embedded into our patriarchal structure since ages this traces back to the colonial laws and traditional customs that continue to oppress women today.

Let me call out few cases in front of you which are never brought to the screens hence, no considerations.

(2016) Qandeel Baloch a model strangled to death by her brother Muhammad Waseem described as honor killing. (2018) Zainab Ansari a 7 year old girl raped and murdered on her way to a Quran class. (2021) Noor Mukaddam a 27 year old woman murdered by her friend Zahir Jaffer without a cause. (2023) Ayesha Bibi from punjab filed a case against her husband for marital rape and physical abuse. (2024) Aisha Ahmed from Rawalpindi harassed and attacked by her fellow student who has been stalking and making unwanted advances.

These are some of them which are reported many of them are still undefined. The rise in such violence is a stark reminder that, despite our progress in various fields, we are failing in one of the most vital aspects of human dignity. Let us imagine a Pakistan where every woman can walk freely and confidently without the fear of violence shadowing their steps.

Taseer Fatima
Dera Ismail Khan
Email: taseerfatima36@gmail.com

The reasons for urgent need to address the Parachinar crisis

Dear Editor,
Through the column of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to draw the attention of the authorities to the escalating crisis in Parachinar, a region that has endured significant violence due to ongoing tribal conflicts and sectarian strife.

Parachinar has a long history of violence and is the second-most targeted city by militants in Pakistan after Peshawar, with over 3,000 lives lost. Recently this conflict, rooted in a land dispute and sectarian strife rose again bringing huge devastation to the area. Due to the recent clashes in Kurram, which have left 46 dead and nearly 200 injured, there is a critical need for the immediate and sustained government intervention, as the lives of civilians are at risk. The government's late response made the situation worst, stressing the urgent need for proactive measures.

Continued violence in Parachinar is tarnishing our international reputation and as Parachinar borders Afghanistan, the unresolved issue can provide a foothold for several militant groups harming our national security. Also as the conflict is rooted in sectarian tensions, it may destabilize Pakistan's fragile sectarian harmony.

The temporary ceasefire is merely a band-aid solution by tribal elders and government officials, which, while a positive step, is insufficient and a permanent resolution is needed for permanent peace. Resolving the land dispute through dialogue rather than violence, coupled with stronger government presence and quicker response times, is essential to prevent future bloodshed.

I hope my concern will reach the ears of the concerned authorities through your newspaper.

Sincerely,

Anna Bibi
Rawalpindi.
Email: amnabibiuni19@gmail.com

AIOU proud on enrollment of international students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is receiving global recognition. As a result of digitalization, the university has expanded its reach worldwide. In addition to Pakistanis residing in any country, the university offers 60 educational programs for international students. In the Spring 2024 semester, 1,003 international students have been enrolled from 36 countries, with 47% being male students and 53% female students. These countries include Australia, Russia, South Korea, Japan, China, the USA, the UK, Ireland, Canada, France, Spain, Sweden, Greece, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Portugal, Turkey, Taiwan, Botswana, South Africa, Iran, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Qatar, Iraq, Kurdistan, Jordan, Oman, and Kuwait. Admissions for the Fall 2024 semester are going on, the

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has set a target to increase the number of international students to 50,000 over the next five years. He has directed Dr. Zahid Majeed, Director International Collaboration and Exchange Office, to utilize all available resources to achieve this target within the set timeframe. Following the Vice Chancellor's instructions, the International Collaboration and Exchange Office has intensified its enrollment campaign through Pakistani embassies and high commissions worldwide.

Security reason

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert in front of a local hotel due to security reason during Pakistan's and Bangladesh cricket team players living in hotel, As the first Test cricket match between Pakistan and Bangladesh starts on 21 August, at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.



Phot by Sultan Bashir o: Online

UAJK's Neelum Campus praised for advancing higher education in Valley

Bureau Report

AUTHMUQAM: Mian Abdul Waheed, the senior politician and Minister for Law, Justice, and Parliamentary Affairs, emphasized the critical role of youth as the nation's greatest asset and underscored the importance of nurturing institutions that support their development. He was speaking at the Prize Distribution Ceremony for Sports Competitions held at the Neelum Campus of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK).

Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, in his address, shared his



vision for the future of Neelum Campus, expressing optimism about its potential to evolve into a full-fledged university. Despite the financial challenges faced by the university, Prof. Dr. Kaleem Abbasi stated that top-tier faculty has already

been provided to the campus. Director of Neelum Campus, Dr. Malik Sajjad Ahmed Nadeem, presented an overview of the campus's progress and achievements. He expressed his profound gratitude to Vice-Chan-

cellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi and Minister Mian Abdul Waheed for their continued support and keen interest in the campus's development.

Accompanying the Vice-Chancellor on this visit were Controller of Examinations Prof. Dr. Wajid Aziz Lone, Chairperson of the Department of Sociology Dr. Nazneen Habib, Director of Student Affairs Dr. Sharjil Saeed, Associate Professor Dr. Imtiaz Awan, Director of Works Azhar Ali, Transport Officer Ahsan Khan, and Public Relations Officer Mubashar Naqvi.

Mourners observe main Zuljunnah procession of Imam Hussain in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The Chelum of Hazrat Imam Hussain was observed peacefully in Attock. The main zuljunnah procession of chalum in Attock City was taken out on Sunday from imam bargah Panjaitani with peace and religious enthusiasm amid tight security. Karbala is a lesson- teaching incident of human history, which gives the message of upholding righteousness and truth to the mankind for their eternal success besides failing the nefarious designs of devilish forces, this was stated by religious scholar Allama farhan haider abidi of lahore while addressing the Chelum Majlis at Imam bargah Panjaitani Attock. He mitigated the difficulties faced by Imam Hussain and his followers for the glory of Islam and narrated several events of the journey of Imam Hussain



which led his martyrdom at Karbala. Latter on Azadar also performed "Zanjereezani" and "Matum" by beating their chests. Sabeels of water, milk and food stalls were also set-up under the surveillance of security personnel

on the route of procession to facilitate the mourners. The mourners offered Zhurain prayer near Fowara chowk and later procession lasted at markazi Imambargh Hussainia Kamalpur Syedan, Attock Cantonment at evening

in peaceful manner after crossing through the traditional route. Tehsil administration had made excellent arrangements for the procession while local police maintained complete vigilance to make the event peaceful. On the occasion, dSP hafeez ullah DSP sana ullah DSP azhar shabeer, special branch personals, security branch CO municipal committee sadar aftab Mpa syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhar were also present. strict security measures were taken by the law enforcement agencies to avoid any untoward incident.

The procession route was barbed with iron wire and police personnel were deployed on roof tops. Special mobile medical team of Shaheed Asfand yar District Headquarters Hospital Attock and rescue 1122 provided medical treatment to the mourners and remained standby to handle any emergency.

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Success of the Army Chief's Afghan Policy

The tone and tenor of the recent interview conducted by the BBC with Zabihullah Mujahid was markedly different from previous engagements. Unlike a few months ago, where his statements were filled with aggression, threats, and blame towards Pakistan for its failure to control terrorist activities within its borders, this interview took a more conciliatory approach. Mujahid extended an olive branch by highlighting shared cultural, religious, and social values, overlapping economic interests, and common borders. He offered the interim Afghan government's willing assistance to help address Pakistan's concerns regarding cross-border terrorism.

This shift in the Afghan Taliban's stance did not occur in a vacuum. It was the result of sustained and persistent pressure applied by Pakistan, particularly by its military leadership. After recognizing that its previous appeasement policies were ineffective, Pakistan adopted a multi-pronged aggressive strategy with a singular objective: to make the Afghan Taliban understand that they must either rein in the Pakistani Taliban (TTP) and stop them from launching cross-border attacks, or Pakistan would be forced to take matters into its own hands to counter this threat decisively.

General Asim Munir, Pakistan's Army Chief, has been actively pursuing a public relations campaign to garner domestic and international support for Pakistan's aggressive stance towards Afghanistan. This campaign has included delivering numerous speeches at significant events, where he has consistently emphasized the necessity of eradicating the TTP and its networks, both within Pakistan and across the border. In a recent address to cadets at

the prestigious Pakistan Military Academy in Kakul, General Munir invoked religious verses, denounced the TTP as Khawarij (a term historically used to describe extremist rebels), and urged the Afghan government to reciprocate Pakistan's decades-long support by assisting in the elimination of the cross-border terrorism threat.

