



Harris widens lead over Trump with boost from women, Hispanics: poll

Democrat Kamala Harris leads Republican Donald Trump 45% to 41% in a Reuters/Ipsos poll published on Thursday that showed the vice president sparking new enthusiasm among voters and shaking up the race ahead of the November 5 election.



UN chief calls for banning nuclear testing "for good"

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres Thursday called for banning nuclear testing "for good" in a message marking the International Day against Nuclear Tests, observed annually on August 29. More than 2,000 nuclear tests have been conducted at over 60 sites around the world since testing began on 16 July 1945, resulting in uninhabitable lands and long-term health problems, the UN chief pointed out in his message for the day.

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National action plan meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a session of the Apex Committee of the National Action Plan in Quetta, on Thursday.



Photo: PID

CJCSC Shamshad, Oman's Deputy PM discuss military ties



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee (JCSC), who is on an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman, called on His Highness Sayyid Shihab bin Tariq bin Taimur Al-Said, Dy Prime Minister for Defence Affairs, General Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Namani, the Minister of the Royal Office, Vice Admiral Abdullah bin Khamis Al-Raisi, the Chief of Staff Sultan Armed Forces (COSSAF), Services Chiefs and Chairman of Strategic and Defense Academy. During separately-held meetings, both sides discussed military cooperation including training, security, counter-terrorism, defence industry and regional security environment; and acknowledged the commonality of views to expand military to military relationship and forge deeper strategic ties. The Omani dignitaries acknowledged the sacrifices rendered by people and Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war against terrorism.

Quetta visit: PM Shehbaz vows to root out terrorism

Says terrorism will be rooted out under guidance of COAS Gen Munir and with full cooperation from state

Spokesman Report

QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has vowed to root out the menace of terrorism with collective efforts as the country deals with the rise in terrorist attacks in Balochistan.

"The entire nation is grieved by the recent tragic incident that occurred in Balochistan. Khawarij who shed the blood of innocent people will be crushed through joint efforts of the nation and the valiant forces of Pakistan," he said while addressing a high-level apex committee meeting at CM Secretariat, Quetta on Thursday.

The premier was on a day-long visit to the city. Chief of Army Staff General Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Balochistan Governor Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Commerce Minister Jam Kamal, the provincial corps commander, and other armed and civilian officials attended the meeting.

A spate of terrorist attacks rocked the resource-rich but

backward province late Sunday night. Militants killed over 40 civilians, including 23 in Musa Khel after identity check, in at least 12 places. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army had claimed responsibility for the attack on Sunday midnight across the province. They also targeted security personnel. They stormed police stations, blew up railway tracks, and set fire to almost three dozen vehicles.

A military wing's statement stated that 10 soldiers and four law enforcement agencies personnel were martyred and

at least 21 terrorists got killed in clearance operations.

PM Shehbaz said: "We make it clear that with determination, and unwavering resolve, we will eliminate terrorism in Balochistan. Balochistan is an important and beautiful province of Pakistan, and all obstacles in its path to development and prosperity will be removed for good."

The premier hinted at the involvement of "foreign elements" and claimed that the Khawarij planned terrorism in Pakistan and shed the blood of Pakistanis, including law enforcement agen-

cies. He reiterated the government's determination to "crush those involved in the ghastly bloodshed as the blood of the martyrs will not go in vain."

While expressing his trust in the professional capabilities of the armed and civilian forces, he said: "Under the guidance of COAS General Asim Munir and with full cooperation from the federal government and the leadership of Balochistan the terrorism will be rooted out. Sacrifices of those who laid down their lives for the motherland and the innocent civilians will not go to waste."

PPP chief Bilawal perplexed by Punjab's Rs14 per unit relief to electricity consumers

Bureau Report

KARACHI: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has stated the Punjab government's decision to provide Rs14 per unit relief to consumers of up to 500 units remained 'perplexing' him as he questions the long-term impact of such steps.

"We welcome the announcement to the extent that it aims to lower electricity costs, but the decision remains perplexing to me," he said while addressing a ceremony in Karachi on Thursday.

"If short-term relief leads to long-term suffering, such projects are not in the public interest."

The provincial government launched the 'Sindh Solar Energy Project' to distribute solar home systems to 1.6 million low-income house-



holds across the province in phases.

Earlier this month, PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif announced that the Punjab government would provide Rs14 per unit relief in August and September bills to consumers using up to 500 units of electricity. He claimed that Maryam has diverted funds worth Rs45 billion from the development budget to provide relief to the people.

Bilawal recalled the PPP's 'long march' against the PTI-led government, which resulted in a temporary reduction in petrol prices.

PM Shehbaz can also be at risk of abduction, if ousted, claims Khan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister Imran Khan has alleged that the incumbent prime minister can also be at risk of abduction if ousted and the "Plan B" was implemented. He did not explain the plan and who else was kidnapped.

"Current priorities have shifted to dismantling the largest political party in the country," he told reporters in an informal conversation on Thursday at the Adiala Jail.

The incarcerated former prime minister has claimed that he has been jailed in politically motivated cases and denied all allegations. He has also accused the government of crackdown on his party and supporters.

Khan was whisked away by law enforcement agencies from the premises of the Islamabad High Court in a graft case on May 9, 2023, leading to violent protests in the country.

He has made several claims in the recent past without presenting substantial evidence. The former



prime minister, who alleges he was ousted via former army chief support, slammed the arrest of his party workers.

On Thursday, Khan denied claims that he had instructed any of the hidden leaders to come out and emphasised that those might face abduction. He directed his leaders, who were hiding, to remain out of public view for their safety.

The former prime minister highlighted the "alarming situation" that PTI members are facing, citing the

abduction of key figures, including the party's president in Lahore and two brothers of Azhar Mashwani. He also claimed that even a jail deputy superintendent was reportedly abducted, with police alleging he fled with a woman.

He alleged that the government was conspiring with Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa to undermine the party's electoral mandate. He claimed that the CJP has been blocking the opening of constituencies for the past six to seven months, asserting that once he completes his tenure, four constituencies would open up, leading to the government's collapse.

Khan criticised the current administration, stating that the country has been turned into a 'banana republic' where citizens no longer trust their rulers. He dismissed claims that terrorism in Pakistan was a result of PTI's actions, reminding that his party had previously engaged with the Afghan government to negotiate against the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan after the US withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Moderate earthquake shakes Islamabad, KP

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad was shaken by an earthquake just before noon on Thursday. According to the National Seis-

mic Monitoring Centre, the earthquake had a magnitude of 5.4 on the Richter Scale.

The epicenter of the earthquake was located in the Hindu Kush range at a depth of 215

kilometres. The earthquake rattled buildings across the city, causing people to exit buildings in panic.

No loss of life and property has been reported so far.

Tremors from the earthquake were also felt in numerous cities across Pakistan, including Lahore, Multan, and Sargodha in Punjab province, and Peshawar, Swat, North

Waziristan, Hangu, Mardan, Malakand, Buner, Shangla, Dir, Manshara, Bitgram, Torghar, and Kohistan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

Potential cyclone expected to emerge along Sindh coast tonight: PMD

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A potential cyclone that has developed over the Rann of Kutch in India is likely to emerge along the Sindh coast late Thursday or Friday morning, according to the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

The deep depression is currently located around 270 kilometers east/southeast of Karachi and is expected to move west/southwestwards, intensifying into a cyclonic storm by tomorrow.

Under the system's influence, widespread rain and thunderstorms, along with

isolated heavy rainfall, are expected till August 31 in Karachi, Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, and other districts. Sea conditions are also likely to remain very rough with squally winds.

Fishermen have been advised not to venture into the sea till August 31. PMD's cyclone warning center is monitoring the system and will issue updates accordingly.

This weather system follows a powerful windstorm and heavy showers that lashed Karachi on Tuesday, disrupting life and damaging infrastructure.

Azad Jammu Kashmir assembly speaker urges international community to end Kashmir dispute

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD/ISLAMABAD: Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that if the international community does not find a lasting and sustainable just solution to the disputed issue of Kashmir between the two nuclear countries Pakistan and India impartially, then all the peace of the world will be destroyed. Efforts can be engulfed in the flames of fanaticism, extremism and intolerance, which India and Israel are creating together. Terrorism and human rights have been committed to violate civil liberties. He has wanted to establish peace through policies, while talking to the media, he said that eight million forces in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, especially Pandu, on August 5, 2019, from the amendments in Arti-



cle Three Seventy and Section Thirty Five, special status of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that ending the tension and deadlock between the two countries on the issue of Kashmir will solve the issue of Kashmir. He said that the Kashmiri people are not angry with India

but are expressing their worst hatred despite the imposition of curfew and lock-down black laws of three generations of sacrifices. In response to a question, Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar said that winning the general elections with a margin of 125,000 votes over the pro-India candidate

Umar Abdullah, who has been in jail for five years, is an authentic example of distrust in Indian policies. Kulbhosh Yadav's terrorism and Indian pilot Abhinand's aggression were actually the expansionist ambitions of the Indian government and the agenda of creating instability. said that the issue of Kashmir is mainly created by the United Kingdom and it is playing the leading role for its long-term solution by stopping the bloodshed of innocent people due to Indian brutality in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile Former Federal Minister Qamar-ul-Zaman Kaira, PPP Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, ticket holders Amjad Yusuf, Shaukat Javed Mir, Azdar Shah are meeting the Acting President of the state Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

Govt Decision to close the utility stores against the people of Pakistan: Ahmed Mujtaba Gillani

Syed Nadeem Kazmi

MULTAN: Former MPA Syed Ahmed Mujtaba Gillani, leader of Pakistan People's Party, Mian Muhammad Azim Saeed and Sallem Raja Divisional Secretary Information of PPP Multan said that the decision to close utility stores is a decision against the people and the employees, and it should be changed. And utility stores should be continued instead of being closed due to inflation. PPP will talk to the public and employees at all levels so that public rights are protected and the employment of employees is not affected. In a joint statement, he said that the utility stores Due to the cruel decision of closure, thousands of people will be unemployed and the people will also be deprived of the facility of cheap and quality products. He demanded the President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shabbaz Sharif, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto, Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani to withdraw the decision of closure of utility stores in public interest and millions of people and The anxiety of thousands of employees should be removed.



Zonal Election of All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Workers Union, Rana Mazhar Latif Group won



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: In the zonal election of All Pakistan Wapda Hydro Workers Union, Rana Mazhar Latif group won with a huge majority. Successful while Rashid Yameen group faced heavy defeat. Rashid Yameen, Malik Tanveer, Mohammad Nisram Abbas and Sajid Jafri lost. Rana Mazhar group got 70 votes while Rashid Yameen group got 50 votes. Regional Secretary Mahmood Amjad, Regional Chairman Revenue Shakeel Baloch, Regional Vice Chairman Sajjad Baloch, Nadeem Rauf, Malik Altaf Mahar, Rana Khizr Hayat and other office bearers congratulated all the office bearers for their great success. Newly elected Zonal Chairman Rana Mazhar Latif, Vice Chairman Malik Usman Liaquat Ran, Secretary Ilyas Sindhu, Joint Secretary Rana Aslam while speaking said that our mission is to bring smile on the faces of workers and prosperity in their homes.

