



PM lauds security forces for anti-terror operations in Balochistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday lauded the security forces for carrying out operations against the terrorists involved in attacks killing innocent people in Balochistan. The prime minister paid tribute to the officers and personnel of the armed forces for killing five terrorists and injuring three others in different operations in Panjgur, Kech and Zhob districts.



How Chinese hybrid grass technology is changing the world for the better

It was pleasantly warm and dry in Rwanda in early August, and young farmers in Southern Province were celebrating a bountiful harvest. Their hands were not bunched with corn or rice but with mushrooms, cultivated with the help of a technology transferred from a country far away to this "land of a thousand hills" in Africa. Joining the celebration was Professor Lin Zhanxi. Since the 1980s, the octogenarian scientist ... (Details on Page 5)

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the President of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazal ur Rehman on Friday.



Photo: PID

Terrorists to be made an example to accomplish journey of progress: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday vowed that the government as well as the armed forces would collectively make the terrorists an example to accomplish the journey of the country's progress and prosperity.

PM meets Maulana Fazal ur Rehman to discuss political situation of country

"This is for sure, the armed forces and the law enforcement agencies will collectively make

them (terrorists) an example. Without this, the country's journey of progress and prosperity cannot be accomplished. We have unity of thought and action on this," he remarked addressing the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him here.

The prime minister, referring to his Thursday visit to Quetta, said that the provincial government and the political leaders unanimously viewed that any talks with the anti-state elements were out of the ques-

tion. He said the family members of the martyrs he interacted with during his visit, were in high morale despite losing their dear ones in the terrorist incident.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the federal government would implement the proposals put forward by the provincial political leaders during his visit.

He told the cabinet members that during the visit, the Quetta Corps Commander gave a presentation on challenges faced by Balochistan and how the terror-

ists, funded by foreign forces, were sowing hatred against Pakistan among the people. He said the civilian government was also taking effective measures for the youth's uplift.

Besides, the officers and the personnel of the armed forces were chasing the terrorists with the federal government's support, he said, and assured the federal government's support for the capacity building of Levies.

He told the meeting that both federal and provincial governments were taking measures to

engage the youth and protect them from being detracted by the anti-state elements. He said a 10% additional quota had been allocated for Balochistan in the schemes like laptops and agricultural training in China. Besides, the federal government would spend Rs55 billion to solarise agricultural tube wells in Balochistan.

The prime minister said that Moody's has recently upgraded Pakistan's rating to indicate the country's improving economic condition.

Zardari expresses sorrow over Dir Bala landslide tragedy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday expressed deep regret and sorrow over the loss of lives caused by landslides in the Dir Bala district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a press release from the President's House, the president extended his condolences to the families of the deceased.

The president expressed his sympathies to the families of the deceased during this difficult time.

The president prayed for the deceased's forgiveness



and beseeched the Almighty to grant the bereaved families the strength to endure their loss with patience.

Twelve khwarij killed in Tirah Valley IBOs: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan armed forces killed 12 khwarij in intelligence-based operations (IBO) conducted in Tirah Valley, Khyber district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). "Since 20 August 2024, Security Forces have been conducting extensive Intelligence Operations (IBOs) in Tirah Valley, Khyber District on the reported presence of Khwarij," according to Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) the media and public relations wing of the Pakistan Armed Forces.

On midnight of 28 and 29 August, Pakistan Army troops effectively engaged the khwarij locations where after an intense fire exchange, 12 khwarij of Fitna-Al-Khwarij were killed, as per ISPR.

These operations have resulted in major setbacks to Fitna-Al-Khwarij and its affiliates, and so far, thirty-seven terrorists have been sent to hell, while fourteen terrorists have suffered serious injuries.

The IBOs will continue till peace in the area is restored and khwarij is eliminated, as the security forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the



country, said ISPR.

Earlier in the day, in the backdrop of terrorist activities, targeting innocent civilians in Balochistan on 26 August, the security forces conducted extensive intelligence-based operations (IBOs) and killed five terrorists.

"On the night 29/30 August, in three separate IBOs in districts of Kech, Panjgur and Zhob, five terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces, while three terrorists got injured during the intense fire exchange," the ISPR said.

Sanitisation operations will continue until all perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of these atrocious acts are brought to justice.

Security forces of Pakistan, in step with the nation, remain determined to thwart attempts at sabotaging the peace, stability and progress of Balochistan.

Deep depression over Arabian Sea intensifies into cyclone Asna: PMD

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) said on Friday that a potential cyclone that had developed over the Rann of Kutch in India has intensified into cyclone Asna.

The cyclone currently lies at around Latitude 23.5 N & Longitude 67.9 E at about 170km south/southeast of Karachi and 88km south of Kati Bandar, the weather depart-

ment said in its fourth alert. The system is likely keep moving initially west/north-westwards.

"Under its influence, widespread rain/wind-thunderstorms with scattered heavy/very heavy and isolated extremely heavy falls likely in Karachi division, Tharparker, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, T. M Khan, T. A Yar, Matiari, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Dadu &



Shaheed Benazirabad districts till 31 August."

"Widespread rain/wind-thunderstorm with scattered heavy/very heavy and

isolated extremely heavy falls also likely in Hub, Lasbella, Awaran, Keach & Gwadar districts during 30 August to 1st September with occasional gaps," according to PMD.

As a result, heavy rains may create water logging/rain inundation in low lying areas of Sindh-Makran coast.

The Met Office said that sea conditions are likely to remain rough/very rough with squally winds of 60-70 Km/hour

gusting 80Km/hour.

However, it advised fishermen of Sindh not to venture into sea till 31 August and those of Balochistan till 1st September.

"PMD's cyclone warning center, Karachi is closely monitoring the system and will issue the update accordingly," it added.

However, cyclone Asna will not directly hit Sindh coastal areas including Karachi.

Political parties, not military, can unite people: Ex-PM Khan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister Imran Khan has alleged that decision-makers were indifferent to the nation's welfare and that intelligence agencies have been tasked with dismantling his political party.

"Political parties, not the military, can unite the people. If that were the case, East Pakistan would not have separated," he told reporters in an informal conver-

sation at the Adiala Jail on Friday. "PTI is the only party capable of bringing the public together."

He spoke to journalists after a hearing regarding a £190 million corruption reference against him and his wife, Bushra Bibi. The case was adjourned until next month.

Khan highlighted what he sees as the country's "greatest" challenge: the economy. He added that while it was previously reported that the "lowest invest-



ment in 50 years had occurred, it has been revealed that this year

has seen the lowest investment in the nation's history."

The national income was dwindling, debts were rising, and the country was heading towards disaster, he claimed and added that political instability and increasing terrorism were significant contributors to the economy.

Khan criticised the political climate, attributing the instability to "fraudulent elections."

He also highlighted the rising

tide of terrorism, stating that while initial blame was placed on settlement plans for the increase in violence, it was now being claimed that terrorism was coming from across the border.

The former prime minister questioned who would invest in the country amid rising crime, terrorism from groups like the banned TTP and violence in areas like Balochistan, all "while intelligence agencies focus on eliminating PTI."

Govt officially confirms installation of 'web monitoring system'

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has officially confirmed the installation of a web monitoring system to manage online content. The Cabinet Division has formally informed the National Assembly of the system's implementation.

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has deployed the web monitoring system to manage online content. The Cabinet Division confirmed that the system has already begun blocking websites and applications within Pakistan.

According to the Cabinet Division, the

PTA has blocked 2,369 URLs and 183 mobile applications through the web monitoring system.

Sources indicate that the PTA is now self-sufficient in content blocking following the upgrade of the web monitoring system (WMS).

The blocked websites were reportedly involved in exposing citizens' personal data, while the blocked applications were linked to the public disclosure of citizens' identification information.



Murad approves Rs500m to start IT certification by three varsities across Sindh

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah approved Rs500 million to start IT Certificate programs in nine trades to enhance the IT skills of students and professionals across the province focusing on poverty reduction strategy.

The CM said that the program would provide practical skills and industry-recognized certifications to stand out in a competitive job market.

The meeting regarding the MOU signing was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman HEC Prof Tariq Rafi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Information, Science & Technology Noor Ahamad Samon, Secretary U&B Abbas Baloch, VC NED University Dr Suresh Lodhi, VC IBA Sukkur Dr Asif Shaikh, VC Mehran University Prof Tauha Hussain, IT Dept's Member Ayaz Uqaili and others.

Secretary of IT Noor Samo briefed



the Chief Minister, stating that the NED University will offer IT courses in Karachi Division and Tharparkar District, Mehran University will cover Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas Divisions, and Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur, and IBA University will cover Larkana Divisions.

The program is initially designed

to benefit 10,000 youth, with the potential for scaling up. The CM has provided Rs. 500 million to the Sindh IT dept under the 'Initiative of Capacity Building' to the respective universities.

The Chief Minister was informed that the IT Certificate program includes the certifications: Certified

JAVA Developer, Certified Python Developer, Certified Database Administrator, Certified Graphic Designer, Certified E-Commerce Professional, Certified Digital Marketing Professional, Certified Web Developer, Certified Mobile Application Developer, and Certified Data Scientist.

In response to a question, Secretary of IT Noor Samo informed the Chief Minister that each certificate has a two-month duration. The certification courses will be conducted five days a week, from Monday to Friday. Each batch will consist of 30 to 35 participants.

The program will be conducted in two phases: IT certification in the first phase and incentivization of the selected/top-ranked participants. All IT certifications will be offered physically at the centres.

At the conclusion MOU was signed by the Sindh IT Secretary with NED University Karachi, IBA Sukkur, Mehran University Jamshoro.