In his high-profile speeches, the army chief categorically ruled out any other options—political, economic, or diplomatic—for resolving the issue of the virulent and dangerous TTP. Instead, he has asserted that the only viable solution is to kinetically eliminate the TTP threat.

Against this backdrop, the recent interview with Zabihullah Mujahid holds immense significance. Mujahid presented several concrete proposals aimed at easing the frustration and anger of Pakistan's leadership, particularly the military, which has been deeply affected by the ongoing sacrifices of its officers and soldiers. With patience and forbearance wearing thin, these proposals could be seen as an attempt to open a dialogue and potentially ease tensions between the two countries.

He has offered mediation between the Pakistan government and the TTP. However, Pakistan has already been engaged in several such mediated talks, which have often proven more detrimental than beneficial to its interests. Pakistan's principal stance is that these notorious and dangerous elements have committed heinous crimes against the people and the state of Pakistan. The Afghan government, which has provided them refuge, equipped them with modern weapons, and offered

them safe havens, is equally culpable in the conflict with the TTP, seemingly using them as strategic assets against Pakistan.

Therefore, Pakistan's demands are twofold: first, that the Afghan government must cease harboring these militants, and second, that they must hand them over to the Pakistani authorities to be subjected to the legal and judicial processes and held accountable according to the laws of the land. Given these firm demands, the option of mediation is almost a non-starter for Pakistan. Mr. Zabihullah Mujahid's assertion that the issue is an internal matter for Pakistan carries little weight or substance, given that the Afghan government is knowingly and willingly harboring a declared terrorist group of over 6,000 heavily armed militants within its territory. By providing these terrorists with hospitality, financial resources, and the means to survive, Afghanistan has made itself an active party to the conflict. Therefore, it cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, declare itself uninvolved.

It is an internationally recognized norm that responsibility for acts of terrorism extends not only to the terrorists themselves but also to the entities or countries that harbor them and provide them with safe havens. This principle is enshrined in various international legal frameworks, including United Nations Security Council Resolutions, which emphasize the accountability of states that support or tolerate terrorist activities. Consequently, the claim made by Zabihullah Mujahid that the TTP issue is merely an internal matter for Pakistan is both illogical and

lacking in reasonable basis.

His emphasis on the Afghan government's commitment to ensuring that Afghan soil is not used for attacks against Pakistan is as hollow as his other assertions. The Afghan government is, in fact, harboring Pakistani nationals who have committed heinous crimes against the people and the state of Pakistan. They are fully aware that these individuals are involved in cross-border terrorism, masterminding and controlling operations within Pakistan to launch fatal attacks on the country's vital interests.

Despite having the capability to rein in these violent groups and assist Pakistan in putting an end to their activities, the Afghan government, for reasons known only to them, not only harbors these militants but also seemingly encourages them to target Pakistan where it hurts most. This behavior calls into question the sincerity of their stated commitment to non-interference and suggests a deliberate complicity in the ongoing violence against Pakistan.

However, his last suggestion that Pakistan and Afghanistan should hold formal talks and negotiations to address any concerns carries significant merit, especially given the current context. By engaging in direct communication, Pakistan can clearly present its demands and concerns, compelling the Afghan government to take concrete and decisive steps in addressing the TTP issue comprehensively. Should these talks fail, Pakistan would gain further legitimacy and international acceptability for its kinetic operations aimed at exterminating the TTP menace.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

UN chief urges immediate 'Polio pause' in war-hit Gaza as Palestinians agonize

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Friday called for warring parties in Gaza to lay down their arms so that humanitarian workers can safely vaccinate more than half a million children against polio.

"I am appealing to all parties to provide concrete assurances right away guaranteeing humanitarian pauses for the campaign," he said, speaking to reporters at UN Headquarters in New York.

"Let's be clear: The ultimate vaccine for polio is peace and an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. But in any case, a Polio Pause is a must."

The UN chief described Gaza as being in "a humanitarian freefall" because "just when it seems the situation could not get worse for Palestinians in Gaza, the suffering grows – and the world watches."

Poliovirus was recently detected in sewage samples in two locations, Khan Younis and Deir Al-Balah, meaning that the disease – which can cause paralysis – is circulating in the enclave and putting thousands of children at risk.

"Polio does not care about dividing lines – and polio does not wait," he said.

Starting at the end of the month, the UN is set to launch a two-phase campaign to vaccinate more than 640,000 children in Gaza under the age of 10.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has already approved the release of 1.6 million doses of the polio vaccine and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is coordinating delivery efforts and the cold chain equipment needed for storage.

Meanwhile, medical teams from the UN Palestine refugee agency, UNRWA – the largest primary healthcare provider in Gaza – are ready to administer the vaccines and assist with logistics.

Guterres outlined the grave challenges these efforts face. He said Gaza's health, water and sanitation systems "have been decimated", most hospitals and primary care facilities are not functional, and people are constantly forced to run to seek safety.

Furthermore, routine immunizations have been severely disrupted due to the conflict, thus increasing the spread of measles, hepatitis A and other preventable diseases.

"We know how an effective polio vaccination campaign must be administered," he said.

"Given the wholesale devastation in Gaza, at least 95 per cent vaccination coverage will be needed during each round of the two-round campaign to prevent polio's spread and reduce its emergence."

The campaign will involve 708 teams at hospitals and primary healthcare centres, he said, again noting that many are barely functioning, and 316 community outreach teams throughout Gaza.



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

Peculiar irritating features of Pakistan Governance

A good governance of any country demands some objectives and will to serve the nation and not to govern only. Those who want to govern must know to listen. Overriding purposes of good governance are to ensure the security, stability, solidarity of the country and life and liberty of the citizens. In present era a good politician has to be a good economist. Bad governance could lead to disintegration of the country as we experienced in East Pakistan tragedy and recent financial crisis as we were touching the frontiers of bankruptcy. Sometimes commendable welfare projects of the government also face failure and get a negative response as nation witnessed in the mismanagement of flood relief program in Sindh, free Atta Scheme in Punjab, release of terrorists from KPK jails and establishment of lungars, shelters as if Pakistan is a refugee camp.

The Parliamentarians take over the government with inadequate knowledge of governance and administration to counter this difficulty experienced bureaucracy is available and the politicians should learn to handle this device adeptly to achieve the objective of good governance. The governments depends too much on Administrative services group. A rationale has to be adopted among all groups of civil service.

The 18th Amendment failed to safe guard the vital element of integration, the education system. It shattered the educational structure at federal level. Now there is no education policy to set forth the national curriculum, higher education policy and foreign training coordination. Therefore, the matter should amicably be reviewed for the unity of standard of education as the civil service is selected at the national level. Now the provinces are devising their own education policies and curriculum, oblivious of requirements of national solidarity.

Another special features which has affected

fiscal system includes unwise and hasty decision, embarking upon welfare projects without sufficient planning. In 2023-24, last year budget, the Finance Minister announced an increase in salaries upto 35%. It was an unwise decision because there was no such pressing demand nor the financial position could cater for this burden. The next day the same Minister destroyed the pension system without realizing that every serving civil servant has to retire and he cannot appreciate the mishandling of pension system.

If the government is serious and sincere for the welfare of public at large they should abstain from increasing privileges of parliamentarians.

Secondly the government should cancel immediately the detrimental agreements of IPPs. Thirdly the colossal amount of Special Development Project (SDP) distributed to parliamentarians running in billions should be discontinued forthwith. Fourthly to increase exports industrial sector should not be chained

with high bank rate and expensive rate of electricity in which situation the industrialists cannot compete in international market. Fifthly the filer system should be simplified. People should be allowed to deposit some amount in the bank direct without the interference of Income Tax department. The bank receipt should serve as Filer Certificate. The CBR should announce categories specifying amount for each category to be deposited in the bank. Sixthly the number of national flags should be reduced. Futile efforts of too much publicity and protocol are also like an epidemic. Once a high-level Indian delegation came via Chakothi. They were surprised to see so many banners of unknown faces of PPP at Chakothi and Kohala. Once a meeting of IBCC had been held in Rawalkot and Benjosa. One political personality of PPP from Sindh province holding no official position came there with entourage of 38 vehicles and IBCC members were thrown out of guest houses. MBBS Medical

College Mirpur stands for Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Medical College Mirpur. BISP stands for Benazir Income Support Program. Asifa Bhutto University Bagh AJK. Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, K. H. Khurshid, Syed Ali Gillani and Syed Ali Hamdani deserve more for this purpose.