We will work more hard than before, along with central president Abdul Latif Nizamani, secretary Khurshid Khan and other officials, we will take more benefits from WAPDA authority than before and we will also move the department towards development. He thanked all the workers and workers. A large number of all the divisional zonal and sub-divisional officers were present on the occasion, they congratulated the success and prayed for the development of the department.

All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference mourns death of Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan expressed his deep sorrow over the death of senior politician and central leader of Muslim League-N Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz. While condoling, he said that Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz was a big name in the politics of Azad Kashmir, his services for the state will always be remembered.

His death has created a great void not only in his family and relatives, but in the entire region and country. Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz in his life not only in the political field but also in various fields of social service. He was also associated with the Muslim Conference and his valuable services for the Muslim Conference can not be forgotten.. His political acumen, passion for public service, and integrity made him a respected leader.

He always used all his abilities for the welfare and development of the people and kept the problems of the people of his constituency as his priorities Smoothed. His death is a great loss, and will be missed forever. We pray to Allah Ta'ala to grant peace to the soul of Chaudhry Muhammad Aziz, accept his services, and grant him a high place in Jannat al-Firdous. We express our deepest sympathy and condolences to his family and loved ones. May Allah Ta'ala grant them all patience and perseverance and enable them to continue the beauty of their lives and work of service.

Meanwhile, President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, visited Arshad Akram, the brother of Sardar Safdar Akram, the leader of the Muslim Conference, in Rawalpindi and prayed for his recovery.

Meanwhile, President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of Haji Raja Fazaldad Khan, a long-time associate of Mujahid I, the senior leader of Muslim Conference from Dhirkot Kotli.

Attention please

FAISALABAD: The situation of the city after the rains needs the attention of the concerned institutions.



Photo: Online

Local government elections should be held in Multan and Punjab ASAP: Dr Aslam Joya

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Local Government Elections Should Be Held in Multan and Punjab as Soon as Possible. Civil Society Network Neely Bar Regional Network Convener Dr. Aslam Joya and Asrar Ahmed said that local government elections in Punjab and Multan should be held immediately and the people of Punjab were not entertained by the elected local governments. On this occasion Shaker Hussain Shakir, Babu Nafees Ansari Ex-MPA, Halima Sadia Assistant Mental Health Department Punjab and Cimon Development Multan Hafiz Allah Ditta Kashif Ex Union Councilor, Syed Athar Shah Bukhari Ex-President District Bar Association Multan. Chaudhry Khalid Hussain Former Chairman Union Council, Pervaiz iqbal Ansari Manager Programs Farms Development Organ-



ization, Amir Raza also expressed their views and said that the elected and government powers are currently active in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Elected local governments are

also functioning in Sindh, Baluchistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In Punjab, after 2015 local government elections do not come out. Due to the laziness of the governments regarding the formation

of elected local governments, the people of Punjab are freed from the constitutional right of elected local governments. Unfortunately, the constitutional and three provinces of the country I am in the constituencies of elected governments.

Demanding the Punjab Government whether (a) the basic unit Union Council may be named, but not more than 20 thousand population on the basis of population, (b) Union Council and district level established and rural. Directly related to local governments. A youth, a non-Muslim special person and an official named technocrat. A total of 13 MLAs. Chairperson and Deputy Chairperson as a suspect team. (m) Breadth and depth in the candidate. State elections must be efficient and effective because of many of the demographic problems of elected local governments.

Drop scene of the shooting incident on a school van at Dheri Kot

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Three savage suspects, Azam Khan, son of Muhammad Safdar; Raheem Khan alias Nomi, son of Azeem Khan; and Muhammad Safdar, son of Muhammad Aslam, who shot two young girls to death and injured five innocent children along with the driver, have been arrested. **Such brutal and inhumane elements will not be given any opportunity to thrive. Our goal is to establish a peaceful society. These barbaric criminals will be brought to justice and given the harshest punishments to set an example, said DPO Attock, Dr. Sardar Ghiyas

Gul Khan in his conference. According to details, Afzal Arif, son of Muhammad Arif, resident of Sargh, Tehsil and District Attock, stated to the police of Thana Saddar Attock that he is associated with the driving profession. He was taking school children from Dheri Kot village to Anwar ul Haq Public School Sargh as usual on the date 22.08.2024 when, upon reaching near the house of Azan Tarbit Khan, son of Ameer Khan, resident of Dheri Kot, Muhammad Naeem, son of Azeem Khan; Raheem Khan alias Nomi, son of Azeem Khan; Azam Khan, son of Muhammad Safdar; Nasir Mehmood, son of Muhammad

Safdar; and Muhammad Tariq, son of Muhammad Nawaz, residents of Dheri Chohan, Tehsil and District Attock, armed with firearms, came in front of his vehicle and started firing indiscriminately with the intent to kill. The firing resulted in the deaths of Arwa Fatima, daughter of Jamshed Khan, and Rameen Shafiq, daughter of Shafiq Ahmed, while five other children and the driver himself were injured. Due to previous enmity, the firing was done at the behest of Muhammad Safdar, son of Muhammad Aslam, resident of Dheri Chohan. Based on this statement, the police of Thana Saddar Attock immediately registered a case. Upon hearing the tragic news, the District Police Officer Attock, Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan, took immediate notice and formed a special team under the supervision of SHO Saddar Attock, Inspector Abid Munir, with the specific task of arresting the culprits involved in the incident as soon as possible. The police team from Thana Saddar Attock, using modern scientific technology and human intelligence, managed to arrest the savage criminals Azam Khan, son of Muhammad Safdar; Raheem Khan alias Nomi, son of Azeem Khan; and Muhammad Safdar, son of Muhammad Aslam, resi-

dents of Dheri Chohan, Tehsil and District Attock, who unjustly killed the innocent angels Arwa Fatima and Rameen and spread fear and terror in society. Their physical remand will be obtained for further investigation, while efforts to arrest the remaining fugitives Muhammad Naeem, son of Azeem Khan; Muhammad Tariq, son of Muhammad Nawaz; and Nasir Mehmood, son of Muhammad Safdar, are ongoing. At this moment, the District Police Officer Attock, Dr. Sardar Ghiyas Gul Khan, stated that such brutality, savagery, and inhumanity will not be tolerated. Our goal is to establish a peaceful society, and these savage criminals will be brought to justice and given the harshest punishments to set an example so that such heinous acts are not repeated. He further said that in light of the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab and the instructions of the IG Punjab, the Attock police will continue the process of arresting lawbreakers and tightening the noose of the law to make society a haven of peace.



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Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:13 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:46 pm
Maghrib 6:37 pm
Isha 8:04 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79

Wana Police hostage Saifullah recovered 5 arrested

Correspondent

WANA: In a successful operation conducted by the District South Waziristan Lower Police Special Team on Wednesday evening, hostage prominent businessman Saifullah was recovered, and five accused were arrested.

Wana City Police arrested the wanted accused Abdur Rehman, who confessed to the crime during interrogation and revealed the names of his co-accused, based on his identification, a heavy police force raided his house in Wacha Khowara area of Wana tehsil and recovered prominent businessman Saifullah Wazir.

According to police the co-accused, who are also Abdur Rehman's brothers, were arrested, including Habib Ur Rehman, Farid Ullah, Anjad Khan, and Noor Khan.

District Police Officer Farman Ullah said that a used Kalashnikov, Fielder car vehicle, and several mobile phones were recovered from the accused. Additionally, all ATM cards, mobile phones, and driving licenses of the hostage were recovered.

In this regard tribal elders, relatives, and social personalities appreciated the excellent performance of the police team and especially for DPO South Waziristan Lower, DSP Wana Basharat Khan Betatni, and SHO City Police Station Wana.

District Police Officer Farman Ullah garlanded the entire team for the successful operation and announced cash prizes and certificates of appreciation.

District Police Officer Farman Ullah vowed to clear the tribal district of South Waziristan Lower of drug dealers, robbers, and subversive elements, stating that no one would be allowed to take the law into their hands.

Milan university students' delegation meets PM's Climate Aide Romina Khurshid Alam

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A four-member delegation of students from Italy's Milan University called on Coordinator to Prime Minister on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam to discuss the pressing issue of climate change and its impacts on Pakistan.

During the meeting held here on Thursday in the climate change and environmental delegation ministry, the students' delegation was also apprised of the various socio-economic impacts of climate change and the government's policy measures for building the country's climate resilience.

On the occasion, the PM's climate aide welcomed the students' delegation and said, "As we all know, climate change is

one of the most critical challenges facing our world today, and its effects are increasingly evident in Pakistan.

Romina Khurshid Alam told the students that ranked among the world's top ten climate-vulnerable country, Pakistan had been experiencing a rise in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, particularly unprecedented floods, intense monsoon rains, intense devastating heatwaves, rapid glacial melting and consequent glacial lake outburst floods.

The recent heatwave in June 2024 saw temperatures soar to record highs, impacting public health and agriculture, she highlighted.

She said further that floods, which are becoming more intense and frequent, displace thousands of families, damage infrastructure, and disrupt livelihoods,

especially in rural areas.

"For resource-poor the country, managing these fallouts of climate change has become a grave challenge because of the frequency and magnitude at which they are occurring and inadequate financial and technical resources," the PM's climate aide said.

Talking about impacts on agriculture sector, Romina Khurshid Alam told the students that climate change was also affecting crop yields and food security. Unpredictable weather patterns and extreme temperatures are harming crops and reducing productivity to an extent that crop failures and fall in productivity of different crops had become new normal in the country, with significant implications for food prices and rural economies, Ms Alam explained.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change, Romina Khurshid Alam addressing a delegation of students from Italy's Milan University, who called on her to discuss pressing issue of climate change and its impacts on Pakistan on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Civil society and health professionals call to regulate industrially produced transfats in all foods

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Civil society and health professionals urged Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) and Ministry of Science and technology to adopt a single, unified regulation to limit industrially produced transfats (iTFA) across all food categories. The urgent appeal was made by members of the TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, spearheaded by Pakistan Youth Change Advocates (PYCA) and supported by the Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), Heartfile, and several other leading civil society organizations and health professionals.

Adding to the urgency, Mukhtar Ahmed Ali, Executive Director of CPDI, warned that "A product-by-product approach to prescribe iTFA



limit will be inefficient, as it would leave certain food items uncovered, and the enforcement officers will find it hard to implement such a regulation. Therefore, the PSQCA must develop one overarching standard/regulation, which applies to all packaged and

non-packaged foods."