Dr. Rubina Akhtar visits constituency after heavy monsoon rains



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The leader of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Dr. Rubina Akhtar, the candidate of NA-148 Constituency, has said that Multan has been in the grip of heavy rains for the past few days and the record of the last 48 years has also been broken, due to which the people of Multan are facing serious problems. The roofs of the citizens' houses were already leaking, due to the standing water in the streets, streets and neighborhoods, the citizens are facing serious problems. It is a matter of concern, the drowning of Multan city due to the recent rains is proof of the incompetence of the WASA administration. Despite the instructions of the A&DMA, WASA did not make timely arrangements, due to which the streets, roads, and canals of Multan Business activities have been severely affected due to urban fielding, while dozens of people have been killed and destroyed, the Punjab government and Multan administration should take strict action against those responsible for this incompetence, he added. He has only paid some attention to urban areas and roads, while settlements in rural areas have become hotbeds of diseases, sewage water is present in the houses of citizens, but no attention has been paid by the WASA administration yet, they WASA Multan He has requested them to pay special attention to remove the standing water from the streets and houses, so that the people can be rescued from the difficulties. On this occasion, the people of the area made Dr. Rubina Akhtar visited the affected streets and roads. But Malik Amir Bakhsh former chairman, Malik Amir Vance, Central President Welfare Association Malik Mushtaq Joya, Malik Abbas, Zeeshan Karim, Tanveer Malik, Malik Saeed and other local people were present with him.

Deputy Commissioner inspects Manikzai embankments after possible flooding



Azad Baloch

DADU: In light of the ongoing rains and potential flooding, Deputy Commissioner Dadu, Mukhtiar Ali Abro, conducted an emergency inspection of the embankments. During the visit, he reviewed the administrative matters of the Irrigation Department and inspected the MNV Drain, FP Bund, RD 88, RD 75, RD 70, RD 65, RD 50, RD 45, and RD 40. He assessed the machinery and the work being done on the embankments. The Irrigation officials briefed Deputy Commissioner Mukhtiar Ali Abro and facilitated the visit to the embankments. The Deputy Commissioner instructed the Irrigation officials to promptly complete the reinforcement work on the embankments and ensure 24-hour monitoring. He emphasized that machinery should be deployed wherever needed. Assistant Commissioner Johi, Samiullah Wagan, along with engineers and other officials from the Irrigation Department, accompanied Deputy Commissioner Mukhtiar Ali Abro during the visit.

At all driving centers, services must be provided in good manner: CTO

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: At all service and convenience traffic centers, services should be provided to the citizens in a good manner—apart from taking photos and data entry, licensing services should be provided in a good manner at all the counters. Negligence and carelessness in official duties cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. These views were expressed by Chief Traffic Officer Farhan Aslam regarding driving service centers.

He further said on the occasion that apart from setting up a separate driving test center for women, separate counters have also been set up at the convenience centers. Under the supervision of Additional Inspector General of Police Traffic Punjab Mirza Faran Baig and City Police Officer DIG Kamran Adil, best facilities are being provided by City Traffic Police. He is making a surprise visit to the traffic centers and in this regard, he also issued instructions to DSP Traffic Headquarters Khalid Aleem and G-in-charges Facilitation Centers.

Traders' strike to challenge government reflects true reflection'

Tariq Khan yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: nationwide strike of traders on August 28 has shaken the government's strongholds, and the entire trading community deserves congratulations and applause for this.

The traders have shown the government its true reflection. If the government and its advisors do not withdraw their draconian decision imposed by the IMF and World Bank, the traders are considering a wheel jam and shutter-down strike across the country.

These views were expressed by Haji Zahir Shah, General Secretary of the Central Organization of Traders Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and President of the Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, during a press conference at the Takht Bhai Press Club sub-office. Haji Tariq Khan, President of the Central Traders Association Takht Bhai, Vice President Rauf Siddiqui, President of Mina Bazaar Mohsin Khan, President of Chappal Makers Association Akbar Ali, and President of Sarafa Association Farman Ali Zargar were also present on the occasion.

Zahoor Shah said that the government and FBR have already skinned the traders and the public alive through various taxes. They are no longer able to pay more taxes, so the government and FBR should not try to put traders through further economic trials. He warned that if the government does not listen to the demands of the traders, they will be forced to take extreme measures, which will have severe consequences.

Spillways

ISLAMABAD: A view of the spillways of the Rawal Dam being opened, this measure is being taken as a precaution due to rising water levels in the dam caused by recent heavy rains, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Removal of Limits on transactions made through PSX's EIPO System

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC), under the aegis of and in close coordination with the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) are working towards facilitating Investors participating in the Initial Public Offerings to have a

seamless experience. As part of the initiative, ILink with the support of SBP has instructed all its member banks to remove the limits on transfer of funds for transactions executed through EIPO platforms. Previously such electronic payments were subject to transactional limits imposed by the Banks.

A Memo to this effect was issued by ILink recently whereby all banks were instructed to remove the trans-

actional capping for EIPOs. This step will enable investors to invest in an IPO through the EIPO facility without being restricted by any transactional capping or limit. The EIPO system is utilised to provide an end-to-end digitised experience to investors participating in the IPO through the EIPO platforms.

Speaking about the removal of transactional capping for EIPO transactions, Mr. Farrukh H. Khan,

MD & CEO PSX, stated, "Pakistan Stock Exchange continuously endeavours to facilitate investors, market participants and stakeholders.

It is in line with this ethos which PSX follows that today, with the cooperation of the CDC, and the support of the SECP as well as SBP, we have enabled removal of capping on transaction limits for investors utilizing the EIPO platforms".

Rain emergency remains in Wasa in view of recent heavy monsoon rains in Multan

Asim Tanveer

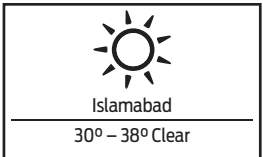
MULTAN: Rain emergency remains in Wasa in view of recent heavy monsoon rains in Multan. The highest rainfall on Friday was 72 mm recorded at Chungi No. 9 Disposal Station. According to the vision of Chief Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, on the instructions of Commissioner Multan Division Maryam Khan, Deputy Commissioner Wasim Hamid Sindh and DG MDA Rana Saleem Ahmed, rain emergency was implemented in Wasa for drainage of rainwater, Managing Director Wasa Khalid Raza Khan issued a high alert and ordered all officers of sewage, disposal station divisions, field staff to mobilize to their respective duty points on emergency basis and speed up the operation for drainage in different



areas of the city. Managing Director WASA directed all the disposal stations to run at full capacity and he monitored the ongoing drainage operations across the city from time to time.

inspected the arrangements and directed the WASA to speed up the drainage system and utilize all the resources. Also ordered, Managing Director WASA visited different areas of the city including Khan Village, Chungi No.9, Old Shujabad Disposal Stations and reviewed the working of disposal stations and the drainage of rain water from the roads. Meanwhile, Director Works Arif Abbas MD Wasa also submitted a report regarding the rainfall recorded in 02 spells at the disposal stations. According to the report, the highest rainfall was 72 mm at Chungi No. 9 Disposal Station, 62 mm at Kadi Jamandan Disposal Station and 31 mm at Old Shujabad Disposal Station. After the recorded rain stopped, Metro Route, BCG Chowk, Under Bypass, Chungi No. 9 Chowk, Huma-

yun Road, Busan Road, Shalimar Colony, Old Shujabad Road, Double Phatak Chowk to Kaiyanpur Chowk, till afternoon. Most of the areas including Police Line Road, Wahari Road, Water Works Road were cleared, meanwhile, MD Wasa Khalid Raza Khan directed all the sewerage officers to use all resources to remove the rainwater from the highways as well as the low-lying areas in time. and he ordered all the officers to be alert in relation to the forecast of more rain and to immediately solve the drainage complaints in their respective limits. Presented the report to the Commissioner and Director General MDA at the moment. He also ordered the officers and staff of all Sewerage and Disposal Station Divisions to ensure presence in the field till the rain water operation is completed.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:14 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:45 pm
Maghrib 6:36 pm
Isha 8:02 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad 1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police 92766044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

AIOU announces results of BS Programs



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the results of the BS (ODL) programs offered in the Autumn 2023 semester. The declared results include the following programs: BBA, BS (Accounting and Finance, Islamic Studies General, Islamic Studies Quran and Tafsiir, Islamic Studies Hadith and Hadith Sciences, Islamic Studies Shariah, Islamic Studies Seerah, Islamic Studies Religion, Islamic Studies Interfaith Studies, Islamic Finance, Sociology, History, Economics, Library Information Sciences, Pakistan Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, English Literature, Urdu, Mass Communication, Instructional Design, Arabic, and Dars-e-Nizami). The results have been uploaded to the students' portals.

RIPHAH joins hands with BISP for public empowerment through skills development program

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Representatives from Riphah International University held an important meeting with the Honorable Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), to discuss potential projects for mutual collaboration aimed at enhancing public welfare and betterment. The Riphah team, led by Mr. Muhammad Junaid Khan, included Mr. Mehr Ali and Mr. Waqar Khan, were engaged in discussions with key members of the BISP team, including Mr. Idrees Mian, Director General of Comple-

mentary Initiatives; Mr. Irfan Ullah Khan, Director of Media; and Ms. Maryam Sikandar, Deputy Director of Media. Senator Rubina Khalid expressed her keen interest in the various educational initiatives of Riphah especially the recently established RIHCA-RIPHAH Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts. She appreciated RIPHAH's contribution in terms of offering growth oriented and modern learning opportunities to the public. The primary objective of this meeting was to establish a strong public-private partnership between Riphah International University and BISP.