It is crystal clear that distribution of cash money leads to corruption and beggary. As is apparent every crossing point the beggars are larger in number than before. If the BISP supports the needy people then why not these deserving beggars. In case they are not deserving then they should not be allowed to beg. They should be confined in shelters. When Zakat fund, Bait-ul-Mal and other charitable NGOs are available for the poor why BISP with huge budget and infrastructure. This amount should be shifted to bank loans. There is no denying the facts that Mohtrama Benazir Bhutto Shaheed stands at the top of Pakistan political arena next to her great father. She does not need such publicity as beauty needs no ornament.

The incumbent Chief Minister Punjab, Marrayam Nawaz, is, no doubt, dedicated to improve the fate and future of Punjab. She feels the pain of the poor. She should safe guard from too much publicity and let action speak louder than words. Distribution of cash money and supply of perishable commodity should be avoided. The awards and incentives for excellence, however should continue. Top priority efforts should be undertaken to save every drop of rain water, flood water, building water reservoirs to prepare for the predicted drought which is round the corner. Small lakes should be sponsored by the political workers. Earning by saving should be motto of Punjab government to generate confidence in the public. The shops, business concerns and institutions should be bound to open not later than 9am. The defaulters should be penalized. It would encourage early rising habits in the nation and saving of energy.

The Writer is Retired Additional Chief Secretary and Advocate Supreme Court of AJK.

Pak Army is not Elite of the Country - I

The term "elite" often conjures images of power, privilege, and influence. This label applies to individuals or groups who wield substantial sway over various facets of society, including political leaders, business magnates, cultural icons, and intellectuals.

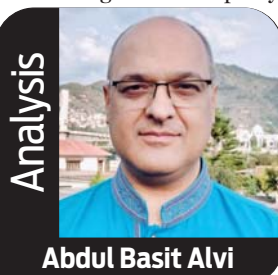
At its essence, "elite" denotes a select group distinguished by exceptional qualities, skills, or power that set them apart from the general populace. These distinguishing factors might include wealth, education, social status, or expertise. The concept of an elite transcends a single domain, encompassing various sectors. Political Elites are individuals who hold significant political power or influence. Examples include heads of state, influential politicians, and senior advisors. Political elites often shape policies and decisions that affect entire nations or regions. Wealthy individuals or families who control substantial economic resources fall into category of economic elites. Business magnates, major investors, and leading entrepreneurs are typical examples. Their financial power often allows them to impact markets and economic policies. Cultural Elites are individuals who shape cultural norms and values through their work in the arts, literature, and media. Renowned artists, authors, and entertainers are part of this group. They influence public perceptions and societal trends. Intellectual Elites are academics, scientists, and thought leaders who contribute significantly to knowledge and innovation. Their research and ideas often drive advancements in various fields. Elites have the ability to shape opinions, decisions, and outcomes within their spheres of influence. This can range from setting political agendas to driving cultural trends. Elites often

have access to substantial resources, whether financial, intellectual, or social. This access can amplify their impact and sustain their position of prominence. They are usually well-connected with other influential individuals and groups. These networks can provide support, facilitate collaborations, and enhance their influence. Their status is often acknowledged by others, reinforcing their position as leaders or authorities in their respective fields. The concentration of power and resources among elites can exacerbate social and economic inequalities. This disparity can lead to unequal opportunities and hinder social mobility for others. Elites often have the power to shape public policy and decision-making processes, which can lead to policies that favor their interests, sometimes at the expense of broader societal needs. Elites may operate with limited transparency and accountability, which can lead to abuses of power and corruption.

There is often a perception that elites are out of touch with the experiences and needs of the general population, leading to policies and decisions that do not reflect the broader public interest. The elite's control over resources and opportunities can perpetuate social and economic inequalities, making it difficult for others to advance or achieve similar status.

As President of the United States, Joe Biden is one of the most influential political figures worldwide. In his role as head of state and government, he is responsible for shaping national policies, managing international diplomacy, and leading the U. S. executive branch. Biden's extensive political career includes his previous service as Vice President under Barack Obama.

To be continued



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi



Analysis

Ch Muhammad Latif

Direct flights to take Pakistan-Indonesia ties to new heights: Zafar Bakhtawari

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Secretary General United Business Group and former President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Zafar has said that Pakistan and Indonesia enjoy cordial relations which are strengthening with the passage of time and that both are bonded in religious, historic and cultural ties. He added that Pakistani nation can never forget the Indonesian support during the 1965 and 1971 wars and will forever remain thankful to the Indonesian leadership as well as the people.

He said this while talking to media men after attending the Indonesian flag hoisting ceremony held at the Embassy in connection with the 79th Independence Day of Indonesia, led by the Charge d' Affaires Rahmat Hindarta Kusuma.

Bakhtawari went on to say that Indonesia the largest economy in ASEAN and the world's 13th big economy is predicted to be the 4th largest economy in the world by 2045. He emphasized that direct flight between the two countries are much needed to further strengthen the existing relations



Embassy's officials along with their families and hundreds of Indonesian diaspora based in different cities of Pakistan, attended the ceremony in Indonesian traditional fervor. Prominent religious leaders, representatives of the dynamic business community, experts from reputable think tanks, and journalists were also present on the special occasion.

The Indonesian Chargé d'Affaires expressed his sincere gratitude to all the guests for joining the celebration by raising the slogan, Indonesia, Pakistan dosti zindabad. He also honored a group of Indonesian students in Pakistan with the certificate of appreciation for pursuing their higher level academic programs with distinction.

Those attended the ceremony also include Adnan Jamil, former caretaker Provincial Minister KPK, Tariq Ullah Sufi prominent business leader from Lahore, Rizwana Asif, President Islamabad Women Chamber, Sahibzada Sultan Ahmed Ali, Chairman Muslim Institute.

The ceremony concluded with the special prayers for the economic progress and prosperity of both the countries.

between the two countries and for the economic advancement and unlocking the tourism potential of both the sides. He also extended his sincere congratulations to the Charge d' affairs on behalf of the business community by wishing economic well being of both the countries.

Malaysia announces adopt-an-orangutan plan for palm oil importers

News Desk



KUALA LUMPUR: Companies that import palm oil from Malaysia will be able to adopt orangutans but they will not be able to leave the country, the commodities minister said on Sunday, in a revised version of a conservation scheme announced earlier this year.

Plantations and Commodities Minister Johari Abdul Ghani also pledged to halt deforestation in Malaysia, saying 54 per cent of the country was forested and that the level would not fall below 50%.

In May, the minister put forward a plan to send orangutans abroad as trading gifts in an effort to allay concerns about the impact on the animals' habitat of palm oil production, which tends to involve clearing forest land.

The plan raised objections from conservation groups fearful for the welfare of the orangutans that are critically endangered.

"The animals cannot leave their natural habitats. We have to keep them here. And then we will meet the countries or the buyers of our palm oil if they want to work together to ensure that these forests can be looked after and preserved forever," Johari told a news conference in Sabah, northern Borneo.

Conservation group WWF says the population of the orangutan, whose name means "man of the forest" in Malay, is less than 105,000 on the island of Borneo.

The "orangutan diplomacy" scheme was first made public in May after the European Union last year approved an import ban on commodities linked to deforestation.

Malaysia, the world's second-largest producer of palm oil which is used in anything from lipstick to pizza, described the law as discriminatory.

Johari said funds raised from companies who adopt orangutans would be distributed to non-governmental organisations and the Sabah government to monitor the forested areas where the primates live, and seek to monitor the animals' safety and condition.

He did not give details on how much adoption would cost.

Marc Anrenaz, scientific director of non-government organisation Hutan, said he hoped the plan could fund habitat conservation work, such as building corridors between fragmented forests that are too small to sustain viable wildlife populations.