The TRANSFORM Pakistan campaign, led by PYCA with the patronage of the Ministry of National Health Services, Coordination & Regulation, and GHAI, along with the support of CPDI and Heartfile, is dedicated to

advocating life-saving policies, such as enacting a mandatory national limit of 2 grams of iTFA per 100 grams of total fat in all foods. This initiative aims to safeguard the health of Pakistanis while also preventing economic and productivity losses for the country.

LUMS Welcomes Students at Orientation 2024

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: LUMS welcomed an exceptional cohort of over 1,200 students from across the country. This year's Orientation programme offered a blend of innovative activities and engaging events, designed to inspire, connect, and prepare students for the rigorous and transformative journey ahead.

While speaking to parents, Vice Chancellor Dr. Ali Cheema, emphasized the increasing need for broad-based education. "Due to technological advancements, there will be significant disruption in the job market, and students should have the flexibility and adaptability to reskill themselves. This is why the curricu-



ulum at LUMS is designed to provide young adults with a diverse set of skills such as critical thinking, prob-

lem-solving and reasoning. We aim to produce holistic individuals who possess real leadership potential in any job they

undertake."

Commenting on the Orientation programme, Dr. Adnan Zahid, Dean, Office of Student

Affairs (OSA) said, "This year's Orientation offered sessions designed to support our incoming undergraduate students.

Addressing the new cohort with a warm welcome, Dr. Tariq Jadoon, Provost, added, "Congratulations on making it to LUMS! Joining a university marks a pivotal transition, and the LUMS Orientation sets the tone for the journey ahead. This year's event emphasized the importance of coming prepared to classes, balancing activities, and making the most of the diverse programmes offered. Among Pakistan's brightest talent, some students may find themselves below the mean, but that's not a bad place to be if learning and growth are taking place.

AIOU introduces "English Access Scholarship" Program for Underserved Students

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University, in collaboration with the Regional English Language Office of the U. S. Embassy, has introduced the "English Access Scholarship" program aimed at supporting talented students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in the districts of Attock, Mianwali, and Bhakkar in Punjab. This two-year initiative is designed to provide these students with enhanced educational opportunities despite their socio-economic challenges.

The program, which is fully funded, includes coverage for stationery, books, transportation charges, and all related expenses for capacity building. From a total of 1800 applications, 250 students were selected based on merit after a rigorous process involving shortlisting, testing, and interviews. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood noted that the program aligns with the university's commitment to educational equity and sustainable development. Dr. Anjad Khan, Program Director, emphasized that this initiative reflects the joint goals of both institutions to promote educational access and social mobility for underserved students.

LESCO recovers Rs 28.91b in electricity theft campaign

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has released detailed statistics regarding the recovery efforts against electricity theft.

According to the data, during the anti-electricity theft campaign, LESCO identified 120,091 offenders and imposed detection bills amounting to Rs 47.45 billion. Of this total, the company has successfully recovered Rs 28.91 billion.

Out of the 120,091 offenders, full recovery has been achieved from 16,736 individuals, who collectively owed Rs 9.10 billion in fines. Additionally, LESCO is currently recovering dues in installments from 102,760 offenders, from whom Rs 19.81 billion has already been collected.

However, 11,611 offenders have failed to pay their fines, leading to the disconnection of their electricity connections.

NITB & MOFA Launched Courier Feature for Apostille Services

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and National Technology Information Technology Board, (NITB) are pleased to announce the launch of an innovative courier feature for Apostille services. The launch ceremony was participated by Deputy Prime Minister & Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Mohammed Ishaq Dar, Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi, Additional Secretary (SIFC&ED/CA) Ahmed Amjad Ali, CEO NITB Mr. Baber Majeed Bhatti, Director IT&DS Mr. Hafiz Javed Ahmed, Program Manager IT&DS Ms. Bushra Saeed, and Senior Team Lead IT&DS Mr. Abdul Mueez. Other team members from NITB involves Software Engineer IT&DS Mr. Muhammad Saad, Software Engineer IT&DS Mr. Zohaibullah Baig, UI/UX Specialist IT&DS Mr. Usman Nazar, Software Engineer IT&DS Ms. Ujala Khan, Project Coordinator IT&DS Usama Muhammad Ashraf, and Business Analyst Mr. Abdul Wahab.

At the moment 5 courier services including M&P, TCS, Leopard, Gerry, and Ecs. This service has been extended to several cities such as Islamabad, Quetta, Gujrat, Lahore, Karachi, and Peshawar. The applicants can submit their documents for attestation at dedicated centers of these courier services and after Apostille attestation, the document will be delivered to the respective addresses.

The MOFA and NITB are also working on an additional feature for the globally recognized Apostille attestation system, where the whole application and fee submission process will be possible online and then applicant can visit the MOFA for the review of the documents and get them attested on the same day.

Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited Successfully Completes Skills Training Project

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited - PMPKL Leaf (PK-Leaf) successfully completed another round of Skills Training Project (Project) for the year 2024. Every year, PK-Leaf undertakes the Project for children of its contracted tobacco farmers. The Project is usually organized between June to August, at a time when the children are free during summer vacations and may fall prey to child labor at tobacco farms considering the period coincides with peak tobacco seasonal harvesting and curing activities. Under the Project, children learn basic knowledge on trade skills and undergo practical sessions to acquire customized electrician and tailoring skills.

Speaking at the occasion, the Manager Social Sustainability Mr. Syed Muhammad Suleman Gul said that "since 2021, the project has provided skills trainings to more than 3,000 children, equipping them with valuable skills and encouraging them to go for self-employment and small-scale entrepreneurship in their future. A number of case studies conducted on the project reveal how trainees of the project go after self-employment as soon as they step into adulthood.

The Head of Leaf, Mr. Abid Javed said that "sustainability lies at the core of our overall operations. We are thrilled to see the positive impact this project has had on our community. The success stories of training participants are a testament to the importance of skills training in their life.

NEOC issues warning of Tropical storm for Sindh

ISLAMABAD, AUG 29 (APP):The National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Thursday issued an alert of a tropical storm anticipated in Sindh province as more heavy to very heavy rain wind and thunderstorms were in the next 24 hours. "A deep depression over Rann Kuch, India is approaching west-southwest of Pakistan about 277 km southeast of Karachi. The system is likely to move west and southwest and convert into a tropical storm. Wind speeds are expected to reach 30-40 knots, gusting higher. The estimated central pressure is 990 hPa, with further changes expected over the next 24 hours," the NDMA news release said.

Under the influence of this weather system, wide spread rains, wind and thunder storms with very heavy to isolated heavy falls were likely in Tharparker, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allah Yar, Matiari, Umerkot, Mirpur Khas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Dadu and Shaheed Benazirabad districts and Karachi Division till August 31st with occasional gaps.

The storm is likely to result in urban flooding in the urban centers. Heavy rainfall is likely to trigger flash floods in local nullahs and hill torrents of the Balochistan in the coming days.

The NDMA urges all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of recent weather system. NDMA issued instructions to all relevant departments to alert Emergency Response Teams and mobilized resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations. Fishermen and sailors are advised not to venture into open seas during these days.

"Residents of these areas are advised to remain vigilant and follow guidance from local authorities. Stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts.

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Innovative Solutions to Terrorism and Extremism - I

If I were to ask you to name the country that hosts one of the largest Islamic research institutes in the world, an Islamic institute housing over 50,000 books on Islam, your mind might naturally scan through Muslim-majority countries or even Western nations with significant Islamic scholarship. But what if I told you that this remarkable center isn't in any of those places, but rather in our iron brother, China?

Yes, you read that right. In China, there's an Islamic institute that boasts a digital library with hundreds of workstations for students, state-of-the-art hostels that accommodate over 500 students at a time, and a university that provides a generous stipend to its students along with guaranteed job placement. This university also has prayer halls equipped with hot and cold water year-round, and a mosque capable of hosting hundreds of Muslims for their five daily prayers in complete freedom and security. It's a place where the pursuit of Islamic knowledge is nurtured with the utmost care and respect.

I recently spent three days in Urumqi, a city once known as a hotbed of unrest in China. This was my second visit to this north western city after a gap of ten years, and the transformation I witnessed was nothing short of remarkable. Unlike Pakistan, where most cities—save for a few exceptions—seem to have deteriorated over time, Urumqi has evolved into something entirely

different. Ten years ago, Urumqi had the feel of a small town with a rudimentary industrial base. The streets were sparsely populated with cars, and the Grand Bazaar had the appearance of something akin to our own Raja Bazaar. But today, Urumqi is a city reborn. It now boasts an IT park, Innovative Development Corridor of Urumqi Economic and Development Zone, Software Park, Taishan Cloud Computing Industry Base and Green Valley Scientific Innovation Town where leading Chinese and international companies have established their regional headquarters, research and innovation centers, manufacturing plants, and import-export hubs providing jobs of hundreds and thousands of local youths.

I had the unique experience of wandering through the Grand Bazaar in Urumqi, which has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. What was once a traditional market is now a state-of-the-art bazaar, offering every food, fruit, and sweet delicacy imaginable. The atmosphere was vibrant, with dance performances, live music, and cultural displays adding a festive touch to the bustling market.

One of the most striking changes was the shift in security measures. Instead

of a heavy presence in the bazaar itself, security has been moved to control rooms, allowing people to enjoy a sense of freedom and ease as they explore. Unlike my visit twelve years ago, when only a few faces reflected prosperity, now you would be hard-pressed to find anyone who appeared to be in poverty or distress.

The cultural experience at Xinjiang Art Theatre was nothing short of overwhelming. Tall, beautifully dressed girls with bright, glittering smiles, along with young boys and handsome men, danced to traditional Muslim folk tunes. Their graceful dance steps and the melodious music filled the entire atmosphere with a sense of magic and celebration, making the experience truly unforgettable.

I also had the opportunity to visit Yining, another city in Xinjiang, which has developed into a bustling commercial and industrial complex along the Kazakhstan border, right on the Euro rail route. Here, towering high-rise buildings and shopping complexes have sprung up, where Chinese and Kazakh citizens engage in frantic shopping sprees. The complex also features numerous food courts and even a 5D cinema. We watched a movie that almost physically transported us across the Euro Triangle, making half the journey

feel incredibly real. With substantial investment, the government has transformed the Grand Bazaar of Yining into a vibrant cultural hub. Beautifully decorated horse-drawn buggies now ferry delighted tourists through the artistically adorned bazaar and its surrounding streets. The houses in the vicinity of the bazaar have been converted into elegant guest and rest houses, where tourists can immerse themselves in the traditional lifestyle, experience local cooking, and savor delicious, mouthwatering home-cooked delicacies, along with homegrown fruits and vegetables. The out-of-this-world hospitality provided here not only offers tourists a unique cultural experience but has also given local households a decent livelihood. This innovative approach has successfully blended tourism with cultural preservation, benefiting both the visitors and the community.