Both parties explored various avenues for collaboration, with a particular focus on skill development programs and scholarships. These initiatives are designed to support the beneficiaries of BISP by providing them with essential skills and educational opportunities, ultimately contributing to their socio-economic upliftment. Additionally, Senator Rubina Khalid proposed engaging fresh graduates of media and mass communication for internships in BISP's media wing. She also suggested organizing a graphic design competition at the inter-university level to raise awareness about BISP's mission.



Victory day

ISLAMABAD: Lt Gen Awais Dastgir, CGS, Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, Ambassador of Turkey to Pakistan Dr Mehmet Paçac?, Defence Attache, Brig. Gen. Umut ONOL and others cutting the cake on the occasion of Victory Day ceremony, at a local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Telenor Microfinance Bank achieves record PKR 2.6 billion profit before tax in H1 2024

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Board of Directors of Telenor Microfinance Bank (TMB) in its meeting held on August 22, 2024, approved the Bank's financial results for the half year ended June 30, 2024. TMB has reported exceptional financial performance for the first half of 2024 (H1'24), achieving a profit before tax of PKR 2.6 billion, a staggering 788% increase compared to H1 2023: PKR 0.3 billion and equity touching PKR 10 billion, solidifying its position as a pioneering force in Pakistan's fintech landscape. Customer deposits and advances have demonstrated remarkable growth, with deposits reaching PKR 67.0 billion up by 21% in comparison with H1 2023: PKR 55.3 billion and advances climbing to PKR 22.9 billion, growing by 59%, H1 2023: PKR 14.5 billion. The Bank



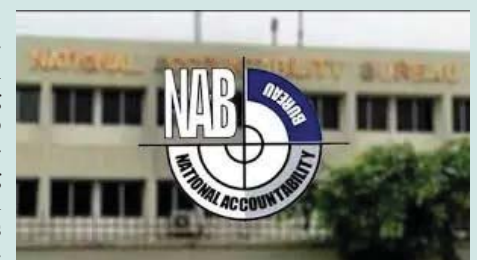
has also maintained a robust Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) of 26.9%. This achievement underscores TMB's exceptional ability to scale operations and sustain growth simultaneously. The significant increase in loans and advances, coupled with excellent profitability, further highlights the Bank's strong financial performance and an effective digital-first strategy in the challenging

economic landscape. Commenting on the remarkable performance, Amin Sukhiani, Chief Financial Officer, Telenor Bank/easypaisa, said, "As we move into the second half of 2024, our commitment to driving economic growth and development remains unwavering, with a continued focus on putting our customers first. Importantly, our digital transformation towards becoming a full-fledged Digital Retail Bank, subject to regulatory approvals, will further enhance our ability to serve our customers and contribute to Pakistan's financial landscape. We extend our heartfelt thanks to our outstanding team, supportive Board members, partners, regulators and customers for their trust. We remain dedicated to our mission of advancing financial inclusion and fostering digital prosperity in Pakistan."

NAB taking strict legal action against persons involved in financial corruption

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Accountability Bureau is contributing significantly to the national economy by taking strict legal action against persons involved in financial corruption and recovering huge amounts from them in different cases. In this regard the National Accountability Bureau has achieved significant success. NAB deposited/distributed an amount Rs. 7,089,998,035/- to Federal & provincial Govts, Departments & financial institutions, and affectees during a short period of January to July, 2024 after completing various investigations/through plea bargains, etc.



Out of this total amount, NAB deposited/distributed Rs. 2,130,341,048/- to the Federal Government; Rs.259,851,692/- to Government of Sindh; Rs. 136,611,951/- to Govt of Punjab; Rs. 13,427,572/- to Govt of KPK; Rs. 500,000/- to Govt of Baluchistan and Rs. 43,597,325/- to Financial Institutions/Departments. Whereas Rs. 4,505,668,447/- disbursed to 21760 affectees in 34 cases of cheating public at large. In addition to its responsibilities, National Accountability Bureau is strictly engaged in the investigation process of major corruption cases with a view to bring the financial culprits before law, recover the looted funds and return the same to the rightful affectees and Institutions.

CCP recovers PKR 5 million penalty from Wateen Telecom

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has successfully recovered a penalty of PKR 5 million from Wateen Telecom (Pvt.) Ltd. This recovery was carried out under Section 40(2)(a) of the Competition Act, 2010, which empowers the CCP to recover penalties by attaching the bank accounts of non-compliant entities. The penalty was originally imposed by the CCP following an inquiry triggered by numerous complaints from residents of the Defence Housing Authority (DHA) Lahore. The residents had voiced concerns about the lack of alternative service providers and the substandard quality of services provided by Wateen Telecom. The CCP's investigation revealed that DHA Lahore and Wateen Telecom had entered into an exclusive agreement, granting Wateen Telecom sole rights to provide telecommunication and media services in specific phases of DHA Lahore. This arrangement was found to violate Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010, which prohibits agreements that limit consumer choice. On March 22, 2011, the CCP issued an order imposing fines of PKR 10 million on DHA Lahore and PKR 5 million on Wateen Telecom. DHA Lahore had already submitted its portion of the fine. Later, both undertakings challenged the CCP's decision by filing an appeal before the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT). In July 2024, the CAT dismissed the appeals, thereby upholding the penalties initially imposed by the CCP. Following this ruling, the CCP exercised its authority under Section 40(2)(a) of the Competition Act, 2010, to recover the outstanding penalty from Wateen Telecom.

Speaker Punjab Assembly and Senior Cabinet Members visit CBD Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan along with Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Zaheer Iqbal Chantra led a high-profile delegation of senior Punjab Cabinet members on an official visit to the Punjab Central Business District Development Authority known as CBD Punjab today. The delegation included Khawaja Salman Rafiq Provincial Minister for Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education, Khawaja Imran Nazir Provincial Minister for Primary and Secondary Healthcare, Bilal Yasin Minister for Food, Chaudhry Shafeeh Hussain Minister for Industries, Bilal Akbar Minister for Transport, Zeeshan Rafique Minister for Local Government and Community Development and Malik Sohaib Bhatt Minister for Communication and Works. They were warmly received by CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin COO Brigadier (Retd) Mansoor Janjua and



Chairman of the Board Barrister Syed Azfar Ali Nasir alongwith senior officials of CBD Punjab. Other notable attendees were Secretary Punjab Assembly Chaudhry Aamir Habib Senior Member Board of Revenue Nabeel Javed, Secretary Housing, Urban Development & Public Health Engineering (HUD&PHED) Captain (R) Asad Ullah Khan Special

Secretary HUD&PHED Tayyab Fareed and Secretary Agriculture Kazim Khan along with other senior officials. During the visit Mr. Imran Amin extended his sincere gratitude to the Speaker and cabinet members for their presence. He provided an in-depth briefing on the ongoing and upcoming projects under CBD Punjab, emphasizing their critical role in driving

economic growth and development within the region. The delegation was presented with a detailed documentary and a comprehensive presentation on key projects, including the Walton Road Upgradation project. Members of the Punjab Cabinet recognized these initiatives as transformative for the province's develop-

ment underlining their potential to attract both international and local investments thereby securing a prosperous future for Punjab. Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan lauded the efforts of CBD Punjab noting that these projects symbolize a bright future for Pakistan. He highlighted the importance of completing the Walton

Road Upgradation project in alignment with the directives of the Chief Minister of Punjab. Provincial Minister for Food Bilal Yasin commended the authority's achievements stating, The progress and potential of CBD Punjab are indeed remarkable. The authority's dedication to transparency, particularly in its dealings involving government-owned land and government-to-government transactions, sets a high standard. The cabinet members also expressed their confidence in the progress of the CBD NSIT city project. Mr. Imran Amin, CEO of CBD Punjab, acknowledged the unwavering support and trust of the Government of Punjab and the Punjab Cabinet. He further highlighted the significant accomplishments of CBD Punjab in a short span of time reaffirming the authority's commitment to transforming Punjab's development landscape.

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A Decision That Cost \$2.56b

I vividly recall that the decision to use imported coal in Sahiwal power plant was made as part of the agreements under CPEC. The project was initially agreed upon in 2013 during the visit of the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to China, where various energy projects, including the Sahiwal plant, were included in the CPEC framework. The construction began in 2015 and it started production in May 2017 with a total capacity of 1,320 MW incurring a cost of \$1.8 billion. Being one of the most efficient plants, its levelized tariff (the average cost over the life of the plant) is around PKR 8-9 per kWh (approximately USD 0.05-0.06 per kWh).

Interestingly, the plant, from the conception to completion was during the period when Mian Nawaz Sharif was in power in the center and Shahbaz Sharif was the Chief Minister in the province of Punjab. This decision to use imported coal was made by both the leaders with stark awareness and knowledge that the indigenous and much cheaper Thar coal was available for power production.

The decision by the Sharif brothers not only surprised me but also baffled many national and international analysts and power experts. Another surprising decision was selecting Sahiwal as the project site, despite it being far from major consumption centers like Lahore, Karachi, and Faisalabad, as well as distant from the Karachi or Gwadar ports. This location inevitably led to additional costs for transporting imported coal from the ports to Sahiwal and transmitting electricity from Sahiwal to the country's main consumption areas.

It would involve a comprehensive project initiation, starting with the development of a project charter, stakeholder identification, and a feasibility study to assess technical, economic, and environmental viability. The planning phase

would include defining the project scope, developing a detailed work breakdown structure (WBS), scheduling, cost estimation, resource allocation, risk management, and establishing a communication plan. During execution, the focus would be on detailed engineering design, procurement of necessary equipment, logistics planning for Thar coal transportation, and retrofitting the plant.

Quality control measures would be implemented throughout construction and installation. The project would proceed with rigorous testing, commissioning, and ongoing monitoring to ensure the plant's efficiency and compliance with standards. The project would conclude with final inspections, handover, post-implementation review, and formal closure, followed by post-project support and continued performance monitoring to ensure the long-term success of the plant's operation with Thar coal.