Super blue moon to grace sky in Pakistan tomorrow

KARACHI: Stargazers who love watching celestial bodies at night are in for a treat as Pakistan will witness the first super blue moon of the year tomorrow (Monday), according to the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (Suparco) on Sunday.

The fascinating sight comes just one year after a Sturgeon moon lit up the skies on August 1 and a super blue moon enthralled the world with its awe-inspiring sight on August 30 last year.

The country's top space agency said that the blue moon would take place in Pakistan on Monday at 11:26pm — the first supermoon to take place this year.

The next three supermoons will occur on September 18, October 17 and November 15, it added.

While sailing in its orbit when the moon comes closest to Earth, i.e. 363,300 kilometres, it shines 30% more brightly and appears 14% bigger. This is when it is called a supermoon.

A supermoon is not an official astronomical term. However, a 'supermoon' is a full moon that occurs when the moon's orbit brings it closer to Earth.

Every month brings a full moon. However, sometimes, there are two moons in a single month of the lunar calendar. When this phenomenon occurs, the second moon is called a Blue Moon.

North Korea reopening to international tourists after nearly 5-year closure

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: North Korea will be reopening to foreign tourists in December 2024 after nearly five years of COVID-19-related border closures, according to two specialized tour operators.

Beijing-based Koryo Tours said on its website that it has received confirmation from its local partner that tourism to Samjiyon and potentially other parts of the country will officially resume in December 2024.

Samjiyon is a gateway city near North Korea's northern border with China, and home to Mount Paektu, where official narratives claim the late supreme leader Kim Jong Il was born. KTG Tours, another



China-based tour operator, (Mount Paektu) area this also stated on its Facebook coming winter, with the page that tourists will be exact dates to be confirmed. The company expressed optimism that Pyongyang and other destinations may also open up for tourism. North Korea sealed off

its borders in early 2020 to protect itself from the COVID-19 pandemic, even preventing its own citizens from entering the country for years.

However, signs of reopening began in the second half of 2023, with the resumption of international flights allowing stranded North Korean nationals to finally return home.

Prior to the pandemic, tourism to North Korea was limited, with tour companies estimating around 5,000 Western tourists visited each year.

Koryo Tours warned that the early days of the tourism restart may not be smooth sailing after the nearly 5-year hiatus.

From Opportunity to Crisis

Silencing the Digital Roar: The Consequences of Pakistan's Internet Firewalls



In the rapidly evolving digital age, the internet has emerged not just as a tool for connectivity but as a cornerstone of global economic, social, and political landscapes. The global technological revolution, fueled by the internet, has changed the way governments, corporations, and individuals operate. With each passing day, the virtual world becomes more influential, and the digital economy grows exponentially. Pakistan, despite its unique set of challenges, has been no exception to this transformative wave. The nation's burgeoning IT industry, fueled by the prowess of its tech-savvy populace, has carved out a significant niche in the global digital marketplace. However, recent actions by the government to exert control over the internet, particularly social media, have sparked widespread controversy and raised pressing questions about the balance between governance, freedom of expression, and economic growth.

The Internet has become a cornerstone of the modern global economy. From online businesses to remote work and cloud computing, the digital space has created unprecedented opportunities for economic growth. The volume of income gener-

ated through the internet and its associated tools is staggering. In many countries, the digital economy contributes a significant portion of their GDP. Pakistan, too, has benefited from the internet, particularly through its growing IT industry. Many Pakistanis work remotely for international clients, earning foreign currency that bolsters the national economy. The rise of platforms like Fiverr, Upwork, and other freelancing websites has allowed Pakistanis to tap into global markets, offering their skills and services to clients around the world. This influx of foreign income has been a lifeline for a country struggling with economic challenges, including high inflation and low foreign reserves. The IT industry has not only provided employment but also helped alleviate some of the financial pressure on the national exchequer.

In recent weeks, however, the Pakistani government has taken a drastic step that threatens to unravel these gains. The unannounced installation of firewalls to control social media has caused widespread disruption to the country's internet services. Social media platforms like YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter) have become targets due to their role in amplifying criticism of the government, influential figures, and state institutions, including the military and judiciary. The government's efforts to silence social media critics through the use of firewalls have led to a significant slowdown in internet speeds across the country. What might seem like a minor inconvenience for the government's minister and spokesperson has,

in fact, had devastating consequences for Pakistan's economy and its people. Files, data sharing, and communication through the internet have become nightmarish, especially for those working in the IT sector. International clients have begun pulling their orders from Pakistani freelancers, citing the inability to access reliable internet services as the primary reason.

According to media reports, Pakistan is facing a potential loss of \$3 billion due to this experiment with internet controls. This figure is especially alarming when considering that Pakistan in the recent past secured a \$1 billion loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) after making significant pledges and harsh decisions for the public. In a matter of days, the government's actions have wiped out three times that amount in potential revenue, simply to control the flow of information on social media. This move raises critical questions about the government's priorities and the long-term impacts of such actions on Pakistan's digital economy and global standing. The irony is hard to miss with a question that in a country where every penny counts, where inflation has skyrocketed, and where the population struggles to make ends meet, the government has chosen to prioritize control over the free flow of information at the cost of economic stability. The loss of \$3 billion is not just a number on paper; it represents the loss of jobs, income, and opportunities for countless Pakistanis who rely on the Internet to make a living.

The supporters of the government's action give examples from China and Saudi Arabia where



firewalls are permanent features of internet services. Countries like China and Saudi Arabia have implemented strict controls over the internet, but their situations differ significantly from Pakistan's. Both nations have robust economies and offer alternative opportunities for their citizens to earn a living. China, for instance, has a thriving domestic market and a well-established tech industry that can absorb the impact of internet restrictions. Saudi Arabia, too, has diversified its economy and provides ample opportunities for employment and investment. In contrast, Pakistan's economy is fragile, and its people rely heavily on the internet for income generation. The government's decision to control social media through firewalls does not come with the same safety nets that exist in China or Saudi Arabia. For Pakistan, this move has resulted in economic self-sabotage at a time when the country can least afford it.

The IT industry in Pakistan has been one of the few bright spots in an otherwise bleak economic landscape. Freelancers who work with international clients have enjoyed relative stability, earning foreign currency that helps support their families and contributes to the national economy. The government's decision to install firewalls, however, has had a chilling effect on this sector. Platforms like Fiverr and Upwork have reported that international clients are increasingly hesitant to work with Pakistani freelancers due to unreliable internet services. As a result, many Pakistani IT professionals find themselves without work, further exacerbating the country's unemployment crisis. The disruption to internet services has also made it difficult for businesses to operate, leading to delays in projects and a loss of competitiveness in the global market.

The installation of firewalls in Pakistan raises important

questions about the balance between government control and economic freedom. While the government may see this as a necessary step to curb criticism and maintain stability, the long-term consequences could be far more damaging. The loss of \$3 billion is just the beginning. If the current internet restrictions continue, Pakistan risks alienating international investors and further eroding confidence in its already struggling economy. The government must also consider the social and political implications of its actions. Silencing dissent through internet controls may provide short-term relief from criticism, but it could also fuel greater discontent in the long run. The internet has become a powerful tool for social and political mobilization, and attempts to stifle it could backfire, leading to increased tensions and unrest.

This problem is mostly a result of the intricate interactions between economic need,

freedom of speech, and governance. Pakistan stands at a critical juncture. The decisions made today will shape the country's future for years to come. While the government may feel the need to control social media, it must weigh this against the economic costs and the potential harm to the country's reputation on the global stage. Investing in digital literacy programs, promoting responsible use of social media, and engaging with critics in a constructive manner could yield better results without undermining the economy. On one hand, the need to maintain law and order, protect national security, and curb misinformation is undeniable. As Pakistan navigates this digital dilemma, it is imperative to seek a middle ground that safeguards national interests without stifling economic progress or infringing on civil liberties. This involves engaging in open dialogue with stakeholders, exploring less disruptive means of regulation, and investing in infrastructure to enhance internet connectivity and security.