The once poor, rustic, and rugged shepherds have been provided with excellent homes at just 20% of the cost, payable through easy installments. They have also been equipped with modern skills in cattle and sheep breeding, as well as the production of high-quality dairy products. Additionally, they have been trained in modern agricultural techniques, enabling them to achieve a decent living and sustainable higher income. This initiative has significantly improved their quality of life and economic prospects.

To be continued



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan calls for urgent UNSC actions to hold Israel accountable,

Pakistan on Thursday reiterated its call for the UN Security Council to take immediate measures to stop the genocide of Palestinian people, end Israel's blatant violations of international laws and the UN Charter, and hold it accountable for war crimes.

Foreign Office spokesperson Mumtaz Zahra Baloch, at her weekly press briefing, expressed grave concerns over the recent large-scale military incursion by Israeli forces in the northern part of the Occupied West Bank. This attack is another blatant violation of international law, including the 4th Geneva Convention, which prohibits indiscriminate targeting of civilians, she added.

She said that the repeated Israeli transgressions and the use of force, including airstrikes and drone attacks on populated areas was a blatant violation of the international humanitarian laws.

The spokesperson reiterated Pakistan's strong condemnation of the bombing of the historic Grand Mosque in Khan Younis by Israeli forces, and said the assault on a place of deep cultural and religious significance was a clear violation of international laws and the Hague Convention.

Responding to a question, the spokesperson said that the invitations had been sent to all heads of government of SCO member countries including India for the upcoming meeting of the Council of Heads of Government of Shanghai Cooperation Organization being held in Islamabad on October 15-16, 2024.

She said Pakistan had also received confirmation from some of the invited countries.

The spokesperson told the media that the third death anniversary of iconic Kashmiri leader Syed Ali Geelani would be observed on September 1, and remembered him as the true voice of the Kashmir struggle for self-determination.

Paying rich tribute to Kashmir leader late Syed Ali Geelani's struggle for Kashmiri's right to self-determination, the spokesperson reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to political, diplomatic, and moral support to Kashmiris for a just and peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute as per UNSC resolutions.

Highlighting the diplomatic engagements during the last week, she mentioned Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi's visit to Cameroon where he was leading a Pakistani delegation at the 50th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

At the CFM, he will share Pakistan's perspective on genocide in Gaza, dire humanitarian situation and Israeli adventurism in the region threatening regional peace. He will also highlight the Indian atrocities in IIOJK, the issues of Islamophobia and climate change.

Spokesperson Baloch said that 8th session of Pakistan-Oman Bilateral Political Consultations (BPC) was held in Muscat earlier this week wherein two sides reviewed all aspects of bilateral cooperation including political relations, trade and investment, security and defense, culture, health, and consular matters.



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

Monkeypox awareness: Key facts and prevention tips

Maha Ahmed

Monkeypox is a viral zoonotic infection, which means the virus that causes monkeypox is spread from animals to humans through scratches or bites. The monkeypox virus was firstly discovered in 1958, when monkeys that were kept for research were infected with a pox-like disease. Animals that usually contain the virus include monkeys, rats, squirrels, and dormice. Human-to-human spread is made possible through direct contact with infected skin and body fluids; however, indirect contact can also facilitate spread by touching or sharing contaminated items such as clothing or bedding. Air can also play a role in the spread of the virus, but it requires direct, prolonged exposure from the infected person. Early days of infection include symptoms like headaches, back pain, sore muscles, and less energy. Common signs of monkey pox infection include fever, rash with raised spots eventually turning into fluid-filled blisters, and swollen lymph nodes. The rash/lesions are first observed on the face and eventually they spread all over the body. Certain people would develop inflammation inside the rectum and around the genitals that may cause pain and difficulty in urination. Severe monkeypox infection includes secondary bacterial infections, the virus affecting the brain, heart, and lungs. The World Health Organization has recently declared monkeypox, a global health

emergency due to the recent growing cases in countries like Pakistan, Africa, and the United States. The disease is mild and can go away on its own within a few weeks with proper care, but it can cause death in young children, pregnant women, and people with weak immune systems, such as those infected with AIDS, autoimmune disorders, cancer, etc. According to the World Health Organization, actions to prevent ourselves from getting a pox infection include avoiding close contact with a pox-infected person, frequent cleaning of hands with soap, or using alcohol. Open conversation about this disease, its spread, symptoms, and prevention is also important to raise further awareness against it. We must avoid touching wild animals, especially those who look sick or are dead. Meat should be properly cleaned and boiled before eating. If you think you have monkeypox infection, consult a doctor and isolate yourself immediately to prevent its further spread. Staying hydrated, eating home-cooked food, and getting proper sleep are some important actions to follow if you have or do not have monkeypox infection so that you have a stronger immunity and can easily fight off the infection. Infected people must avoid scratching their rash; if they feel discomfort, they can use salt-water gargling for mouth sores, warm baths, and Vaseline to ease the discomfort. Fingernails must be kept short, and infected people must avoid sharing any type of clothing like towels.

Capital university of science and technology, Islamabad. She can be reached at maha@pakistan@gmail.com



Promoting Student Wellbeing Through Education Reform

Respected Sir,
 As a concerned community member, I firmly believe that putting student wellbeing first should be at the top of our educational agendas. The demands of academic performance, social pressures, and the evolving world have taken a toll on the mental health of our young minds. As a result, I am writing to you to bring your attention to this important issue: the wellbeing of our students and the need for comprehensive education reform.

The current educational system frequently falls short of addressing the holistic wellbeing of students, instead emphasizing academic achievement at the expense of our children's emotional and psychological needs. Teaching reform ought to adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes mindfulness exercises, counselling services, and mental health instruction in the curriculum. By encouraging resilience, emotional intelligence, and a positive work life balance, we can equip our students to succeed in all facets of their lives. Furthermore, lowering academic pressure and reconsidering standardized testing procedures can help kids feel less stressed and provide a happier learning atmosphere. In addition, supplying sufficient funding for student support programs and offering educators training in mental

health awareness are critical measures in guaranteeing the welfare of our coming generations.

I urge policymakers, educators, and community leaders to work collaboratively in implementing meaningful changes that will foster the wellbeing of our students. Our collective efforts can pave the way for a brighter and more balanced future for our youth.

Thank you for your attention.
 Sincerely,

Areeba Mahmood
 A Community Member From Karachi
areebamahmood334@gmail.com

Increasing threat of monkeypox in Pakistan

Dear Editor,
 I am writing to draw attention to the increasing threat of monkeypox in Pakistan, which has become a significant concern for public health. Given the rapid global dissemination of this virus, we must take immediate action to contain the situation and protect our communities from a more widespread outbreak.

The health ministry in Pakistan has reported the presence of the monkeypox virus in a patient who had recently travelled from a Gulf country. Monkeypox carries substantial dangers, particularly in regions where public health systems may lack the necessary resources. The virus can be transmitted through direct contact with infected individuals or by coming into contact with contaminated objects, emphasizing the need for stringent preventive measures.

It is imperative to address this issue promptly and efficiently. To begin with, it is crucial to initiate public

awareness campaigns that aim to inform individuals about the signs of monkeypox, the significance of maintaining good hygiene practices, and the necessary actions to take if they suspect they have been exposed to the virus. Additionally, healthcare facilities need to be prepared to handle potential cases and offer precise diagnosis and treatment. Ultimately, it is crucial to keep a close eye on and evaluate all the individuals entering the country through the airport to ensure the prevention of the virus's transmission.

I strongly encourage policymakers, health authorities, and community leaders to prioritize the containment of monkeypox and collaborate to implement preventive measures. By taking proactive measures, we can safeguard public health and prevent the transmission of this virus.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Manahil Arshad
manahilarshad2@gmail.com

Urgent attention needed for Pakistan Railways' infrastructure crisis

Dear Editor, The recent disclosure by the Secretary of Railways that 67% of Pakistan Railways' tracks are outdated is alarming. This revelation underscores the pressing need for comprehensive reform within our national railway system. While the redesign of the Main Line 1 (ML-1) project, following flood damage, reduces costs to \$6 billion, it raises concerns about potential compromises in quality and safety. Senator Kamil Ali Agha rightly questioned this unchanged cost despite significant modifications. Moreover,

the halted corruption investigation involving Karachi employees further erodes public trust in the management of our railways. Such issues should not be swept under the rug; instead, they demand transparent and immediate resolution. To ensure the safety and efficiency of Pakistan's railways, I urge the government to prioritize modernizing our rail infrastructure, ensuring strict oversight of the ML-1 project, and reviving stalled investigations. Without swift action, we risk further deterioration of a vital national asset.

Yours Sincerely,
 Anna Bibi. Rawalpindi.
annabibiuni19@gmail.com

Poor construction of Roads

Dear Editor,
 I want to bring your attention to a very concerning and important subject, that is, the neglected condition of the roads in Karachi. Due to poor construction, rain, and the lack of maintenance, these roads are very uneven and rough, which causes many accidents and other major losses for the public. This issue requires significant attention, particularly because the air is polluted, there is no proper drainage system for the rainwater, and the roads are flooded for several days, causing hundreds of cars to be stranded on the roads for hours and bacteria and parasites to grow in stagnant water. It should be emphasized that every street in our beloved country should be well maintained. To commence this mission and achieve this goal, our government must focus on the basic necessities of people instead of creating futile flyovers and bus stations.

Regards,
 Kinza Faisal, Karachi
kinza.faisal1619@gmail.com

German Envoy inaugurates new MIH Dental Department—highlights preventable diseases

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Mr. Alfred Grannas, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, inaugurated the new Dental Department at Maroof International Hospital (MIH) in Islamabad today. During the ceremony, Ambassador Grannas toured the facility, including the online digital system, radiation control room, waiting area, dental implant facilities, sterilized rooms, and other key areas.

The event was attended by Chairman Choudhary Naseer Ahmed, CEO Haroon Naseer, CEO of Centaurus Sardar Yasir Ilyas, and other esteemed guests. The newly established department aims to provide top-tier treatment for various dental conditions.

In his address, Ambassador Grannas commended the hospital management's dedication, in providing exemplary services to the community. He assured continued support for the hospital's advancement, including the potential installation of orthodontic equipment in the future.