If the Sharif Brother could have taken the right decision to use Thar coal from the very start of this project, it would have provided significant long-term benefits, including lower initial capital costs by eliminating the need for later retrofitting and reducing fuel costs through the use of a domestic coal source. It would have enhanced Pakistan's energy security by decreasing reliance on imported coal, providing a stable and predictable supply chain, and fostering local economic development by boosting the Thar coal industry and creating jobs.

Environmentally, the plant would have minimized transportation emissions and could have incorporated advanced emissions control technologies tailored to Thar coal. Operationally, the plant would have

been optimized for Thar coal's specific properties, improving efficiency and long-term reliability. Strategically, this early adoption would align with Pakistan's sustainable energy goals, driving innovation and contributing to a more self-sufficient energy future.

If the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant had utilized Thar coal from the beginning, Pakistan could have potentially saved approximately \$2.058 billion over seven years, from 2017 to 2024. These savings would stem from the lower cost of Thar coal, which is domestically sourced and significantly cheaper than imported coal, as well as reduced transportation and handling expenses due to the proximity of the Thar coalfields. By avoiding the higher costs associated with importing and transporting coal, the country would have benefited from substantial economic advantages, contributing to greater energy independence and overall cost efficiency.

The conversion of the Sahiwal Coal Power Plant from imported coal to Thar coal is estimated to cost between \$330 million and \$555 million. This figure includes the necessary modifications to the plant's systems, such as boilers, combustion, and emission controls, as well as upgrades to transportation infrastructure, with costs ranging from \$240 million to \$410 million. Additionally, the estimate now accounts for detailed design and engineering costs, which could add \$20 to \$30 million, along with consultancy fees and legal services estimated at \$20 to \$35 million, encompassing feasibility studies, project management, and regulatory compliance.

The billion-dollar question is: who will hold accountable those responsible

for the imprudent, illogical, and short-sighted decision to run the Sahiwal power plant on imported coal, resulting in losses exceeding \$2.08 billion? Now, with the reversal of this decision costing an additional \$555 million, the total loss amounts to \$2.635 billion.

The PML(N) stalwarts bear responsibility for increasing electricity tariffs, making power unaffordable for many Pakistanis. Their faulty decisions have escalated circular debt, depleted precious foreign exchange, and hurt Pakistani industry by making products uncompetitive due to expensive electricity. As a result, they have undermined exports, further impoverishing the country.

In conclusion, consumer groups, industrial consumers, and chambers of commerce should urgently seek judicial intervention to hold accountable those responsible for these financially and commercially unviable decisions. The National Assembly and Senate committees must also take action against the reckless misuse of the nation's resources, ensuring those who caused this economic harm are held to account. To mitigate the losses, the Sahiwal plant could be sold on the international market, with the proceeds either invested in a new plant near Thar's coal reserves to reduce costs or directed towards wind and solar farms to lower electricity prices and protect the environment. Alternatively, the decision to convert the Sahiwal plant to Thar coal could be reconsidered, and the \$555 million that would have been spent on reconfiguring the plant could instead be used to establish wind and solar farms, thereby reducing the overall per unit cost of electricity from Sahiwal.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

'Humanitarian pauses'

The UN World Health Organization (WHO) has said it delivered 1.26 million doses of polio vaccine to Gaza, with 400,000 more to follow, after Israel and Hamas tentatively agreed on "humanitarian pauses" in the fighting to allow over 640,000 children to be vaccinated amid an outbreak of the virus, the first in the enclave in a quarter of a century.

WHO Representative for the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), Dr. Rik Peepkorn, said that the two-round vaccination campaign is due to begin this Sunday in central Gaza for three days, then move to the southern and northern areas. A second dose will be administered after four weeks.

"During each round of the campaign, the Palestinian Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the WHO, [the UN Children's Fund] UNICEF, UNRWA [the UN agency for Palestine refugees] and partners, will provide two drops of novel oral polio vaccine type 2 (nOPV2) to more than 640,000 children under 10 years of age," Dr. Peepkorn said.

The campaign is now all set with the arrival of vaccine doses in besieged Gaza and 500 vaccine carriers.

Speaking to reporters at UN Headquarters in New York via video link from Gaza, Dr. Peepkorn welcomed a preliminary commitment with the Israeli military to "area-specific humanitarian pauses" during the vaccination campaign.

"We call on all parties to pause fighting to allow children and families to safely access health facilities and community outreach workers to get to children who cannot access health facilities for polio vaccination," he said.

Without humanitarian pauses, the campaign – a massive task in any setting, let alone after more than 10 months of heavy fighting, mass casualties and displacement – will not be possible, warned the WHO.

The campaign will be rolled out in phases of three days each, starting with central Gaza, followed by southern and finally northern Gaza.

Vaccinations will be extended by one day wherever necessary to account for upticks in violence, destroyed roads and infrastructure damage – all additional hurdles that could hamper the objective of achieving sufficient vaccine coverage within three days in each area.

At least 90 per cent vaccination coverage during each round of the campaign is needed to stop the outbreak and prevent international spread of the sometimes-deadly waterborne disease, which can cause lifelong paralysis.

The UN health agency will coordinate with all parties, including the Israeli humanitarian coordination unit, COGAT, to ensure safe access to health facilities for children and families.



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

WASA Multan: Appointment of New Director Recovery

On 23rd August, the Punjab government, through the Department of Housing, Urban Development, and Public Health Engineering, issued orders appointing Abdul Salam as the Director of Recovery at WASA (MDA) Multan. Engineer Abdul Salam has taken charge of his new responsibilities. He had previously served in the recovery department and performed his duties successfully. According to WASA customers and senior officials, he possesses all the qualities of an effective recovery officer. He is diligent and responsible, making him a valuable asset to his organization. His performance, adherence to principles, and professional conduct distinguish him from others. In contrast, less dedicated employees seem unhappy with his appointment, as they cannot display their usual laziness and negligence under the supervision of an honest and hardworking officer like Abdul Salam. His appointment has created difficulties for employees who neglect their duties.

For the development and improved performance of any organisation or department, having a head who is honest, competent, and dedicated is crucial. An honest leader fosters a culture of transparency and integrity, setting a positive example for all members of the organisation. Their credibility helps build trust among employees, stakeholders, and clients, which is vital for effective collaboration and decision-making. No one has any objections to Director of Recovery WASA, Abdul Salam's timely and accurate decision-making, teamwork, professional competence, and integrity.

The Director of Recovery at WASA outlined his policies, stating that he will take several

measures to improve the agency's monthly recovery. His top priority will be the timely distribution of bills to WASA customers, ensuring they do not face difficulties in paying them. Timely billing will not only increase WASA's recovery but also maintain customer confidence.

Another significant point he mentioned was identifying and eliminating illegal connections. According to him, WASA will identify illegal water supply and sewerage connections and include them in the recovery network. This move will not only increase WASA's revenue

but also ensure the fair use of water and sewerage resources.

The third significant policy mentioned by the Director of Recovery is the disconnection of WASA defaulters' connections. By cutting off the services of those who fail to pay their bills, the policy aims to compel defaulters to settle their dues on a monthly basis. This

move is expected to directly address the issue of unpaid bills and will play a crucial role in improving WASA's financial health.

This strategy is not only a practical approach to securing regular revenue but also a clear signal that non-compliance will have immediate consequences. By ensuring that customers meet their financial obligations, WASA can achieve greater financial stability, which is essential for its continued operation and ability to deliver quality services. Moreover, this policy will help reduce the number of persistent defaulters, thereby fostering a culture of accountability and encouraging timely payments from all customers.

Ultimately, the disconnection policy is anticipated to be highly effective in enhancing service delivery, as the additional revenue collected can be reinvested in infrastructure improvements,

better maintenance, and expanded services. By enforcing this policy, WASA aims to safeguard its financial interests and enhance overall operational efficiency, leading to better services for all its customers.

For effective recovery, it is crucial that all departments within the agency fully meet their responsibilities in a comprehensive manner. This goes beyond merely focusing on financial recovery; it also involves tackling operational challenges related to sewerage and water supply and swiftly resolving customer complaints. Addressing customer complaints promptly and effectively is vital for maintaining the quality of services and ensuring public satisfaction. When departments respond quickly to issues and complaints, it builds trust within the community and helps prevent service disruptions that could negatively impact recovery efforts.

Moreover, effective handling of all operational aspects enables WASA to improve its overall performance. By maintaining high standards of service and addressing any gaps or shortcomings immediately, the agency can foster stronger customer relations, which is key to ensuring timely payments and ongoing support from the community.

Ultimately, a well-rounded approach where every department actively contributes to resolving both financial and operational challenges allows WASA to achieve its financial recovery targets. It ensures that the organisation is not only financially stable but also reliable and trusted by its customers, paving the way for long-term sustainability and growth.

Director of Recovery Abdul Salam clarified that no recovery inspector, assistant, or circle in charge will be transferred. "We need to move WASA forward. My doors are open to all WASA customers. There is no need for recommendations to approach me or to get any legitimate work done."



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid



Concern About Pakistan's Economic Problems

Dear Editor,
 I am writing to express my deep concern about the economic problems that our country is facing. Right now, the situation is very difficult for many people. Prices of basic items like food, fuel, and medicine are rising every day, making it hard for families to manage their budgets. On top of this, finding a job has become even more challenging, and the value of our currency keeps dropping. This combination is creating a lot of stress for ordinary citizens.

I urge the government to prioritize this issue and take immediate steps to address these concerns. Additionally, I encourage citizens to raise their voices and demand accountability from those in power. By working together, we can push for the changes needed to stabilize our economy and protect our future.

Thank you for considering my views. I am hopeful that with the right steps, we can overcome these challenges and move towards a brighter future for Pakistan.