In conclusion, Pakistan's experiment with firewalls has exposed the delicate balance between control and progress in the digital age. The internet has been a lifeline for many Pakistanis, offering opportunities for economic growth and global engagement. The government's decision to prioritize control over this vital resource has had devastating consequences, both economically and socially. As Pakistan navigates this challenging period, it must find a way to harness the power of the internet for the greater good, rather than stifling it in the name of control.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,045.30	78,105.98
Day's High	Day's Low
78,619.17	78,041.08
Index Value	Change
8,765,263,421	-60.68
Percentage	Time
-0.08%	16 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,311.41	-35.94
Percentage	Time
-0.43%	16 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
40,682.84	+119.78
Percentage	Time
+0.30%	16 Aug, 1:11 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,062.67	+1,336.03
Percentage	Time
+3.64%	16 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	183.9	187.5
Bahrain Dinar	738.2	743.7
Canadian Dollar	202.9	207.25
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	303.5	305.70
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.91	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.45	910.60
Malaysian Ringgit	58.7	59.5
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	73.85	74.55
Singapore Dollar	202.15	204.15
Swedish Korona	26.25	26.55
Swiss Franc	319.5	324.50
Thai Bhat	7.55	7.7
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	76.65
UK Pound Sterling	357.9	360.1
US Dollar	279.70	280.4

Relief for electricity consumers in Punjab a worthwhile initiative: Dr. Shahid Rasheed

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Dr. Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Sunday that it is a worthy endeavour to provide relief to energy consumers in the province of Punjab.

He said the provincial government's announcement to give consumers a relief of 14 rupees per unit on electricity bills is a laudable move.

Shahid Rasheed Butt said that other provinces should also follow Punjab and give relief to the people. Provinces can manage resources using surplus funds or cutting assembly members' development budgets.

The business leader said in a statement today that provinces can also cut expenditures in various sectors, reduce development funds, and divert the money for the badly needed relief program as almost half of the developmental funds are wasted.

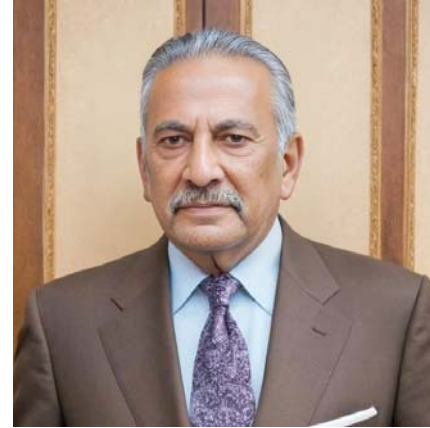
Electricity bills have troubled people across the country. The bills have increased house rents, and most of the country's population has been unable to pay them and the increased tariffs is bankrupting the masses and the businesses.

Since power bills are bankrupting businesses, it is also contributing to unemployment, reduced taxes, sluggish production and overall economic downturn, he observed.

He said that in these disappointing circumstances, the historic electricity relief package for Punjab by the leader of Muslim League (N) Nawaz Sharif is certainly a people-friendly initiative.

According to this initiative, those using 500 units per month will get a relief of Rs 14 per unit, provided in August and September bills. Up to 500 units, the introductory tariff rate is Rs 37 to Rs 38 per unit. After Rs 14 relief, it will be Rs 24, he informed.

In this regard, PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz



said in a press conference that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif should also reduce electricity prices.

Appreciating the relief package, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that work is being done to find a lasting solution to the

reduction in electricity prices.

Shahid Rashid Butt said that heavy electricity bills, indirect taxes, and IPPs agreements have made life difficult for people. Currently, 49 billion dollars are paid to IPPs that run only 85 hours. Employees of electricity companies are given free electricity worth 15 billion rupees annually.

The government of Punjab has decided to continue the relief and provide the people with cheap electricity through solar panels worth seven hundred billion rupees.

According to Shahid Rashid Butt, the government must take into consideration the plans that the electricity bureaucracy is attempting to carry out against the solar industry.

He said that it is common knowledge that a solar company must first bribe the DISCO officials to get their projects approved in order to operate in the market. Top officials are aware of this, but they have chosen to remain silent and promote this practice.

Dangerous

ISLAMABAD: A view of sinking newly constructed Bhara Kahu bypass road, blocked with plastic road barrier, which may cause any incident any time and needs the attention of concerned authorities, in the Federal Capital.

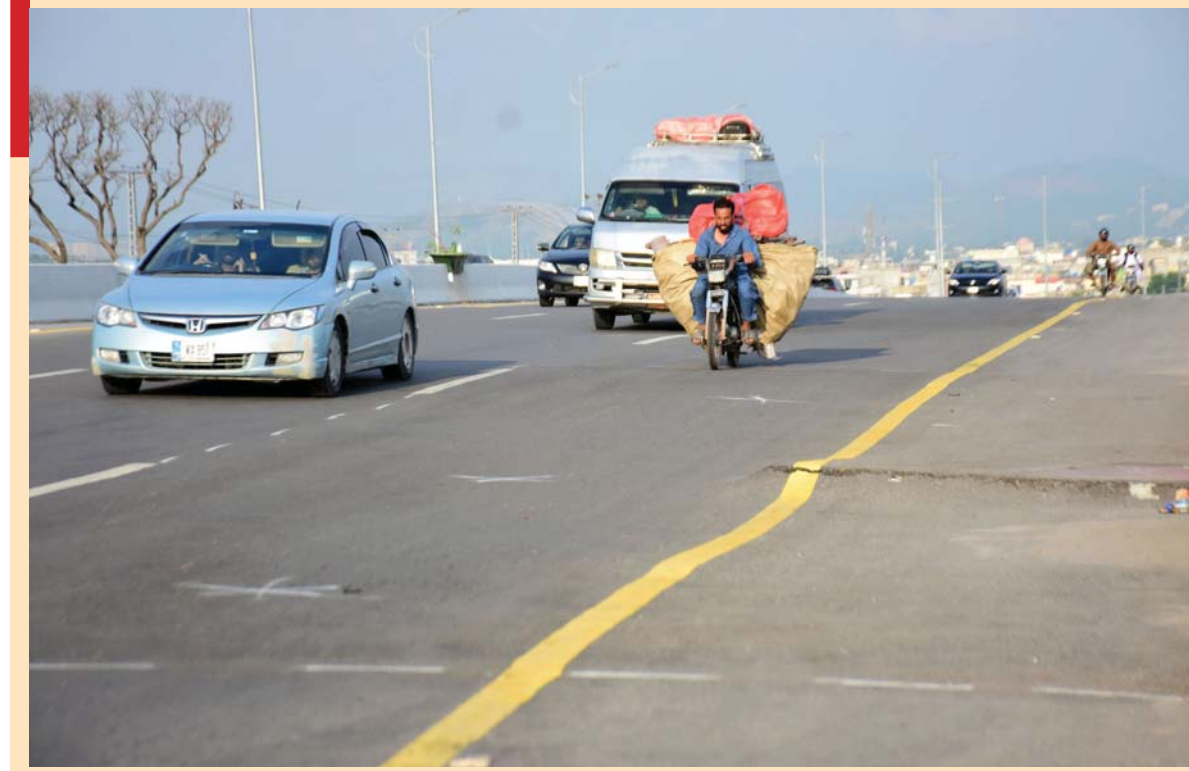


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

New PIAF Pioneer Progressive Alliance launched to contest LCCI 2024 polls

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The biggest alliance of the three strong groups of LCCI has been established first time in the history of Lahore business community to contest Lahore Chamber's election being held in Sept 2024.

PIAF Chief Patron Mian Anjum Nisar, Chairman Pioneer Group Ali Hussam Asghar and President Progressive Group Khalid Usman held a press conference with their respective leaders at PIAF Head Office here today.

PIAF Chairman Faheemur Rehman Saigol said that the Pakistan Industrial and Traders Associations Front (Anjum Nisar



group) continued to secure more support as traders and several more associations have announced to back the PPPA in the LCCI upcoming elections of 2024. The PIAF leadership also nominated their more expected candidates for Lahore Chamber Election 2024.

Incremental benefit must be passed on to Karachi industrial units: FBATI

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government and concerned authorities should release the allocated funds on account of incremental benefit subsidy electricity to industrial units of Karachi, mainly Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to prevent the closure of large-scale economic activities and layoffs in different sectors of commercial and industrial hub of the country, said President Federal B Area Association of Industries Syed Raza Hussain.