Ambassador Grannas exhorted the need for informing and awaring people about the preventive aspects of dental diseases. They said that Dental Diseases and general health go hand in hand. For example Oral health and heart disease are connected by the spread of bacteria—and other germs can spread from your mouth to other parts of your body through the blood stream. People with diabetes are at special risk for severe gum disease or



periodontal disease which also affects the bone that holds the teeth in place. Chairman Ch. Naseer Ahmed emphasized the significance of the new facility, noting that it has been highly anticipated by the public. He highlighted the introduction of Premium Evening Dental Clinics, which offer improved access to quality dental care for working professionals. CEO Haroon Naseer elaborated on

the comprehensive range of services available, stating, "Our Dental Department offers all types of dental treatments and procedures under one roof, including oral health screening and care, pediatric dental care, root canal treatments, crowns, bridges, veneers, extractions, surgical treatments, implantology, orthodontic brackets and aligners, and aesthetic dentistry." Sardar Yasir Ilyas also addressed

the gathering, underscoring the need for government support in the health-care sector. He urged the government to provide land on lease or at reserved prices to facilitate the construction of healthcare facilities for the benefit of the public.

Brig. Prof. Dr. Gulzar Bukhari, Head of the Dental Department, provided a brief overview of the clinic's offerings. The event was attended by



several distinguished guests, including Dr. Mir Waheed, Medical Director; Ms. Rubina Afzal Corporate Head and Dr. Lamia Yousaf, Medical In-charge at Soteria Healthcare Solutions. Photo Online Sultan Bashir

False narratives about Xinjiang cost U. S. taxpayers millions of dollars

By Xinhua

URUMQI: Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region is embracing yet another booming tourism season, with popular attractions such as the Old Town of Kashgar and the Grand Bazaar in Urumqi bustling with visitors from both home and abroad.

With a population of 25.8 million, Xinjiang received 265 million domestic and foreign tourists in 2023, raking in 296.7 billion yuan (about 42 billion U. S. dollars) in tourism revenue, double the visitors' spending Hawaii garnered in the same year.

The flourishing tourism sector is just one aspect of Xinjiang's dynamic social and economic development, which is unfolding in defiance of the vehement smear campaign the United States has launched against Xinjiang at the expense of American taxpayers.

REAL DOLLARS FOR FALSE NARRATIVES

In what is widely considered a giveaway of Washington's machinations, Lawrence Wilkerson, chief of staff to former U. S. Secretary of State Colin Powell, hinted in a 2018 speech at using the Uygur autonomous region to

destabilize China.

To the people in Xinjiang, such a scheme would be too delusional. Yet Washington has clearly raised its bet on Xinjiang in recent years in a bid to contain China, and one of its first plots was to launch a frenzied smear campaign against the region.

Such unfounded accusations as forced labor, oppression of minorities, and even genocide are nothing but a laughing stock, but for purposes obvious to all, Washington has kept splurging millions of tax dollars every year on those false narratives.

For example, the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), primarily funded by the U. S. Congress, provides millions of dollars every year to support anti-China, separatist Uygur organizations. Among them is the notorious "World Uyghur Congress," whose head, Dolkun Isa, was caught up in a sex scandal involving a 22-year-old Turkish-Belgian university student and forced to resign temporarily earlier this year. In the past few months, he has been spotted in Switzerland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the United States, and his clothes suggest no shortage of funds.

According to the NED website, the NED's grants to different Uygur "human rights advocacy" projects totaled 2.58 million dollars in 2021. The webpage listing previous grants is "under construction," and the numbers for 2022 and 2023 are not available. On its website, the NED claims to be the only institutional funder of so-called Uygur advocacy organizations, awarding 8,758,300 dollars to Uygur groups from 2004 to 2020.

But rumor-mongering machines are not the only thing U. S. taxpayers are paying for; they are also paying for the higher prices of many goods caused by ill-founded U. S. sanctions, including those imposed according to the so-called "Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act" (UFLPA).

For example, China's solar panels are 20 percent to 40 percent cheaper than their U. S. counterparts. Unfortunately, the United States blocks imports from Chinese solar panel companies, not only leading to higher costs for those importers but further complicating the country's efforts to achieve its renewable energy goals.

As businesses on the UFLPA

entity list are involved in a wide range of areas, such as apparel, agriculture, polysilicon, plastics, chemicals, batteries, and household appliances, the overall impact on U. S. manufacturers and consumers is likely to be extensive.

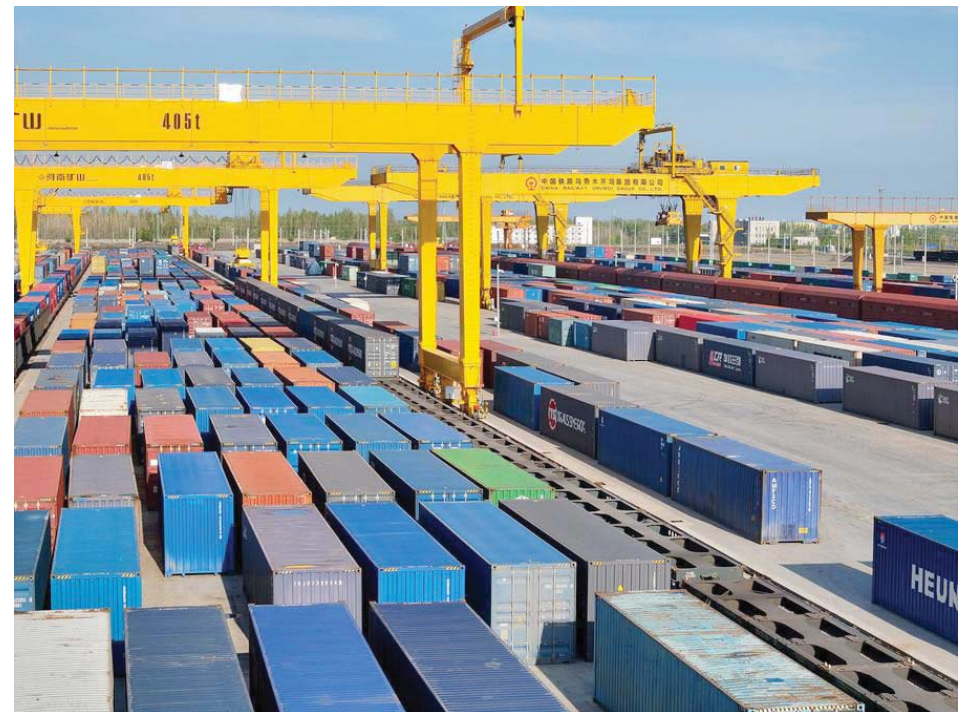
TRANSLATE DISADVANTAGES INTO MOTIVATIONS

Meanwhile, there is no evidence that the U. S. sanctions have dealt any serious blow to Xinjiang's social and economic development.

The region's gross domestic product (GDP) registered a growth rate of 6.8 percent in 2023, the first full year the UFLPA was implemented after being enacted in late 2021 and taking effect in June 2022. The per capita disposable income reached 28,947 yuan (about 4,063 dollars), up 7 percent year on year.

As many foreign vloggers have shown the world during their trips to different places in Xinjiang, the local society is as prosperous as it is stable and harmonious, and the Xinjiang people, including the Uygurs and other ethnic minority groups, are all living a better life.

As regards the sanctioned enti-



ties, the export restrictions have indeed caused some headwinds, but the companies are holding up, and none of them have gone bankrupt. Their products are either consumed by China's vast domestic market or exported to other countries. Losing the U. S. market might be regrettable, but not fatal.

For example, a silicon manufacturer Xinhua visited last week, which prefers to remain unnamed for fear of further U. S. sanctions, has been striving to extend production chains and

upgrade technologies to make their products more competitive. They have not laid off a single employee in the past two years, and their revenue has remained stable.

In a reflection of the traditional Chinese philosophy of turning disadvantages into advantages, an executive of that enterprise told Xinhua that the company believes strengthening its capabilities is the only way to survive and succeed in a fiercely competitive environment after being excluded from the U. S. market.

Indeed, Xinjiang is forging ahead with resilience and confidence. It has announced its development goals for this year, which include a 6.5-percent GDP growth, as well as a 6.5-percent and 7.5-percent growth for the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents, respectively.

Should Washington continue with its costly mud-slinging offensive against Xinjiang, it would only result in more U. S. tax dollars being wasted on a futile cause.

Pakistan and Iraq pledge to strengthen bilateral and trade relations

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Making a new beginning, the Pakistan-Iraq Parliamentary Friendship Group (PFG) held the first meeting of the group with H. E. Mr. Hamid Abbas Lafta, Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to Pakistan at the National Assembly of Pakistan.

The meeting was chaired by Ms. Sehar Kamran, MNA/Convener, Pakistan-Iraq PFG. The meeting was attended by group members, Ms. Mehtab Akber Rashdi, Ms. Shehla Raza and Mr. Muhammad Moein Aamer Pirzada MNAs, who actively participated in the dialogue and discussion on further strengthening the bilateral ties between Pakistan and Iraq.

While welcoming the Ambassador of Iraq, Ms. Sehar Kamran, said that Pakistan and Iraq were intertwined in eternal bonds of religion, brotherhood and culture. She said that the



bonds of brotherhood could further be cemented through Parliamentary Friendship Group.

The Ambassador underscored the necessity of regular high level engagements between Pakistan and Iraq, expressing optimism that exchange of visits will contribute to the diversification and enhancement of bilateral cooperation in diverse fields.

The Ambassador of Iraq underscored that Pakistan and Iraq had great opportunity in terms of bilateral cooperation in fields

of energy, petroleum, trade and business. He also said that Iraq values high its ties with Pakistan and is looking forward more cooperation in term of trade and business.

The Ambassador of Iraq expressed a desire to facilitate a meeting between Civil Aviation Authorities of Pakistan and Iraq, with the aim of fostering greater cooperation and collaboration in the aviation sector.

The Ambassador of Iraq was informed that Pakistan would soon create commercial section in Baghdad. Further, 9th session of Paki-

stan Iraq JMC is scheduled to be held in September 2024; Joint working group on trade and investment is likely to be established in same session.

It was mutually agreed that in order to strengthen trade relations and identify new avenues of economic collaboration, meetings will be arranged with the business community and chambers of commerce of Pakistan and Iraq, facilitating a dialogue between key stakeholders from both nations.

The Parliamentary Friendship Group reiterated Pakistan's commitment to fostering stronger relations with Iraq and emphasized the need for regular interactions between the two nations.

Both sides agreed that Parliamentary Friendship Groups can play a pivotal role in promoting parliamentary diplomacy, people to people contact and promoting parliamentary relations between two countries.

OICCI Showcases Commitment to IT Sector at ITCN Asia 2024

By Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) affirmed its commitment to advancing Pakistan's IT and telecom sectors at ITCN Asia 2024, a Tech Festival being held at the Expo Centre Karachi from August 27th to August 29th. In a keynote address, OICCI President, Mr. Rehan Shaikh shared an optimistic vision for the future, underlining the significant potential in Pakistan for growth in IT and IT-enabled Services (ITeS), optimization of which can lead to a substantial boost in the domestic industry as well as export revenues.