Sincerely,
 Khadija Zulfiqar, Karachi.
 Khadijazulfiqar612@gmail.com

A heinous crime Mousmita Debnath murder case

Dear Editor,
 As I sit down to pen this article, my mind is filled

with the same sense of shock and outrage that I felt when I first heard the news of Mousmita Debnath's murder. A young and promising doctor, brutally killed by a rape accused in Kolkata, has left the entire nation reeling in horror. The case is a stark reminder of the vulnerabilities of women in our society, particularly those who dare to speak out against injustice.

The investigation into Mousmita's murder has revealed disturbing details, pointing to a sinister plot to silence the victim. The accused was allegedly deployed by someone to kill Mousmita, raising alarming questions about the involvement of powerful individuals or groups. The family's statement suggests a larger conspiracy, which demands a thorough and impartial investigation.

Furthermore, the case underscores the need for a more robust support system for victims of sexual assault. Mousmita's family has spoken about the trauma and fear she endured during the investigation and trial. The lack of adequate protection and support can force victims to withdraw cases or face dire consequences, as seen in this tragic instance. The investigation into Mousmita's murder must be conducted with utmost transparency and accountability. The authorities must ensure that all evidence is carefully examined, and all leads are pursued. The perpetrators, including those who may have masterminded the crime, must be brought to book and face the full force of the law.

Mousmita Debnath's murder is not just a heinous crime but also a wake-up call for our society. It highlights the need for us to come together to create a safer and more just environment for women. We must demand accountability from our authorities and work towards creating a support system that protects victims of sexual assault. As I close this article, I am reminded of the words of Malala Yousafzai, "The struggle for women's rights is not only a matter of justice but also a matter of human rights." It is our collective responsibility to ensure that women like Mousmita Debnath do not have to face such horrors alone. We must stand together in solidarity with them and demand justice for all.

Sincerely,
 Momal Naem
 momalnaem2202@gmail.com

International Islamic Banking and Takaful Awards held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Spokesman Report

ADDIS ABABA: The International Islamic Banking and Takaful Awards distribution ceremony was celebrated during the 5th International Interest-Free Banking and Takaful Forum organized by AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking & Economics (CIBE) at the Ethiopian Skylight Hotel in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The event aimed to encourage the Interest-Free Banking & Takaful industry and to recognize and celebrate the outstanding achievements and contributions of individuals and institutions within the sector. AlHuda CIBE extends its heartfelt congratulations to all the winners of the awards.

"These awards represent the collective efforts and innovations of the pioneers in the Interest-Free Finance industry across Africa," said Mr. Zubair Mughal, Chief Executive Officer of AlHuda CIBE. "We are honored to recognize those who have made significant strides in advancing the sector and are setting benchmarks for others to follow. We express our gratitude to all participants, judges, sponsors, and partners for their support and commitment to making the African Interest-Free Banking and Takaful Awards a resounding success."

The forum attracted delegates from various countries, and dignitaries including H. E. Mr. Hassan Muhammad, State Minister of Industry, The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, and Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, CEO of

AlHuda CIBE, who handed over the awards to the winners. The various award categories included the Best Customers Centric Solution Provider Award to Tsehay Bank S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Interest-Free Banking Leadership Award to ZamZam Bank S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Interest-Free Bank for Financial Inclusion Award to Hijra Bank S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Interest-Free Banking Lending Products Award to Shabelle Bank S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Shariah Compliant Interest-Free Banking Award to Awash Bank S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Islamic Fintech Company Award to MYTM, Saudi Arabia; Best IT Integration and Innovative Interest-Free Banking Products Award to Dahabshil Bank International, Somaliland; Best Islamic Central Bank Award to Central Bank of Somaliland; Best Takaful Innovative Products Award to Halal Takaful by Oromia Insurance S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Takaful Market Penetration Strategies Award to Ahli Takaful by Global Insurance Company (S. Co.), Ethiopia; Best Takaful Practitioners Award to Salaam Takaful by Awash Insurance S. Co. Ethiopia; Best Shariah Compliant Re-Takaful Company Award to Kenya Reinsurance Corporation Ltd (Retakaful Window).

Individual awards were also given, including the Best Interest-Free Banking Practitioner Award to Mr. Abdella Adem; Best Emerging Personalities in Ethiopian Interest-Free Banking and Takaful Industry to Mrs. Kerima Ali, Mr. Faris Ahmed Shafi, Mr. Awol Zinab Gamal, and



Mr. Mengistu Meharu; Best Takaful Knowledge Contributor Award to Mr. Fikru Tsegaye Wordofa; Best Islamic Entrepreneur Award to Mr. Abdul Waheed Shah Kotia; and Best Takaful & Interest-Free Contributor Award to Mrs. Jemila Kibret.

The event success was ensured by the active

participation of sponsors, including Ethiopian Insurance Corporation, Dahabshil Bank International, Shabelle Bank, MYTM, ZamZam Bank, and Global Insurance Co. S. C., with support from partners like the Somaliland Banker's Association, Islamic Finance Research Institute – Ghana, AL BARAKAH Multi-purpose Cooper-

ative Society Limited, Azerbaijan Fintech Association – Azfina, and Africa Fintech Network. The media partners, Adbsolute Communications Plc, IFING-MEDIA, Mesofinance Monthly, and Financial IT, also played a crucial role in the event's coverage, and Ethiopian Airlines served as the official partner airline.

ZTE and Orange Liberia team up to complete rural network deployment in Liberia

Spokesman Report

MONROVIA, LIBERIA: Orange Liberia, in collaboration with its strategic partner ZTE Corporation (0763. HK / 000063. SZ), a global leading provider of integrated information and communication technology solutions, has announced the successful completion of a project to build new communication sites, called RuralPilot EcoSites, across the country, significantly enhancing network coverage in rural areas.

The project, encompassing 128 communication sites, was completed in just three months. These sites employ low-power-consumption, wide-coverage wireless base station equipment supporting the 800MHz and 900MHz bands.

The network offers 2G voice services for users in remote areas and supports 4G data services. Each site integrates solar energy and smart lithium batteries, enhanced with Power-Pilot AI energy-saving software, to achieve energy-efficient network construction. Additionally, transmission challenges are flexibly addressed through the adaptable use of microwave, satellite, and 4G relay technology.

This new infrastructure marks a significant improvement in communication services for Liberia's rural regions, providing high-quality network access to previously underserved areas. Over 580,000 subscribers in rural areas will benefit from enhanced digital, financial, and energy inclusion.



Jean Marius YAO, CEO of Orange Liberia, stated, "This project demonstrates our commitment to providing better communication services to the people of Liberia. We will continue to work with partners like ZTE to advance Liberia's telecommunications sector."

"The newly built communication sites will provide strong support for the economic and social development of Liberia's rural areas. Orange Liberia remains dedicated to offering convenient and high-quality communication services to its customers," added Jean Marius YAO.

Zhang Guanzhen, CEO, ZTE Orange MEA Account, expressed honor in their collaboration on this project. "This project marks the first implementation of our rural network solution with the Orange Group, representing a significant breakthrough in our collaboration," added Zhang Guanzhen. "Despite facing challenging conditions, including underdeveloped infrastructure and harsh climates, the delivery teams from both companies overcame numerous unforeseen obstacles to ensure the project's successful completion. This accomplishment stands as a key strategic milestone in the ongoing cooperation between Orange Group and ZTE Corporation."

The new rural network infrastructure promises to bolster Liberia's rural communities, facilitating enhanced economic and social integration. Orange Liberia and ZTE are committed to advancing the telecommunications landscape in Liberia further.

How Chinese hybrid grass technology is changing the world for the better

Xinhua

KIGALI/FUZHOU: It was pleasantly warm and dry in Rwanda in early August, and young farmers in Southern Province were celebrating a bountiful harvest. Their hands were not bunched with corn or rice but with mushrooms, cultivated with the help of a technology transferred from a country far away to this "land of a thousand hills" in Africa.

Joining the celebration was Professor Lin Zhanxi. Since the 1980s, the octogenarian scientist has led a research team on Juncao technology in China's southeastern Fujian Province. The hybrid grass technology enables fungi to grow on grass-based substrates instead of felled trees, a solution to the mushroom industry's threat to forests.

The plant's name means "mushroom" and "grass" in Chinese. Its versatility is a key feature, allowing it to grow edible mushrooms, provide livestock feed and help battle desertification.

Thanks to the active and visionary promotion by Chinese President Xi Jinping, Juncao is thriving in and beyond China, improving livelihoods and fostering sustainable development in developing nations across the Asia-Pacific, Africa and Latin America.

A Way Out Of Poverty

Before known as "the father of Juncao," Lin grew up in the impoverished rural mountains of Fujian. His personal experiences with poverty profoundly shaped his commitment to Juncao technology.

After decades of work, Lin and his team succeeded in selecting and breeding a type of high-yield, drought and salinity-resistant herbaceous plant that can be used



as a substitute for wood to grow edible and medicinal mushrooms.

At the ninth Aid-for-Trade Global Review Conference held by the WTO in Geneva in June, Lin reflected on how Juncao technology began its global journey. It was back in 1992 when Lin first presented Juncao to widespread acclaim at an international exhibition on inventions, also in Geneva. There in Switzerland, Lin received many calls to learn more about the technology.

Lin recalled how Xi has passionately supported using scientific and technological means to combat poverty.

In 1997, Xi, then deputy secretary of the Communist Party of China Fujian Provincial Committee, listed Juncao technology as part of the province's poverty reduction efforts with the northwestern Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Upon receiving the assignment, Lin immediately took his team, as well as grass and fungus seeds, to Xihaigu, a poverty-

stricken region in Ningxia.