He pointed out that the government released power subsidies to industries of different cities but it only paid an amount of Rs. 9 billion to subsidies of Karachi as against the allocated amount of Rs. 42 billion as part of the relief to industries from COVID-19 economic

downturn during FY20-23, but the financial relief was discontinued due to disagreements between the industries and the K-Electric.

He called on Federal Minister for Energy Owais Leghari and Minister of State Muhammad Ali to address this discrimination urgently, urging the removal of specific surcharges imposed exclusively on Karachi consumers as they are unjustified.

He proposed increasing the gas supply to K-Electric to reduce electricity costs, as the current generation from RLNG is highly expensive. The delay in subsidy distribution and high electricity costs have led to warnings from industrial leaders that protests, including sit-ins and demonstrations, may be inevitable if the situation is not resolved soon, President FBATI said.

BMP for check on govt expenditure, high cost of debt servicing to contain budget deficit

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry's Businessmen Panel has called for keeping check on government expenditure and high cost of debt servicing to contain budget deficit, as the Pakistan's federal budget deficit projection has been revised to history's highest to over Rs6 trillion, highlighting the unending fiscal woes that have pushed the country into a debt trap despite putting additional burden of billions of rupees on industry in the current fiscal year.

The FPCCI former president and BMP chairman Mian Anjum Nisar has warned the high cost of doing business has been hurting the economic growth, as the inflation rate bounced back, hurting the trade and industry the most, which faced the brunt of a staggering increase in gas prices.

The FPCCI former president said that the failure to reform the tax system is a major factor behind heavy domestic and foreign borrowings by the government.

Government's decision to provide risk coverage to banks for growth in SME Sector



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In line with the Government's efforts to give impetus to the SME sector, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) has recently conveyed its strong resolve to support the banking sector by issuing a risk coverage scheme, which will help the banking sector to double its SME exposure to Rs. 1.1 trillion

during the next five years.

These strategic measures being implemented with the support of Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA) dedicated taskforces, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, are expected to provide significant support to driving robust economic recovery and sustainable development in the country.

Reliable Internet, a National Priority

Noor Ul Ain Bashir

Recently, Pakistan has faced enormous difficulties due to internet shortages that have severely impacted businesses, freelancers, and multinational companies operating within the country. In as much as the current government focuses on motorway development and national events celebrations, it is crucial to address the immediate and pressing issues impacting the nation's economy.

Independence is not just about symbolism or infrastructure projects. The true measure of independence lies in securing basic necessities for our people and their businesses such as reliable and effective internet access services.

The current internet short-

ages have led to disruptions in daily business operations, slowed productivity and causing financial losses. Freelancers, who are a key sector of the digital economy, find it difficult to continue working due to constant unavailability of the internet. Multinational companies, which contribute significantly to our economy by earning in foreign currencies, are facing operational hurdles that may lead them to reconsider their investments in Pakistan.

The government must recognize the value of these contributions and address the infrastructure deficits that undermine economic stability. Investments should be directed toward improving the Internet infrastructure and ensuring that service quality meets the demands of a digital economy. By prioritizing these critical areas, the government



can foster a more conducive environment for business growth and international investment

In addition, priority should not be given to security and surveillance at the expense of reliable utilities and infrastructure. The focus should be on creating an environment where

businesses can thrive and where the economic contributions of multinational companies are respected and appreciated. Addressing these issues will not only support local entrepreneurs and freelancers but also reinforce Pakistan's reputation as a viable and attractive destination for

international investment. In addition to these concerns, we must acknowledge that the world is rapidly modernizing. We need to redirect our attention from rising prices of basic commodities such as sugar and wheat, we need to focus on maximizing our economic potential. Many freelancers and recent graduates, with limited job options are resorting to entrepreneurship or freelance work to sustain themselves. However, without an enhanced internet backbone, these efforts may be compromised, leading Pakistan to lag behind the rest of the globalized digitized universe. Ensuring uninterrupted internet access is the least that can be offered to the public as we strive to stay current with the rapidly evolving global landscape.

Email: noorhashmi50@gmail.com

FBR notifies Karachi traders to pay Rs 60,000 advance tax



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Saturday notified traders in Karachi, demanding an advance tax payment of Rs 60,000 per month under the Tajir Dost Scheme.

FBR Karachi's regional tax office issued a notice to the shopkeepers in the metropolis, demanding an advance tax payment of Rs 60,000 per month under the Tajir Dost Scheme, stating that the advance tax should be paid by the 15th of each month.

The scheme, aimed at simplifying tax compliance for traders, has caused concern among the business community, particularly in markets such as Liaquatabad and the electronics market.

The business community in Karachi expressed worry over another financial burden by the authorities and decided not to pay the advance tax under the government's scheme.

A day earlier, the traders' community announced a country-wide strike on August 28 against the Tajir Dost scheme introduced by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR).

All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajir in joint presser with other traders associations, demanded the withdrawal of the Tajir Dost scheme which they termed 'unacceptable'.

The traders demanded that the scheme be immediately withdrawn and that the decision to impose heavy taxes on the export sector be reversed.

The traders also demanded to withdraw the increase in income tax slabs for salaried individuals and businessmen.

PCB moves second Bangladesh Test from Karachi to Rawalpindi

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced shifting the second Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh from Karachi to Rawalpindi.

In a statement on Sunday, the PCB said that the decision was taken owing to the ongoing construction and renovation works being done at the National Bank Stadium Karachi.

"Given that construction must continue uninterrupted to ensure the venue is operationally ready for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the PCB, after consulting all stakeholders and reviewing operational and logistical matters, has decided to hold both Tests in Rawalpindi, as per the PCB's statement.

According to the cricket governing body, the dust from the construction work could also affect the health and well-being of the players, officials, broadcasters, and media.

While the PCB had earlier decided to



hold the second Test without spectators in Karachi, it has announced that spectators will be able to watch the game live in Rawalpindi.

"At this stage, we will not like to speculate on the hosting of the second Test in Karachi from 15-19 October and will continue to work closely with the archi-

tecs and construction experts on the safe and secure hosting of the match, while keeping the England and Wales Cricket Board updated," the Pakistan Cricket Board stated in the statement.

It is pertinent to mention that the Test series between Pakistan and Bangladesh is a part of the World Test Championship

(WTC) 2023-25.

The first Test between the two teams is scheduled from August 21 to 25 at the Pindi Cricket Stadium while the second game will be played from August 30 to September 4 at the same venue.

Pakistan's Test squad: Shan Masood (c), Saud Shakeel (vc), Aamir Jamal (subject to Fitness), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Kamran Ghulam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Huraire, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk) and Shaheen Shah Afridi.

Bangladesh's Test squad: Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Mahmudul Hasan Joy, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Kumer Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nayeem Hasan, Nahid Rana, Shoriful Islam, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed and Syed Khaled Ahmed.

Indian Gymkhana vs Khawaja Junaid Legends match ends in tie

Sports Desk

LONDON: The exhibition hockey match between Indian Gymkhana London and Khawaja Junaid All Stars Hockey Legends ended in a thrilling tie, with both sides scoring five goals each. The match, organized in collaboration with Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy, Al Mera Foundation and the Noor Project was aimed at promoting hockey and raise funds for orphans and underprivileged children.

The match consisted of four 15-minute halves, showcased the skills of international hockey stars, including Dhanraj Pillay, Stephen Blocher, Juan Escarre, James Tyndall, Pakistan's Olympian Khawaja Junaid and Rana Ghazanfar Ali, Faiz ur Rehman, Akram Raza, Adeel Ahmad. Throughout the match, the spectators were captivated by the legends' skills and techniques.

Although the match ended in a draw, Rana Ghazanfar of Pakistan emerged as the top scorer with two goals, while Dhan Rajpala dominated the game with



his exceptional performance.

In his post match comments, Indian hockey legend Dhan Rajpala expressed his willingness to visit Pakistan to promote the sport and back the Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy. "I would be happy to come to Pakistan on a call for

the promotion of hockey and to support the children of Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy," he said.

Spanish star Juan Escarre shared his fond memories of Pakistan stating, "Whenever there is a hockey event in Pakistan, I will be the first to reach there."

German hockey legend Stephen Bluscher said he was honoured to participate in the match, held for a noble cause.