In his speech, Mr. Shaikh underscored OICCI's longstanding role as the oldest and most prominent chamber of commerce in Pakistan, representing 200+ multinational companies (MNCs) and contributing a substantial portion of the country's economic growth. He emphasized the critical importance of a robust IT ecosystem, not just as a catalyst for business efficiency but as a cornerstone for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI) and driving sustainable economic growth in Pakistan. "What we need is a sustainable environment, and we need a platform that helps us to put those policies in place," stated Mr. Shaikh.

Mr. Shaikh projected that Pakistan's IT/ITeS export revenues could expand to between \$10-18 billion by 2028, while the domestic IT industry has



the potential to grow to over \$6 billion annually. Furthermore, he emphasized the transformative potential of digitalization, which could unlock an annual economic value of \$35 billion by 2030. By digitizing key sectors such as SMEs and agriculture, which constitute nearly two-thirds of Pakistan's GDP, the country could significantly increase its GDP, employment rates, and exports.

Additionally, Mr. Shaikh praised the State Bank of Pakistan's efforts, particularly in executing the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, which leverages technologies like digital onboarding to expand financial access. He cited the entry of five digital banks into the industry—many backed by foreign

investors—as a testament to the country's growing financial landscape. He noted the impressive progress Pakistan has made in internet and smartphone adoption, as well as the key role MNCs have played in bringing innovation and best practices to the country's IT landscape.

In his closing remarks, Mr. Shaikh expressed confidence in the leadership of the Ministry of IT and Telecom under the Prime Minister and reiterated OICCI's unwavering support. Mr. Shaikh called for continued collaboration between the government, private sector, and educational institutions to overcome these challenges and unlock the full potential of Pakistan's IT industry.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
78,349.66	77,992.78	
Day's High	Day's Low	
78,513.85	78,017.35	
Index Value	Change	
8,238,824,846	+356.88	
Percentage	Time	
+0.46%	29 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
8,379.64	+35.79	
Percentage	Time	
+0.43%	29 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
41,495.68	+404.26	
Percentage	Time	
+0.98%	29 Aug, 1:11 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
38,362.53	-9.23	
Percentage	Time	
-0.024%	29 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186.93	189.18
Bahrain Dinar	732.60	740.60
Canadian Dollar	202.65	207.00
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	309.40	311.89
Hong Kong Dollar	35.68	36.03
Indian Rupee	3.34	3.45
Japanese Yen	1.98	1.99
Kuwaiti Dinar	903.45	908.53
Malaysian Ringgit	59.25	60.25
New Zealand \$	169.34	171.34
Norwegians Krone	26.14	26.44
Omani Riyal	723.13	727.21
Qatari Riyal	76.44	77.14
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.45
Singapore Dollar	201.75	203.75
Swedish Korona	26.15	26.45
Swiss Franc	324	328.94
Thai Bhat	7.57	7.72
U.A.E Dirham	75.60	76.25
UK Pound Sterling	365.20	368.70
US Dollar	278.5	280

Loss making SOEs to be privatized on priority basis: A. Aleem Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Privatization, Board of Investment and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that the privatization of loss-making State Owned Entities is priority so this important issue should be dealt with quickly according to rules and regulations. He added that the process of privatization is having positive impact on the country's economy and the rating of "Moody's" is a clear proof of it. Federal Minister for Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan was presiding over the 223rd meeting of Privatization Commission Board in which various issues and aspects of privatization including PIA Roosevelt Hotel were discussed in detail. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan said there is no doubt that Privatization will reduce the burden on the national exchequer that's why more State Owned Entities are being listed for privatization. He asked for timely preparation of documents which is of utmost importance and where it is necessary the process of secrecy related to the transactions of privatization should be ensured by all means. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan directed that the formalities of privatization be completed in a phased and transparent manner for which the Privatization Commission Board



will resolve the issues with mutual consultation keeping in view the wider national interest.

Federal Secretary Privatization briefed the PC Board Meeting on the technical issues of privatization while Board Members Pir Saad Ehsanuddin, Rasool Bakhsh, Parvez Afzal

Khan, Naheed Memon, Khurram Shehbaz, Javed Bashir Sheikh and Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan tabled different proposals regarding Privatization and expressed their views and suggestions regarding different issues. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan observed that in

the light of the recommendations of the Privatization Commission Board final decision will be taken by the Cabinet Committee. The meeting of Privatization Commission Board also approved the proceedings of the previous meeting of PCB.

Consul General Khalid Majeed will participate in second Pakistan Investment Summit

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Founder Chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas and Fahad Barlas Convener Exhibition met Consul General Khalid Majeed and Commercial Consul Sadia Khan at Pakistan Consulate Jeddah. In the meeting, Chairman Khurshid Barlas gave a detailed briefing to Consul General of Pakistan Khalid Majeed and Sadia Khan Commercial Consul about the arrangements for the second Pakistan Investment Summit and Smart Expo on November 2, 2024 at Jeddah Hilton Hotel. A large number of different business community related to tourism, minerals, medical, civil aviation industry, construction material, private developer, education and other sectors will participate in the exhibition. Consul General Khalid Majeed inaugurated the first Pakistan Investment Summit and Smart Expo in Jeddah. Appreciated the organization and assured Khurshid Barlas that he will also be a part of this conference and support you fully



and we stand by your side. Your efforts to increase the country's economy are commendable. It is very important to hold a conference and expo between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, it will strengthen the mutual relations between the two countries and strengthen the economy. On this occasion the Chairman of Pakistan Asso-

ciation of Exhibition Industry Khurshid Barlas presented the invitation letter to Consul General Khalid Majeed for the exhibition and Sadia Khan, Commercial Consul Fahad Barlas, Convener Exhibition and Marketing Director of Jeddah Vision for Expo and Conference, Najdi Bakhsh were also present.

ONIC Sets Groundbreaking Telecom Benchmarks with Digital Connectivity

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: ONIC, a pioneering digital telco brand that launched just a year ago, has made a remarkable impact on Pakistan's telecom industry. It started as a bold vision, which has become a thriving reality through transforming how people connect and setting new standards for the future. Since its inception, ONIC has experienced remarkable growth in digital-first subscribers, solidifying its unique position in a historically traditional telco market. This surge in subscribers highlights the brand's strong appeal and the effectiveness of its segmented approach, inspiring competitors to follow suit.

ONIC is about more than connectivity; it's about convenience and innovation. With a fully digital onboarding process and advanced online payment options like a pinless wallet journey and auto-renewal features, ONIC is redefining seamless customer experi-

ence. This commitment has earned the company notable accolades, including Best Mobile App and Digital Ambassador of the Year at the Pakistan Digital Awards.

ONIC's unique branding activities, such as a prominent feature on Times Square during the Cricket World Cup 2024, and its trendsetting partnerships with brands like Careem, foodpanda, and Golootlo, have further cemented its role as a leader in the industry with exclusive deals for its users, showcasing ONIC's dedication to creating value.

"ONIC's rapid growth and market success within its first year is a testament to our commitment to digital innovation and customer-centric solutions," said Hatem Bamatraf, President and Group CEO of PTCL & Ufone 4G. He further added, "We are proud of ONIC's achievements and look forward to continuing our journey of transforming Pakistan's telecommunications landscape."

NBP records total income of 96.8 bn, up 5.1% YoY

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of National Bank of Pakistan "NBP" "the Bank" met yesterday to approve the interim condensed financial statements of the Bank for the half-year ended June 30, 2024.

Demonstrating yet another period of a remarkable performance, the Bank reported a total income of PKR 96.8 Bn, a 5.1% increase from PKR 92.2 Bn in H1'23. The Bank's performance was particularly stronger during Q2'24, with total income of PKR 54.4 Bn compared to PKR 42.5 Bn earned during Q1'24. These results were driven by a strong performance across both fund-based and non-fund-based earning streams.

In a stable interest rate environment, the Bank's gross interest income surged by 30.1% YoY to close at PKR 562.2 Bn, an increase of PKR 130.3 Bn from PKR 432.3 Bn for the same period in 2023. Similarly, the Bank's cost of funds also rose by 36.7% YoY, reaching PKR 490.8 Bn. Consequently, net interest income closed at PKR 71.8 Bn, reflecting a small decrease of 2% YoY. In the booming performance of the stock market during most of the period under review, the Bank recorded gain on securities amounting to PKR 5.8 Bn, taking the total non-fund income to PKR 25.1 Bn, which is 31.7% higher YoY. Equity investment of the Bank generated a divided income of PKR 3.0 Bn as against PKR 2.4 Bn for the half-year ended June 30, 2023. Fee & commission income earned through branch banking operations also stood high at PKR 12.1 Bn, showing a YoY increase of 14.7%.

The Bank's President & CEO, Mr. Rehmat Ali Hasnain, appreciated efforts & dedication demonstrated by the Bank's employees towards financial results and strategic delivery. The Bank is pursuing a major organizational and technological transformation, product enhancement, digitalization and initiatives for promoting financial inclusion with a focus on commercial and rural segments.

EFU Life & General Partner with easypaisa to Introduce Transactional Insurance



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa, Pakistan's leading digital financial services platform has partnered with EFU Life, a top life insurance and family takaful operator, and EFU General, a premier non-life/general insurance and takaful service provider, to introduce transactional insurance.

Sharing his remarks on this collaboration, Jahanzeb Khan, President & CEO, Telenor Microfinance Bank/easypaisa, said, "This landmark collaboration with EFU Life & General represents a pivotal moment for

easypaisa, as we redefine the insurance landscape with innovative use cases that deliver an unparalleled customer experience. Strategic alliances with like-minded industry players are integral to easypaisa's mission of creating a financially inclusive Pakistan.

Sharing his thoughts, Mr. Mohammed Ali Ahmed, Managing Director & CEO, EFU Life, expressed his enthusiasm, stating, "As a prominent insurance provider on easypaisa, we are thrilled to strengthen our partnership with easypaisa. This collaboration allows us to offer top-tier insurance coverages, including transactional insurance, to

their customers. Our proposition provides comprehensive protection through innovative general and life insurance available on the easypaisa app."

Syed Salman Rashid, Deputy Managing Director, EFU General, commented, "Our collaboration with easypaisa represents a pivotal step towards redefining financial protection in Pakistan."

With over 45 million registered users and counting, easypaisa continues to lead Pakistan's digital financial services landscape, dedicated to fostering financial inclusion through technological innovation.