Today, Juncao technology is used in 31 provinces across China and has significantly contributed to ending poverty and revitalizing rural areas.

With Xi's support, a pilot project to introduce Juncao technology in Papua New Guinea was launched in 2000, becoming one of the first applications of Juncao technology overseas.

Fueled by their dedication and pioneering spirit, Lin and other Chinese researchers have since introduced the technology to 106 countries and regions across the globe.

With a mission to end poverty around the world, Chinese scientists have applied Juncao technology to some challenging environments. In Papua New Guinea's Eastern Highlands, they witnessed tribes still practicing slash-and-burn agriculture. In Rwanda, families without access to cattle or tractors labored in muddy fields using only hoes. In

the Central African Republic, they observed the devastating impact of post-conflict famine.

Throughout these years, Lin has faced gunpoint robberies, malaria, altitude sickness and long periods in remote outposts without electricity or water. Witnessing extreme poverty in developing countries further strengthened Lin's commitment to Juncao.

"We go to the poorest places with a genuine intent to help the people," Lin stated.

A Plant Of Prosperity

Agnes Ayinkamiye is the first coordinator of the Juncao project in Rwanda.

"One of the things that made me especially happy was how we helped people. The project was well-received, and we trained many people, particularly women's cooperatives and youth groups," she said. "I enjoyed my work immensely and was thrilled to collaborate with experts."

"People can earn money through Juncao technology,

and it's become quite popular," Ayinkamiye added.

Lin noted that around 4,000 Rwandan households have benefited from the technology, with some experiencing their incomes double or even triple over the years.

"Juncao technology is affordable... This technology is applied in such a way that makes it affordable for people at a very local level, which I believe is the key benefit," said Earle Courtenay Rattray, chef de cabinet to the United Nations Secretary-General.

Seruwaia Kabukabu, an entrepreneur in Serea Village of Fiji's Naitasiri Province, is one of the women trained at the Juncao demonstration center in Nadi, Fiji's third-largest city.

"After the training, every one of us received mushroom substrate bags for free from the center. Under the guidance of technical experts, we began to harvest and sell mushrooms within 7-10 days, earning money for our family," Kabukabu said.

The income from the Juncao project allowed her to improve her family's living standards by purchasing essential appliances, building a concrete toilet and bathroom, and even contributing to a clean water project in her community.

"Fiji faces numerous problems ranging from geographical isolation, susceptibility to natural disasters due to climate change that hinders agricultural, and sustainable development and food security," Kabukabu said.

Over the past decade, over 2,400 people in Fiji have received training on Juncao technology, with the Juncao cultivation area in Fiji exceeding 2,000 hectares.

"Simple to learn and effective to implement," said Lin, emphasizing that Juncao technology



should lower its technical application threshold abroad "so that even the poorest farmers can get involved."

To date, nearly 350 international workshops have trained over 14,000 people in Juncao technology, with introductory papers now available in 18 languages for global use.

Never-Ending Experiment

Apart from cultivating mushrooms, Juncao technology has continued to innovate, expanding its production to include feed and fertilizer.

Since using Juncao as fodder, Tabiya Massawe, a farmer in Bumbwi Sudi, Tanzania, has observed improved milk density and nutrition and increased milk production.

"It has also saved money for me," she told Xinhua, "because the budget I previously spent on other feed is now saved by using this grass."

Farmers multiply Juncao and use it on their farms. Many testimonials show that farmers have accepted the technology simply because the feeds are rich, said Makame Kitwana, director of Planning, Policy and Research at Tanzania's agriculture ministry.

"In a number of ways, scientific-

cally, it has (been proven) that the protein content, as well as carbon content, is high, making cattle more satisfied when consuming Juncao grass compared to other grasses," he said.

Juncao can also help with ecological management.

Soil erosion has been a serious problem in countries such as Rwanda. Rwandan officials used to worry that if the soil problem could not be resolved, Rwanda would have no land to cultivate. Lin always kept their concerns in mind.

He still remembers the experimental data in Rwanda during his visit over a decade ago. On one day the rainfall for two and a half hours reached 51.4 millimeters. All the rain was captured by the giant (Juncao) grass, and it was very effective in water conservation and soil retention.

In February in Fiji, Lin also worked on applying Juncao technology to saline soil management, aiming to seek additional solutions to combat climate change for developing countries, including Pacific island nations.

"The experimental results were very promising," Lin said. "Juncao is the grass of happiness, a gift from China to all."

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
78,488.21	78,349.66
Day's High	Day's Low
78,914.27	78,439.61
Index Value	Change
9,038,344,948	+138.55
Percentage	Time
+0.18%	30 Aug, 2024 5:00 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
8,376.63	-3.01
Percentage	Time
-0.036%	30 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
41,251.32	-83.73
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	29 Aug, 1:11 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
38,647.75	+285.22
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	30 Aug, 3:15 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186.5	189.18
Bahrain Dinar	732.60	740.60
Canadian Dollar	202.65	205
China Yuan	38.25	38.65
Danish Krone	40.03	40.43
Euro	309	312
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	73.8	74.4
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	365.5	369
US Dollar	278.65	279.75

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan calls for strategic reforms in engineering sector to compete globally

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan held a virtual meeting with the Sectoral Council for Engineering, emphasizing the need for strategic reforms to elevate Pakistan's engineering industry to a level that can compete globally.

Jam Kamal Khan highlighted the rapid pace of technological advancements worldwide, noting the shift towards robotic machines, and underscored the government's readiness to provide financial support to guide the industry onto the right path.

During the meeting, Minister Jam Kamal asked a comprehensive proposal from the council, detailing the current global standings in the engineering sector, Pakistan's position, and a roadmap to make this industry a leading force in the country.

The minister assured the council that their recommendations would be thoroughly deliberated at the highest levels, with practical steps taken to implement them.

The Chairman of the council expressed appreciation for the Minister's vision and commitment to revamping and restructuring the council, highlighting his support for the



business community. The Chairman also presented the challenges faced by the industry, including tariff issues, and outlined key recommendations for improvement.

Council members emphasized the need for competitive energy rates and tariffs to match regional standards and boost exports.

Minister Jam Kamal acknowledged that branding and publicity, both locally and internationally, are crucial for enhancing trade.

Jam pointed out that trade officers in various countries could play a vital role in this regard, and mentioned that the Ministry of Commerce is actively working to elevate Pakistan's trade branding.

Speaking about Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision, Minister Jam Kamal reiterated the government's commitment to supporting the trade sector at all levels.

He said govt planned to establish warehouses and business centers in various countries, starting with Saudi Arabia, to facilitate the Pakistani business community.

Addressing concerns about recent budgetary issues, the Minister assured the council that the government is working to resolve any challenges the business community faced due to tariff adjustments.

He clarified that these issues arose from the budget being rushed, but efforts are underway to revisit and correct them.

The council also called for a long-term policy to provide stability and growth for the sector, which the Minister pledged to consider in the government's ongoing reform efforts.

Pakistan's solar power potential vital to end acute economic sufferings of masses: experts



Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The concerned energy sector representatives have emphasised greater exploitation of Pakistan's solar power potential to swiftly transition away from fossil fuel-based electricity production and end acute economic sufferings of masses due to heightened power tariff.

They were speaking at a panel discussion held as part of Solar Power Conclave & Technology Excellence Awards-2024. The Energy Update organized the event in partnership with the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), Private Power Infrastructure Board (PPIB), and Pakistan Solar Association here at a hotel.

The relevant experts who spoke on the occasion said that greater reliance on abundantly available solar power all over the country could guarantee protection of Pakistan's energy security.

The speakers at the conclave also emphasised the need for proper regula-

tion of Pakistani renewable energy market to prevent the fleecing of unsuspecting consumers at the hands of unregistered dealers who brazenly sell substandard solar power products due to lack of regulations.

Speaking as the chief guest at the conclave, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that Pakistanis were extremely worried over exorbitant electricity bills, which caused tremendous economic hardships to the masses.

"The people of Pakistan are rightly distressed over inflated electricity bills and it is the government's responsibility to be fully answerable before the people over this grave injustice," he said.

Earlier, Managing Editor, Energy Update and Chairman Organizing Committee Naem Qureshi delivered a welcome address.

Faizan Ali said that the government needs to encourage people to self-consumption of solar power rather than

exporting units through net metering. "The government may reduce buyback from Rs 27 to Rs 15 per unit, and instead incentivize the consumers in installing batteries," he added.

PPIB Managing-Director, Shahjahan Mirza, hoped that the conference organised by the Energy Update go a long way in achieving the government's goal of maximizing clean power production to lessen reliance on imported fossil fuels for electricity production.

Engr. Faiz Bhutta lambasted Independent Power Producers (IPPs) as the mode of power generation, saying that distributed solar systems must be embraced and implemented quickly.

Muhammad Ahsan from Astro Energy and Usmaan Waheed from Sungrow, Waseem Qureshi CEO and CTO ENERCAP Holdings also spoke at the panel discussion, moderated by Waqas Moosa from the Pakistan Solar Association (PSA).

Motul kicks off Karachi sales event with key customer engagement session

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Key Customer engagement session was held in Karachi by Motul on Aug 29 which was the first of the sequence of events planned in Pakistan over the next few days. Similar gatherings will follow across the country including Lahore and Islamabad.

Motul is a reputable European Company with an international footprint specialized in the formulation, production and distribution of high-performance lubricants.

Motul in Pakistan is headed by Country Manager Mr. Saad Swati who drives the business through the Authorized

Distributors House of Lubricants, in the region.

Global team from Motul including Mr Hassan Ali Khwaja - Business Development Manager and Mr Hesham - Technical Manager, Middle East attended the session and shared their valuable insights and the Company's expansion plans in Pakistan.