Several notables, including British MPs Seema Malhotra and Ruth Cadbury, Lord Rami Rangers and Hounslow Deputy Mayor Muhammad Shakeel witnessed the thrilling contest.

Seema expressed pleasure to see Indian Gymkhana organizing an event of a very high caliber for the first time.

Seema asked Khawaja Junaid and Indian Gymkhana's top brass to devise a plan to make the event a part of their annual clander.

Rajpala commended Khawaja Junaid for organizing the event and expressed his willingness to participate in future events in Pakistan. He emphasized the importance of strategic planning and funding for hockey, encouraging Pakistan to follow India's approach to the sport.

The event highlighted the strong bonds of sportsmanship between the players and underscored the importance of promoting hockey globally.

Abbas Afridi's all-round show in vain as Shaheens concede defeat

Sports Desk

DARWIN: Pakistan Shaheens fell 30 runs short against Adelaide Strikers in the first semifinal of the Top End T20 series as they scored 167 all out in reply to Strikers' 197-5 on Sunday at the DXC Arena in Darwin.

Mohammad Abbas Afridi's quickfire 29-ball 54 went in vain as the Shaheens ran out of batters with 11 balls still left in the bag. Earlier, Abbas also took three wickets.

In pursuit of the 198-run target, Pakistan Shaheens lost a wicket in second, third, fourth and fifth over as they were reduced to 33-4 in 4.1 overs. Mohammad Harris got off to a steady start scoring 19 off 11 balls with the help of three fours before falling to Tim Oakley in the third over.

Mubasir Khan (18, 12b, 2x6s) and Usman Khan (32, 20b, 2x4s, 1x6) stitched a 32-run fifth-wicket partnership but both fell in the eighth and 11th overs respectively as with the scorecard reading 65-5 and then 91-6.

Abbas, who walked into bat at seven, belted five fours and three sixes during



his 29-ball stay on the crease but with no support from other end. Arif Yaqoob (15, 17b, 1x4) and Mohammad Imran Jnr (11, 5b, 1x4, 1x6) chipped in with small contributions but all in vain as the team was bundled out for 167 in 18.1 overs.

Liam Scott picked up three wickets while Jordan Buckingham and Lloyd

Pope had two each to their names. Oakley, Tim O'Connell and Noah McFayden dismissed one batter each.

Earlier, after Shaheens opted to bowl first, Strikers' opening batter Jake Winter smashed a 61-ball 104 hitting six fours and eight sixes to take the game away. He was joined by Harry Manenti (52, 32b, 9x4s, 1x6) in the ninth over as

the duo stitched a 73-run fourth-wicket partnership in 7.4 overs, taking the team score from 57-3 to 130-4 in 15.4 overs when Manenti departed.

Sam Rahaley remained unbeaten on 13 off 10 hitting one four as Winter was finally dismissed in the last over of the innings. For Shaheens, Abbas took three wickets while Faisal Akram chipped in with two.

This semi-final loss brings an end to the Pakistan Shaheens tour of Darwin which began with a two four-day match series against Bangladesh 'A' in July followed by two 50-over matches against Bangladesh 'A' and NT Strike. Pakistan Shaheens played seven matches in the Top End T20 series winning five and losing two.

Scores in brief:

Adelaide Strikers won by 30 runs Adelaide Strikers 197-5, 20 overs (Jake Winter 104, Harry Manenti 52; Mohammad Abbas Afridi 3-51, Faisal Akram 2-58)

Pakistan Shaheens 167 all out, 18.1 overs (Mohammad Abbas Afridi 54, Usman Khan 32; Scott 3-44, Lloyd Pope 2-32, Jordan Buckingham 2-33)

Bangladesh's Mahmudul Hasan to miss first Test



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bangladesh opening batsman Mahmudul Hasan Joy is suffering from a groin strain and will miss the first Test against Pakistan, which gets underway in Rawalpindi on August 21.

Bangladesh national team physio Bayjedul Islam Khan said: "Joy had complained of pain in the right groin on 14 August while playing for Bangladesh A in the four-day match against Pakistan A.

He underwent an MRI followed by physical assessment, and it has since been confirmed that he has a Grade 1 adductor strain in the right groin.

He has begun his rehab. Such injuries usually take about 10 to 14 days to recover from. He will not be available for the first Test but we hope to have him fit for the second Test which starts on August 30.

"We will continue to monitor his progress on a day to day basis."

Jay Shah congratulates Virat Kohli on completing 16 years in international cricket

A Sports

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Secretary Jay Shah has congratulated batting maestro Virat Kohli on completing 16 years in international cricket.



The 35-year-old Indian batter made his debut on 18 August 2008 in an ODI against Sri Lanka in Dambulla. He had a forgettable debut game, scoring a meagre 12, however, he went on to become arguably the greatest batter of the modern era, breaking several records during his 16-year-long career.

On the 16th anniversary of Kohli's debut, Jay Shah shared a heartfelt congratulatory message on his official X account, acknowledging the star batter's illustrious and successful career.

"16 years ago today, a 19-year-old @imVkohli stepped onto the international stage for the first time, marking the beginning of what has become a truly legendary career. Congratulations to the King on completing 16 years in international cricket," Shah posted.

During his illustrious career, Virat Kohli has achieved significant success with team India, securing victories in three major tournaments: the ICC ODI World Cup in 2011, the ICC Champions Trophy in 2013, and the more recent ICC T20 World Cup in 2024. Virat Kohli has showcased his exceptional skills across, but his performance in ODI cricket is particularly remarkable.

He has scored a phenomenal 13,906 runs with an outstanding average of 58.18 and has struck a record-breaking 50 centuries in ODI cricket.

Meanwhile, Kohli has scored 8,848 runs in 113 Test matches at an average of 49.15 with 29 centuries. On the other hand, he has amassed 4,188 runs in 125 T20Is at an average of 48.68 and a strike rate of 137.04.

Ronaldo's Al Nassr loses to Al Hilal in Saudi Super Cup final

Cristiano Ronaldo's Al Nassr has lost the Saudi Super Cup 2024 trophy to Al Hilal as his club just managed to score a single goal on Saturday.

Al Hilal scored all of their four goals in a fiery, adrenaline-rushed second half as the score ticked up to 4-1 in their favour and they lifted the trophy.

CR7 managed to score Al Nassr's only goal in the final while just a minute of the first half was left.

The opposing club went wild after the interval as Sergej Milinkovic-Savic scored the first goal for Al Hilal and eight minutes later they were leading the scoreboard after Aleksandar Mitrovi scored the club's second goal.

The Serbian footballer again struck a goal and secured his team's chances of winning. Al Hilal's back-to-back goals left Ronaldo and his team agitated as they fumbled and failed to one-up the lead.

Brazilian footballer Malcolm, who is representing the Al Hilal football club in the Saudi football league, struck the fourth goal for his club in the 69th minute. The rest of the second half witnessed the further downfall of Ronaldo's Al Nassr as Al Hilal clinched their second Saudi Super Cup title in a row and their fifth overall, three more than the club they defeated in the final.

South Africa win keeps up hopes of test championship final berth

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: South Africa's Test series success over the West Indies keeps up their outside chance of a place in next year's World Test Championship final even if they must win at least five of their next six matches.

The 40-run win over the West Indies at the Providence Stadium in Georgetown on Saturday was their second success in six tests in the 2023-25 cycle and moved them up to fifth in the standings.

But if they are to stand any chance of challenging the likes of log leaders India and second placed Australia for a berth in next year's one-off final, they must win at least five of their

next remaining six tests - two away against Bangladesh in October, which are yet to be confirmed, followed by two home to Sri Lanka and Pakistan each at the end of the year.

Reaching the final of the championship is a goal for South Africa, who kept up their long-standing dominance over the West Indies with their weekend win in Guyana.

It proved a see-saw battle in the second test as the home side chased a target of 263 run to win but fell short when South Africa bowled them out for 222.

"It was very satisfying because winning away from home is never an easy feat, and you should never take it for granted," South Africa captain

Temba Bavuma said.

South Africa were in their first test outing since February when the Twenty20 commitments of most of their players saw them send a second-string side to New Zealand and be easily beaten.