ICCI election: Prominent business leader Atif Jamil Butt announces unconditional support to Founder Group

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prominent personality of Progressive Itihad Group Islamabad Atif Jamil Butt has announced his complete and unconditional support to the Founder Group in the forthcoming Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry election. He has also announced to withdraw the nomination papers of his candidates fielded against the Founder Group candidates.

This significance announcement has been made during a luncheon held here in Islamabad on Thursday. On this occasion Chairman Founder Group Khalid Iqbal Malik, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce

and Industry Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General United Business Group Zafar Bakhtawari, ICCI Council members Khalid Javaid, Tariq Sadiq, Mian Akram Farid, Mian Shaikat Masood and Progressive Itihad Group's Khalid Imran, Arshad Abbasi, Asim Abbas, Feroz Khan, Rai Tanveer and members of Progressive Itihad belonging to all the markets of Islamabad were present.

In his address Khalid Iqbal Malik said that Atif Jamil Butt is a dynamic and progressive personality who has joined the Founder Group unconditionally and that he by using his abilities will work for the unity and welfare of the business community. Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said that

he and Atif Jamil Butt has a eleven year old relationship and he has found him very sincere and devoted figure and that we will fully utilize his talent for further strengthening the Chamber.

In his remarks Zafar Bakhtawari said that after this milestone decision of Atif Jamil Butt, the election of September 17 has turned as just a formality. He added that success of Founder Group was already confirmed but now has authenticated.

Former President ICCI Khalid Javaid termed the hallmark decision of the Atif Jamil Butt as an extraordinary incident in Chambers politics and expressed the hope that young Atif Jamil Butt will prove an asset

People intimidated by SBA's successes keep making mistakes, says Ghulam Bilal Javid

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: President of Peshawar Traders Chamber, Ghulam Bilal Javid, stated that the Women Chamber of Peshawar violated chamber rules and regulations by electing a president a month before the officially announced schedule, through fraudulent means. This not only undermines the chamber's guidelines but also damages their political credibility. The unjust interference is strongly condemned.

Peshawar, the capital of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has a population that is 52% women, but the same leaders have kept the Peshawar

Women Chamber as ineffective for the past 10 years for their personal gains. The Women Chamber's Election Commission had issued an official schedule, but nomination papers were not provided to anyone by the set deadline of August 21. However, on August 23, the individuals responsible for sinking the Sarhad Chamber and the business community committed severe nepotism and fraud by installing their favored woman as the president of the Women Chamber. This act has been strongly condemned by the entire business community and women of Peshawar.



for the ICCI.

The event was also addressed by

Mian Akram Farid, Arshad Abbasi, Khalid Imran and other.

Street Football Children team Pakistan's pride, says Rana Mashhood

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: Chairman of the Prime Minister Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan has said that Pakistan's Street Football Children team was the pride of the country and were no less than Football Greats Cristiano Ronaldo and Lionel Messi.

Addressing a ceremony in honor of the Football Street Children team for showing the best performance in the Norway Cup 2024, he said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had always encouraged sports activities while PMYP would provide more opportunities to the Street Children team.

He said that a vast talent existed in every sector of Pakistan and sports has become an industry in a civilized society while the government's job is to provide a platform to every talented child.



Mashhood said that PMYP was taking various initiatives to highlight the potential and provide more employment opportunities to the youth, adding Arshad Nadim was also an artefact of PMYP.

Rana said that Pakistan's financial position had been strengthened globally and Moody's and other international monetary institutions upgraded ratings showed confidence in the country's economy.

He added that Pakistan has been achieved by making great sacrifices and the future of the country is bright and in safe hands.

He lauded the role of the Muslim Hands organization for doing progressive work in education, sports and other fields and urged all the stakeholders to play their constructive role in improving society.

Pakistan, Thai MMA Federations join hands to promote martial arts



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation (PMMAF) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with IFSA & Thai Association of Mixed Martial Arts (TAMMA) to develop the MMA sport in both countries, said a PMMAF statement on Thursday.

The agreement was signed by Chairman Pakistan PMMAF Tariq Ali and IFSA Thai Association of Mixed Martial Arts (TAMMA) Secretary General Achilles Ralli in Bangkok.

The MoU is set to provide a platform for a strategic relationship between the two MMA national federations to cooperate and exchange knowledge on a range of matters related to the MMA sport. The MoU will be immensely beneficial for both federations and will lead to enhanced relations for the sport in Pakistan and Thailand.

It will also focus on strengthening the mutual understanding and solidarity between the peoples of the two countries through cooperation, developing friendly ties, and achieving mutually beneficial results aimed at the development of MMA by establishing joint activities.

The partnership will include collaboration in sports research, sports medicine and support for the organisation of MMA sport events, the statement added.

Three Pakistan Hockey players banned for slipping in Europe



A Sports

LAHORE: The Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) decided to impose a lifetime ban on three national players along with a team physio for seeking asylum in Europe.

During a press conference, PHF Secretary Olympian Mujahid Ali revealed that players Murtaza Yaqoob, Ehtisham Aslam, Abdul Rahman, and the team physio travelled to Poland with the national team but failed to return.

Instead, they sought asylum abroad, reportedly submitting letters of apology to the Pakistan Hockey Federation.

Rana Mujahid clarified that the players left the country without obtaining the necessary No Objection Certificate (NOC), which is mandatory for such international travel.

As a result, the PHF has decided to ban these players and the physio for life, effectively ending their careers with the national team.

The Secretary further stated that the PHF would be writing to the Ministry of Home Affairs for further action against the individuals involved. These players were part of the Karachi camp in preparation for the upcoming Azlan Shah Cup.

Cristiano Ronaldo's YouTube channel makes it to Guinness World Records

Portuguese football legend Cristiano Ronaldo's debut on YouTube, with his channel "UR - Cristiano", was nothing short of extraordinary as it broke records and has now made a mark in the Guinness World Records (GWR).

The star athlete launched his own channel on the world's largest video-sharing platform on August 21, which has continued to gather subscribers since then.

The GWR has now recognised the 39-year-old Al Nassr star's YouTube channel as one with the most subscribers gained in 24 hours.

Earlier this week, the organisation stated on its website that Ronaldo's "domination of social media has continued" with his YouTube channel reaching 19,729,827 subscribers in one day.

'We are up for the Battle'; Jason Gillespie

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan red-ball Head Coach Jason Gillespie expressed Green-shirts readiness for the upcoming second Test against Bangladesh beginning Friday, saying 'We are up for the Battle'.

"We will look at the conditions and make the assessment. Abrar Ahmed is included in the 12-member squad. We have yet to see the pitch and we'll evaluate the conditions Friday morning," Gillespie said in a press conference held here at a local hotel.

He emphasized the importance of authentic play, urging players to perform at full strength, and noted that success can be achieved through strategic singles and doubles, while effective bowling requires precise line and length to challenge the batter.

Jason said Shan Masood is a very positive captain and we want to win games. "We showed our intent in the first Test match, we made the declaration because we wanted to get our opposition into bat. It didn't quite work out, but full credit to our opposition as they played really well," he said.



"Our focus is on the second Test and we are up for the battle and really looking forward to it. We are looking to play the best combination for the game," he said.

He said Shaheen Shah Afridi is working on a few aspects of his bowling to be as effective as he can. "Shaheen will sit out of this game. We had a good conversation and he fully under-

stands the reasoning behind this decision. Shaheen's a new father and we're seeing an opportunity to allow him to spend time with his family as well. He is a quality player and will play a significant role.

We're looking for the best combination for this game, and this is our direction. We will assess the conditions in

the morning and decide on our bowling attack. We've learned our lessons and hopefully can apply those in this game. We know it's going to be tough, but we're up for the battle and are really looking forward to it," he said.

Pakistan's twelve member squad for second Test includes Shan Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Abdullah Shafique, Saim Ayub, Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan (WK), Salman Ali Agha, Khurram Shahzad, Mohammad Ali, Abrar Ahmed, Naseem Shah and Mir Hamza.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Head Coach Chandika Hathurusingha said the morale of the team was high after beating Pakistan in the first Test.

"It was not an easy task, as Pakistan is a very strong team. We expect a very good fight in the second test," he said.

To a question, he said we should have a good partnership early on 12 overs, but the strategy depends on the conditions. "We know are strengths and limitations, as well as of our opposition," he said.

Bangladesh has secured a historic victory in the series opener, winning by 10 wickets and taking a 1-0 lead.

Pakistan team named for 2nd Test against Bangladesh

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan team red-ball head coach Jason Gillespie on Thursday announced a 12-member squad for the second Test match against Bangladesh.

The playing XI for the second Test commencing Friday at the Pindi Stadium Rawalpindi will be announced at the time of toss, he said during a pre-match press conference here at a local hotel.

Bangladesh are leading the two Test-match series 1-0, after defeating the hosts Pakistan by 10 wickets on Sunday.

The toss will take place 09:30am, with the first ball expected to be bowled at 10am.

Pakistan 12-member squad for second Test against Bangladesh: Shan



Masood (captain), Saud Shakeel (vice-captain), Abrar Ahmed, Abdullah Shafique, Babar Azam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali,

Mohammad Rizwan (wicket-keeper), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub and Salman Ali Agha. Match officials for second Test match: Michael

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

Sports Desk

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

The race was officially inaugurated by Col. Jehanzaib Khan Niazi (Retd.), with Moazzam Khan Klair, Chairman of the Organizing Committee, also present to lend his support. In the men's category, Awais Khan from WAPDA emerged victorious, securing the first position. He was followed by Sanaullah from HEC, who took second place, and Muhammad Sharif from Punjab, who claimed third. The women's race was equally thrilling, with Sheha Khalid taking the top spot, Romna Rashid finishing second, and Aswa rounding out the top three.

Shoaib Malik shares to have received selector role before T20 World Cup

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain and veteran all-rounder Shoaib Malik on Thursday, shared that he received a role in the national men's selection committee ahead of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024.

Malik addressed a press conference here at Gaddafi Stadium after unveiling the logo of Champions Cup side Stallions with whom he will work as a mentor. The 50-over tournament will be played at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad from 12-29 September.

The all-rounder revealed that he was approached to join the national men's selection committee ahead of this year's mega event but turned down the offer as

he is still playing cricket. "Look, I only received an offer once before the [T20 World Cup] to become the selector," shared Malik.

"At that time, the entire selection committee had equal powers as there was no chief selector. "But my reason [behind declining] was that I am still playing cricket and how can I select those cricketers with whom I play so it did not make sense that you play cricket and become a part of the selection committee simultaneously."

Shoaib Malik then responded to a question regarding his retirement plans and once again shared that he has lost interest in playing international cricket for Pakistan again.

"I've already said that I do not have

any interest in playing for the Pakistan Cricket team," said Malik.

"I've already retired from two formats, Tests and ODIs. In T20Is, I do not have any interest in playing for the Pakistan team."