Mr Hafiz Zeeshan Alam, GM House of Lubricants briefed the audience about the group and its association with Motul.

The event was attended by motor sports enthusiasts including Mr Nadir Magsi, influencers and key accounts and distributors from the city

PSO launches innovative Blue LPG Initiative to enhance energy access in Pakistan



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The leading Energy Company, Pakistan State Oil (PSO), in collaboration with the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, proudly announces the launch of the "Blue LPG Initiative", a pioneering project aimed at transforming the energy landscape in Pakistan.

The launch ceremony was attended by esteemed chief guests, including Mr Eman Shah, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Information, Gilgit Baltistan and Managing Director and CEO - PSO, Syed Muhammad Taha. Other dignitaries from the region also present on the occasion.

The Blue Initiative offers numerous benefits to customers, including last-mile delivery of LPG, ensuring quality, convenience, and availability. The initiative features a competitive pricing strategy aligned with OGRA, providing a superior customer experience with hassle-free ordering and delivery.

Also, customers can access services at their fingertips through a mobile app and web platform, with products packaged in safe, lightweight, and modern composite cylinders. By establishing a nationwide utility company, PSO aims to increase energy access to 100% of the population, focusing on last-mile delivery.

PSO is at the forefront of this energy revolution, leveraging technology and innovation to create a sustainable future for all. The initial phase has commenced in Central Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan, offering eco-friendly and safe energy solutions.

PSO relies on community trust and support to deliver higher energy access for all, for decades to come.

Maulana Tariq Jameel visits ICCI: Urges adherence to Quranic Teachings for success

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Renowned religious scholar Maulana Tariq Jameel emphasized the importance of adhering to the golden principles of Quran and hadith to overcome the daily life challenges and earn Allah's blessings. He stressed the need for religious harmony and tolerance to create a peaceful and inclusive society, highlighting the importance of mutual respect and understanding.

During his talk at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, largely attended by the business community leaders, students and civil members, Maulana Tariq Jameel urged people to focus on common values and shared humanity, rather than differences. He emphasized the need to strictly follow the teachings of the Quran and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) in all aspects of

life, including business, trade, governance, and agriculture, for individual and collective success and development.

"Earlier, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, delivered a welcome address, highlighting the challenges facing the country, particularly the business community in terms of ease of doing business.

Senior Vice President Faad Waheed in his vote of thanks expressed gratitude to the distinguished guests for visiting the Chamber and enhancing their awareness about the Quranic teachings through his insight and wisdom.

United Business Group Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari, VP Eng. Azhar ul Islam Zafar, former office bearers, ICCI executives and members in large numbers attended the lecture.



First day of second Pakistan-Bangladesh Test called off due to rain

A Sports

RAWALPINDI: The first day of the second Test between Pakistan and Bangladesh has been called off due to persistent rain here on Friday.

Overnight downpours delayed the toss and after more monsoon rains, umpires abandoned play for the day shortly after midday.

"The first day's play has been called off due to persistent rain and wet outfield," Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) posted on their social media platforms. Notably, neither team left their hotels.

Meanwhile, the PCB unveiled the 12-member squad on Thursday which will form their Playing XI for the must-win second and final Test against Bangladesh.

Shaheen Afridi was a notable omission from the lineup along with wicketkeeper Sarfaraz Ahmed as well as uncapped batters Kamran Ghulam and Muhammad Hurraira.

Pakistan would be looking to bounce back in the second Test after suffering the



first-ever defeat against Bangladesh in the opening Test of the two-match series.

Following the defeat, several strategies came under question; such as going with an all-pace attack, declaration and batting failure in the second innings.

Pakistan, after being put into bat first,

accumulated 448/6 and declared their first innings in the dying minutes of the second day.

Bangladesh, in response, piled up a mammoth total of 565, courtesy of Mushfiqur Rahim's marathon 191-run knock, before bundling out in the third

session of the fourth day.

The first Test was assumed to be heading towards a draw but Pakistan's batting lineup faltered against Bangladesh's spinners on the final day and could score 146, setting the visitors a meagre 30-run target.

The Bangladesh openers made no mistake in chasing down a paltry total and steered their side to a historic victory over Pakistan.

Pakistan 12-member Squad

Shan Masood (c), Saud Shakeel (vc), Abdullah Shafique, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Khurram Shahzad, Mir Hamza, Mohammad Ali, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Salman Ali Agha.

Bangladesh Squad

Najmul Hossain Shanto (c), Mahmud-ullah, Zakir Hasan, Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Mushfiqur Rahim, Shakib Al Hasan, Litton Das, Mehidy Hasan Miraz, Taijul Islam, Nazmul Hossain, Nurul Hasan, Ebadot Hossain, Hasan Mahmud, Taskin Ahmed and Khaled Ahmed.

Misbah-ul-Haq to mentor Wolves in Champions Cup

A Sports

LAHORE: Former Pakistan captain and all-format head coach Misbah-ul-Haq has been confirmed as mentor of the Wolves side for next month's Champions One-Day Cup, which will be played in Faisalabad from 12-29 September.

Prior to Misbah, Shoaib Malik was named as the mentor of the Stallions side on Thursday, while announcements of team names for the other three mentors – Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Waqar Younis – will be made in the coming days.

While Shoaib Malik's Stallions has been allocated Sialkot Cricket Academy for training and practice during the 2024-25 domestic cricket season, Misbah's side has been allocated Faisalabad Cricket Academy to prepare for the events during the upcoming season.

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 in a single-league format.

All but the 16 September match between Lions and Panthers, which will start at 9.30 am, will commence at 3 pm. There will be three playoffs in four days



with the final on Sunday, 29 September.

Misbah-ul-Haq's Wolves will take on Panthers on the opening day on 12 September, followed by matches against Stallions (15 September), Dolphins (17 September) and Lions (20 September).

Misbah ul Haq is Pakistan's most successful Test captain, who led his side to victories in 26 out of 56 Tests, including the country to No.1 in the ICC Test Team Rankings in August 2016.

Before that, he equalled the then-world record of the fastest Test century by hitting a 56-ball 100 against Australia in Abu Dhabi in 2014.

Misbah-ul-Haq has featured in two 50-over World Cups, three T20 World Cups and three ICC Champions Trophy events for Pakistan.

He was a member of the side that played in the final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2007 and won the tournament two

years later at Lord's.

"I am excited to reunite with Wolves as a mentor and play a crucial role in shaping the future of our emerging cricketers," said Misbah.

"This role not only allows me to share my experience and knowledge to help them refine their skills but also gives me a chance to complete some unfinished business from 2019 and bring my vision to life.

"The Champions One-Day Cup is an electrifying event where the best players in the country will compete fiercely in a format where every match is crucial.

"This tournament promises to deliver high-quality cricket to Faisalabad fans and inspire our players to perform at their peak, while also providing a platform for the PCB to showcase and elevate this premier event.

"I believe this tournament will be pivotal in discovering the next generation of talent who can be developed to represent Pakistan on the international stage.

"With upcoming ODIs against Australia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, a home tri-series, and the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, there is no better time to identify and nurture our future stars."

Pakistan Shaheens win series after third One-Day against Bangladesh A called-off

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The third and final One-Day between Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh A was abandoned on Friday due to persistent rain at the Islamabad Club.

Earlier, the second one-day between both sides was also abandoned without a ball being bowled due to rain on Wednesday.

Pakistan Shaheens won the 50-over series 1-0 after defeating the visiting side by eight wickets in the first match of the series on 26 August.

Pakistan Shaheens defeated Bangladesh A by eight wickets on 26 August at the same venue. Right-arm fast bowler



Mohammad Abbas Afridi's five-wicket haul and half-centuries by Haseebullah and Usman

Khan were key to Pakistan Shaheens' victory in the first one-day.

After opting to field, Pakistan Shaheens bundled out the visiting team for 183 runs in 36 overs.

Abbas Afridi was the pick of the bowlers, with match figures of 9-0-38-5. This was Abbas' second five-fer in 22 List-A matches.

Left-arm pacer Jahandad Khan (2-51) and left-arm spinner Mehran Mumtaz (2-29) equally supported Abbas as only Saif Hassan (58, 47b, 10x4s, 1x6) managed to score a half-century for Bangladesh 'A'.

Rishad Hossain coming to bat at number nine was the other notable run-getter, scoring 40 off 37 balls, hitting four fours and two sixes.

In turn, Pakistan Shaheens

achieved the target in 27.5 overs courtesy of a 129-run partnership between Haseebullah and Usman for the second wicket.

Left-handed opening batter Haseebullah returned undefeated on 73 off 81 balls, smashing seven fours and two sixes. Right-handed batter Usman fell 13 runs short of his first List-A century.

His innings included eight boundaries and five towering sixes, which came off 60 balls. Omar Bin Yousuf also returned unbeaten on 14 off 19, adding an unbroken 42-run partnership for the third wicket with Haseebullah.

For Bangladesh A, Mahedi Hasan and Mosaddek Hossain snapped a wicket each.

Botic van de Zandschulp claims shock win over Carlos Alcaraz at US Open



Sports Desk

Spanish superstar Carlos Alcaraz was knocked out of the US Open by Dutch world number 74 Botic van de Zandschulp in a seismic second-round upset on Thursday.

World number three and 2022 champion Alcaraz lost 6-1, 7-5, 6-4, ending his bid to become only the third man in the modern era to win the French Open, Wimbledon and US Open in the same season.

Alcaraz had made at least the quarter-finals in his three previous appearances in New York and Thursday's defeat was his earliest at a Grand Slam since a second-round exit at Wimbledon in 2021.

"I'm a little lost for words," said van de Zandschulp after only his second career win over a top five player.

"It was an incredible evening out here in my first time in the night session on Arthur Ashe. I had some unbelievable points at the net.