They were back to full strength for their brief Caribbean tour, where they drew the first rain-affected test in Trinidad and Tobago.

"Our goal was to come to the Caribbean and win the series, and we're happy that we were able to do so. And I think along the way as well, we've played some good cricket," Bavuma said.

"We were put under pressure, and we were able to have answers in those



periods. I think we can obviously get better and improve, but I think for

this young group of players, there's a lot of learnings and confidence

that we can take from here," he told reporters.

Floral wreath

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi laying floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in Frontier Corps Balochistan (South) Headquarters on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Interior Minister
condemns attack on
Police in Lakki Marwat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD, AUG 18 (APP): Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday strongly condemned the attack on a police party in the jurisdiction of Bargi Police Station in Lakki Marwat. He paid rich tribute to Constable Nisar Khan, who embraced martyrdom in the attack. The interior minister extended

heartfelt condolences to the family of the martyr. He also prayed for the swift recovery of the injured police personnel.

Mohsin Naqvi said that we salute the sacrifice of Constable Nisar Khan. He added that the officers and personnel of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police have rendered invaluable sacrifices in the fight against terrorists of Fitna Al Khawarij.

Tarar grieved over
demise of brother
of DG Information
Department Lahore

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Ataullah Tarar on Sunday expressed deep grief over the death of Deputy Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Rawalpindi Chaudhry Musrat Abbas who is the brother of Director General Information Department Regional Office Lahore Shafqat Abbas.

The minister, who was deeply saddened by the news, prayed to the Almighty to rest the departed soul in the eternal peace, and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss with fortitude.

Tarar, in a news statement, said



Chaudhry Musrat Abbas was a very hardworking and capable officer, and his services for the country would always be remembered.

Internet slowdown caused by
VPN use, Minister claims

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Sunday, Khawaja claimed that the government had neither shut down the internet or slowed it down.

She went on to claim that a majority of the consumers in the country were using VPNs to access some functions of social media sites, especially downloading. She added that the VPN use was putting 'pressure' on the internet causing it to slow down as a whole.

The minister also said that the disruption to internet service was 'natural' and had occurred for only one or two days.

Khawaja said that she had requested the Pakistan Tele-

communication Authority to ensure that ordinary users should not face difficulties in accessing the internet.

The minister announced the formation of a National Digitalization Commission to accelerate Pakistan's economic growth, aligning with the priorities set by the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC). Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will head the commission.

Khawaja highlighted the government's commitment to advancing the IT sector. She noted that Pakistan witnessed record IT exports this year and that investments are increasing under the SIFC framework. Prime Minister Sharif has emphasized digitalization since assuming office.



She stated that the newly established commission, headed by the Prime Minister, will prioritize the IT sector, reflecting its importance in economic recovery. This marks the first time in Pakistan's history that IT exports

greater investment.

Khawaja further emphasized the government's commitment to digital literacy, stating that over 4 billion rupees were allocated in the previous budget for IT training and employment opportunities for children. Over 300,000 children will receive training from Huawei, with ongoing discussions with Google, Microsoft, and Meta for further certifications and skill development.

This includes plans to provide coding skills to over 10,000 children and the development of two IT parks, one in Islamabad and one in Karachi. The Islamabad IT park is expected to generate over 10,000 job opportunities.

Istehkam-e-Pakistan to convene
special meeting on Local Government
elections in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 18: President of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party & Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan, while presiding over the consultative meeting of District Presidents and provincial leaders of the Party has said that no one should remain in any doubt about the red line and national priorities for our beloved motherland. He added that it is crystal clear that our Party IPP fully stands with the objectives of strengthening the country. Central President IPP Abdul Aleem Khan directed to convene special meeting of the Central Executive Committee



of Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party next week in which political Consultations and important decisions will be finalized. Similarly, he said that there will be a meeting and consul-

tation with the Party leaders on the last Saturday of every month. Abdul Aleem Khan instructed the District Presidents to intensify political activities in their respective

constituencies, strengthen the connections with the people and prepare themselves for Local Government Elections. President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan approved the nomination of former MPA Tahir Hindli from Sialkot as a Member of the Central Executive Council. Declaring the proposal feasible, he directed to prepare the list of IPP ticket holders to nominate them in the District Coordination Committee. He also asked Provincial President & General Secretary to finalize the nominations of IPP district office bearers in the remaining districts including Layyah. President Istehkam-e-Paki-

stan Party Punjab Rana Nazir Ahmad Khan and General Secretary & MPA Muhammad Shoab Siddiqui while giving a detailed briefing to the Central President of the Party Abdul Aleem Khan told that most of the work has been completed including the nomination of district officials while names Lahore district has also been announced. Khawar Mumtaz Manika, Niaz Gashkuri, Tahir Hindli, Rana Umar Nazir and Raffaat Gillani also spoke in the meeting while the Party leaders expressed their full confidence in Central President Abdul Aleem Khan and assured him to work more actively for the Party's strength.

Harris, Donald Trump
neck-and-neck in 4 critical
battleground states: Poll

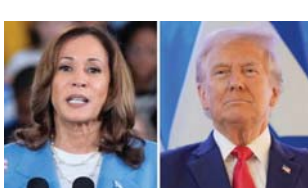
NEW YORK, AUG 18 (APP): US Vice President Kamala Devi Harris is closing the gap with former President Donald Trump in several key U.S. battleground states as the November presidential election inches closer, according to a new poll.

The poll from The New York Times/Siena College found Harris is leading Trump in Arizona (50 percent to 45 percent) and North Carolina (49 percent to 47 percent).

Battleground states are where the number of Democratic and Republican voters is about the same.

The vice president's momentum has in recent weeks led her campaign to declare that North Carolina, where Trump had built a solid lead when facing former President Joe Biden, is back in play for Democrats.

In Nevada and Georgia, Harris has largely closed the gap with the former president.



Trump leads the vice president in Nevada 48 percent to 47 percent, and in Georgia, 50 percent to 46 percent, as per the survey.

As an average of the four Sun Belt states — Arizona, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada — Trump and Harris are tied at 48 percent, the survey shows. A win in at least one of these states with a sweep of the other three battleground states — Wisconsin, Michigan, and Pennsylvania — would likely be enough to clinch the presidency.

Harris has steadily gained in national polls since Biden announced last month he would withdraw from the race and endorsed her to run in November. She became the official Democratic nominee earlier this month, and will formally accept the nomination alongside her running mate Minnesota Governor Tim Walz next week at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago.

MOFA starts
apostille attestation
service through
courier companies for
Gujrat, Quetta

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: After Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi and Peshawar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has now decided to provide Apostille attestation services through courier companies in Gujrat and Quetta as well.

The service in the cities will start from August 19 (Monday), a statement issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson said on Sunday.

MOFA starts apostille attestation service through courier companies for Gujrat, Quetta

As part of this initiative, designated courier companies are collecting documents from applicants, which will then be attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The courier companies authorized to collect documents for apostille attestation in Gujrat include TCS, M&P, Leopard, and ECS. Similarly, in Quetta, TCS, Gerry's, M&P, Leopard, and ECS will collect the documents for apostille attestation.

According to the statement, the courier companies are authorized to accept all documents except Power of Attorney.

Actress Nimra Khan
was being harassed, not
kidnapped, say police

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The alleged abduction of actress Nimra Khan in Karachi's Defence Phase 8 has taken a new turn, as police clarified that it was not an attempted kidnapping but rather a "case of harassment."

According to Sub-Divisional Police Officer

Manisha Ropeta,

the investigation

revealed that

there was a single

assailant involved

in the incident. She

noted that there

have been two

recent harassment

cases involving

women and both

suspects have been

arrested.

Nimra expressed

satisfaction with

the police's performance,

stating that they

worked "tirelessly" to

gather evidence and

carry out the investigation.

"I am glad that nobody

is after my life," she said and

hoped that they

would arrest the culprit and provide justice to her.

The incident reportedly occurred on August 11 evening. The actress had previously revealed in an Instagram video that she thwarted an attempted abduction, sharing chilling details about the incident with her followers.



She shared a terrifying account of her experience while waiting for her family outside a hotel in Karachi's Defence area. While her family was on their way to pick her up, their vehicle got caught in traffic. As it began to rain, she stood outside the hotel waiting.