"So my plan is to retire from all forms of cricket once and for all."

Shoaib Malik was one of the five champion mentors unveiled by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) earlier this week.

Misbah-ul-Haq, Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Waqar Younis are the other four mentors, who will reveal their side names and logos in PCB-arranged media conferences as part of promotion and publicity as well as creating Champions Cup brand aware-



ness. The Champions One-Day Cup will feature the country's 150 best of the best cricketers. This will be a 50-over tournament that will be played on a single-league format.

Bilateral exercise

Commanding Officer of PNS Hunain calls on senior officials of Royal Oman Navy during Ship's visit to Oman.



Pakistan Navy Ship Hunain visits Oman and participates in bilateral exercise

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship HUNAIN, during maiden voyage from Romania to Pakistan visited Salalah, Oman and participated in bilateral exercise with Ship of Royal Omani Navy.

Upon arrival at Salalah port, Pakistan Navy ship was warmly welcomed by Officers of Royal Navy of Oman. During stay at port, various bilateral activities and exchange visits were conducted to share professional knowledge and experience. Upon completion of port call, PNS HUNAIN conducted a sea exercise with Royal Navy of Oman Ship

RNOV SADH to enhance interoperability between the two Navies.

Pakistan and Oman are maritime neighbours and frequent visits of dignitaries, port calls by ships, joint exercises and coordinated patrols are regular feature. The visit of PNS HUNAIN will further strengthen bilateral relations between the two navies.

PNS HUNAIN is the 3rd of the 4 PN YARMOOK class ships being constructed at DAMEN Naval Shipyard Romania. The induction ceremony will be held on 6 September at Naval Dockyard. The President of Pakistan will grace the occasion as the Chief Guest.

President confers Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon Arshad Nadeem

Announces Rs 100 million reward for the Olympic Gold Medallist

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the award of Hilal-i-Imtiaz upon Mr Arshad Nadeem for the Olympic Gold Medallist in recognition of his outstanding performance in Men's Javelin Throw in the Paris Olympics 2024. The President also announced a Rs 100 million reward from his side for the athlete.

The award was conferred during a special investiture ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. Later, the athlete also met with the President. Mr Arshad Nadeem's Coach, Mr Salman Iqbal Butt, Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination, Mr Nadeem Irshad Kayani, Director General Pakistan Sports

Board, Mr Muhammad Yasir Pirzada, and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

While congratulating Mr Arshad Nadeem, President Asif Ali Zardari stated that Arshad Nadeem had made the country proud by setting the Olympic record with a throw of 92.97 meters. He appreciated his remarkable achievement, sheer hard work, and dedication that not only elevated Pakistan but also inspired countless young athletes across the country.

The President said that Pakistan needed to promote other sports, especially the Singles. He remarked that children of sportsmen should be granted scholarships, saying that he would ask the Sindh Govern-



ment to contribute Rs 250 million to Pakistan Sports Board's Endowment Fund for the welfare of athletes.

The President said that Mr Arshad Nadeem's exemplary triumph encouraged our youngsters to break barriers and make their mark in the field of sports at the international level. He expressed the hope that the athlete would continue to win laurels for the country in future.

Mr Arshad Nadeem thanked the President for conferring Hilal-i-Imtiaz and resolved to break the world record for the Javelin throw event. He also thanked his family and the nation for their prayers and wishes.

The President also appreciated the contributions of the athlete's coach, Salman Iqbal Butt, for his guidance and contributions to Arshad's success.

Shortage of teaching faculty in medical colleges would be met on priority basis: PM AJK

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Anwar ul Haq has said that the shortage of teaching faculty in medical colleges across the state would be met on priority basis. The PM said this while chairing a meeting of the governing body of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Medical Colleges here today. The meeting was attended by senior minister Col Retd Waqar Ahmed Noor, Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Chief Secretary Dawood Mohammad Barich, Principal Secretary Zafar Mehmood Khan, Secretary Finance Islam Zeib Khan, Secretary Health Brigadier Irfan Ahmad, Secretary Social Welfare Irshad Ahmad Qureshi and Principals of the respec-

tive Medical Colleges. Whereas Health Minister Nisar Ansar Abdali participated in the meeting through video link. Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that the government will provide all possible support and resources to the medical colleges to ensure quality education to the students. He said the provision of teaching staff and related infrastructure was the responsibility of the government. He said that the highly qualified staff should be appointed in all the medical colleges of Azad Kashmir in order to produce the best doctors who could serve the nation. The governing body, on the occasion, also gave a formal approval for the selection/appointment of principals for the medical colleges of Muzaffarabad and Poonch.

Finance Minister Chairs Review Meeting with Joint Venture Investment Companies

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a review meeting with representatives from Joint Venture Investment Companies, including Pak-Brunei Investment Company Limited (PBICL) and Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SPI&AIC). The meeting centered on evaluating the progress, challenges, and future directions of these companies.

The meeting was attended by senior leadership from both companies, including Ms. Dk Noor ul Hayati Binti Pg Julaihi, Chairman PBICL, Mr. Sultan M. Hassan Abdulrauf, Chairman SPI&AIC, and senior officers from Finance Division.

CEO Pak-Brunei Investment Company Limited (PBICL) gave a brief overview about the portfolio of the company and its major initiatives in Pakistan. He apprised the Minister about



the role played by PBICL in promoting economic cooperation between Pakistan and Brunei by facilitating investments in Industry and Agricultural sectors, through financial services, real estate, and SME's support, and how it has contributed to significant advancements in these areas, fostering bilateral trade and economic stability.

Similarly, CEO Saudi-Pak Industrial and Agricultural Investment Company (SPI&AIC), also gave a pres-

entation about the major development initiatives of the company in the country for promoting Islamic finance, food security, digital finance, trade, and agriculture and livestock.

The meeting also discussed various aspects of the operations of these companies, including investment strategies, performance metrics, and key impediments affecting their growth. Both companies presented their achievements and challenges, high-

lighting areas that require policy support to overcome obstacles in their operational landscape. The discussion also focused on potential areas for future investments and collaborations through more Government-to-Government initiatives in order to support priority sectors.

The Finance Minister appreciated both companies and specifically applauded the implementation strategies of KSAs Vision 2030 for achieving their targets within

a few years, and stressed that Pakistan is keen on learning those strategies.

Senator Aurangzeb also expressed the Government's unwavering commitment to creating an enabling environment for private sector investment, recognizing the critical role that joint venture companies like PBICL and SPI&AIC could play in driving economic growth. He underscored the importance of these ventures in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).

Sindh CM orders vigilance after cyclone alert

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Thursday directed the local administration and all concerned departments to keep vigilance over an alert issued by the PDMA.

"According to the weather forecast heavy rainfall is likely in several districts of Sindh," chief minister said.

"All necessary preparations should be completed, which needed to deal with any emergency situation," CM Murad Ali Shah has said in a statement.

The chief minister also directed the health department to ensure that the province's hospitals improving their arrangements and also ensure staff attendance.

He also instructed the fisheries department to ensure fishermen's safety amid extraordinary sea conditions.

"Continue monitoring the embankments of rivers, streams and other water passages," Murad Ali Shah directed the irrigation department.

Foreign Secretary meets Bangladesh Adviser Ministry of Foreign Affairs

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the sidelines of the 50th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, Foreign Secretary Muhammad Syrus Sajjad Qazi on Thursday met with Adviser, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of Bangladesh Md. Touhid Hossain.

The foreign secretary underscored the significance attached by Pakistan to its brotherly relations with Bangladesh, according to a press release received here.

The foreign secretary underlined the deep-rooted goodwill between the people of Pakistan and Bangladesh and expressed Pakistan's desire to advance bilateral engagement and



dialogue.

Adviser Md. Touhid Hossain briefed the Foreign Secretary on the latest political developments in Bangladesh. The foreign secretary conveyed his best wishes for

the continued peace, harmony, and prosperity of the people of Bangladesh.

Both sides agreed to continue engagement on matters of mutual interest.

CM appoints parliamentary secretaries in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Thursday approved the appointment of 25 parliamentary secretaries in Punjab.

According to the details, Osama Leghari has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary of Agriculture Department, Malik Iftikhar Ahmed of Auqaf & Religious Affairs, Shoaib Owaisi of Board of Revenue and Mansoor Azam of Energy Department.

While, Shehryar Malik has been made Parliamentary Secretary of Excise & Taxation Department, Malik Muhammad Waheed of Food Department, Muhammad Ajmal Khan of Higher Education, Sultan Bajwa of Housing, Sonia Ashir of Human Rights & Minorities Affairs and Hasan Askari Sheikh of Industries, Commerce, Investments & Skill Development Department. Shazia Rizwan has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary of Information & Culture Department, Sahibzada Muhammad Gazain Abbasi of Labor & Manpower and Khalid Mehmood Ranjha of Law & Parliamentary Affairs Department. Khuram Khan Virk has been made Parliamen-



tary Secretary of Local Government & Community Development Department, Muhammad Zubair Khan of Mines & Minerals, Rana Muhammad Tariq Khan of Planning & Development and Ziaullah Shah of Punjab Emergency Services.

Nausheen Adnan has been appointed Parliamentary Secretary of School Education Department, Mian Shahid Hussain Khan of S&GAD and Ch Arshad Javed Waraich of Social Welfare & Baitul Mal Department.

Rushda Lodhi has been made Parliamentary Secretary of Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Taimur Ali Lali of Transport & Mass Transit, Muhammad Anas Mahmood of Youth Affairs & Sports, Salma Saadia Taimur of Women Development and Sultan Haider Ali Khan has been made Parliamentary Secretary of Chief Minister's Inspection Team.

Man with 47 illegal visas arrested at Karachi airport

Bureau Report

KARACHI: A man attempting to travel abroad was arrested at Jinnah International Airport in Karachi after authorities found out more than 47 illegal visas stored on his mobile phone.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) spokesperson revealed that the suspect, identified as Aliyan Zaman, was about to board a flight to Malaysia on a visit visa when he was detained by immigration officials.

Upon inspecting his mobile phone, authorities found dozens of visas, including those for Cyprus, allegedly intended for Pakistani and Bangladeshi nationals.

According to FIA sources,

Aliyan Zaman, a resident of Attock, had a plan to travel from Malaysia to the United Kingdom (UK) with the assistance of an agent.

He had already paid Rs 400,000 to the agent, with a total of PKR 2.8 million agreed upon for the illegal immigration attempt with payments were made through both cash and microfinance accounts.

During the investigation, authorities also discovered a Cambodian visa among the documents stored on Zaman's phone.

When Zaman was unable to provide satisfactory explanations regarding the visas, he was transferred to the FIA's Anti-Human Trafficking Circle (HTC) in Karachi for further investigation.