"I tried to stay calm. You have to keep your head against these guys otherwise they will take advantage."

Alcaraz, who had needed four sets to see off Australian qualifier Li Tu in the first round, appeared on court with his left thigh heavily strapped.

That proved the least of his problems as he dropped serve twice in the opening set, failing to hit a single winner against his 28-year-old opponent, who made the quarter-finals on his debut in 2021.

Carlos Alcaraz squandered break points in the second game of the second set and the Dutchman made him pay with a break of his own for a 2-1 lead in front of a stunned crowd.

The 2022 champion hit back immediately to level at 2-2 but it was a brief respite from his troubles as his inspired opponent broke again for 6-5 and took the set when Alcaraz fired a service return wide.

The 21-year-old had never had to come back from a two sets deficit in his young career and went into Thursday's match with a 2-0 head-to-head edge over the Dutchman.

However, he slipped 2-3 down, recovered to 3-3, greeting the rare chink of light with a wide grin, but was then broken again in the ninth game.

Botic van de Zandschulp was not to be denied and claimed victory when Alcaraz fired his 27th and final unforced error of the contest.

He becomes the first Dutchman to defeat a top three player at a Grand Slam since Richard Krajicek beat number one Pete Sampras in the quarter-finals at Wimbledon in 1996.

He is the first from his country to achieve it at the US Open since his coach Paul Haarhuis knocked out Boris Becker in the third round in 1991.

Cristiano Ronaldo 'honoured' to receive major UEFA Champions League award



Portuguese football legend Cristiano Ronaldo was "honoured" after being crowned the "all-time leading goalscorer" in the UEFA Champions League on Thursday.

Ronaldo's remarkable feats in Europe's elite club competition, spanning over 18 years, were recognised during the inaugural 2024/25 UEFA Champions League at Monaco's Grimaldi Forum. After receiving the award, the 39-year-old Al Nassr star said: "The first win with Manchester United was very special. Winning four times with Real Madrid was also incredible."

"In 2018, in Lisbon, I felt the pressure of being the most expensive player in the world and needing to win the Champions League. But I think goals and trophies are like ketchup; once they start coming, they keep coming."

Taking to his Instagram after the event, the five-time Ballon d'Or award winner shared a snap from the event in a post.

In the caption, he wrote: "Honored to receive this award from @championsleague for being the all-time top scorer of the competition. Grateful for all the support along the way! Thank you!"

Joe Root dedicates record-equalling century to late Graham Thorpe

Sports Desk

LAHORE: England batter Joe Root paid an emotional tribute to the late Graham Thorpe after scoring a milestone 33rd Test hundred against Sri Lanka at Lord's on Thursday, saying much of his success was down to the impact of his former coach.

His innings meant Root equalled Alastair Cook's record for the most Test hundreds by an England batter after he came in with the side faltering at 42-2 on the first day of the second Test.

Root immediately pointed to the sky after reaching three figures in a gesture in memory of former England batter and assistant coach Thorpe, who died aged 55 earlier this month after taking his own life.

A deeply moved Joe Root, whose composed 143 helped England

reach 358-7 at stumps, told reporters: "I've been very lucky to work with a lot of people, whether it be senior players, coaches, mentors, and Thorpe was one of those people who offered me so much."

"It was nice to be able to think of him [Graham Thorpe] in that moment. He's someone I'm sorely going to miss, and who I owe a lot to. He put a lot into my game and my career, and without his help, I definitely wouldn't be where I am now."

Graham Thorpe, who won exactly 100 Test caps, was widely regarded as the best England batsman of his generation. The stylish left-hander was also one of the first to recognise Root's talent.

"Before I'd even made a hundred at first-class level he picked me for an England Lions (A team) game

against Sri Lanka at Scarborough," said Root.

"He saw something with me... He pushed very hard for me to be involved in that India tour where I made my debut (in 2012) and from that point onwards we worked together."

Root added: "It evolved into more than that, we became good friends and I really enjoyed spending a lot of time with him. It was nice to pay a small tribute. He means a lot to me and that was a small thank you." Root's innings revived England after Sri Lanka's gamble in bowling first under blue skies and on a good batting pitch almost paid dividends.

England were faltering at 212-6 but Root's century allied to Gus Atkinson's Test-best 74 not out boosted the total after several top-order batsmen gave their

wickets away.

Joe Root, eventually out to his trademark reverse ramp, came in after Ollie Pope was dismissed for just one — his third single-figure score since deputising as captain for the injured Ben Stokes.

Pope admitted he was finding it tough to balance the demands of batting and leadership after twice being out for six in an otherwise successful debut as skipper during England's five-wicket win in last week's first Test at Old Trafford.

But, with the home team 1-0 up in a three-match series, former England captain Root insisted: "I don't think there's anything for Ollie to worry about... He should keep doing exactly what he's doing."

Root added: "You know someone like him with his talent and his mindset, it won't be long before he scores a big score."



PNS HUNAIN

KARACHI: Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi addressing the crew of PNS HUNAIN upon arrival at Karachi.



Third Offshore Patrol Vessel PNS Hunain arrives Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Third Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) PNS HUNAIN arrived in Karachi. Upon arrival, an impressive reception ceremony was held at PN Dockyard. Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi was Chief Guest on the occasion.

While addressing the ceremony, Commander Pakistan Fleet highlighted that addition of PNS HUNAIN in PN fleet will significantly enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding Maritime frontiers of Pakistan. He also emphasized

that induction of such multipurpose state of the art platforms will provide vital support to ongoing PN Maritime security patrol in Indian Ocean.

PNS HUNAIN is a multipurpose medium sized Offshore Patrol Vessel equipped with state of the art electronic warfare, anti-ship, anti-air warfare weapons and sensors, self protection and terminal defence system. The ship was built and commissioned in July this year at Damen Shipyards, Romania.

Reception ceremony of PNS HUNAIN was attended by large number of PN Officers, CPOs/ Sailors and families of crew members.

Federal cabinet green lights talks on ML-1 financial agreement

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal cabinet on Friday approved starting negotiations on the Financial Commitment Agreement between China and Pakistan Railways for the up gradation of the ML-1 project, a crucial component of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, instructed that the final agreement (on ML-1) be brought back to the cabinet for approval.

The prime minister briefed the cabinet on his recent visit to Quetta, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies,



such as the police and levies, in Balochistan.

The prime minister stated

that the entire nation was committed to eliminate terrorism and setting an example by dealing firmly with terrorists.

He also praised the Balochistan provincial government for its commendable efforts to integrate Baloch youth into the national mainstream, aiming for their development and prosperity.

The prime minister stated that the federal government will fully support the Balochistan government in offering world-class education and equal development opportunities to Baloch youth.

The Cabinet also approved the decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee on August 29, 2024.

Pakistan, Bangladesh agree to work closely for South Asia's progress

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephone conversation with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh government Professor Muhammad Yunus wherein two leaders agreed that there was a need to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries.

During the conversation, both leaders also agreed that greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia, a PM Office press release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif congratulated Professor Muhammad Yunus on assuming the office of Chief Adviser and lauded his contribution to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. He expressed sympathies over the devastation caused by the recent floods in Bangladesh.

The prime minister underscored the importance of revitalizing bilateral relations through enhanced cooperation in different domains. Noting the historical, religious and cultural bonds between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he expressed a keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

IHC seeks report regarding missing persons' recovery



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday sought progress report from attorney general of Pakistan regarding recovery of PTI activist Azhar Mashwani's two missing brother.

The court stated that the AGP has given clear statement that the two missing persons were not in the custody of law enforcement agencies. It said that the AGP's statement is worthwhile as he is a law officer.

Chief Justice Aamer Farooq heard the case where AGP Mansoor Usman

Awani appeared before court. The attorney general said that all the resources are being utilized to recover the missing persons, adding that he was viewing the matter personally.

The court adjourned the case with above instruction.

Meanwhile, the same bench granted time to capital's police for recovery of former security in charge of PTI's founder Umar Sultan. SSP Khanzaib informed the court that the police were viewing the CCTV footage and investigation is underway in this regard. The court asked sought report and adjourned hearing till next week.

Firewall installation challenged

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Hamid Mir, a senior journalist filed a petition in Islamabad High Court against the installation of firewall and internet shutdown through lawyer - Imaan

Mazari.

The applicant in his petition argued that the installation of the firewall apparently caused a drastic drop in internet speed, hurting the youth who are the backbone of the digital economy.

The petitioner requested that the installation of firewalls, which could potentially impact the fundamental rights of citizens, to be halted and argued that such installations should be carried out only after consulting relevant

stakeholders and ensuring the protection of fundamental rights.

Additionally, the petitioner urged that access to the internet for livelihood purposes be recognized as a fundamental human right

under the Constitution.

The petitioner also requested that the involved parties be required to provide a detailed report on the firewall implementation.

Over 50 Pakistani pilgrims stranded at Baghdad airport

Immigration administration 'loses passports'

Spokesman Report

BAGHDAD: Over 50 Pakistani pilgrims are stranded at the Baghdad airport after their passports went missing with the airport's immigration administration, causing significant difficulties for

those travelling to Iraq for Arbaeen.

The affected pilgrims reported that they had been at the airport since 4am while their flight to Islamabad departed at 9am leaving them behind in the Iraqi capital.

The stranded travellers

expressed frustration, stating that their passports cannot be located and they have not been informed about when or how they will return home.

Pilgrims have appealed for assistance from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin



Naqvi, urging the government to ensure their immediate return through special emergency flights.

Senate body urges DRAP to enhance drugs' quality

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Senate Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination on Friday urged Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) to enhance quality of drugs and regulation of formula milk.

The committee meeting which was chaired by Senator Amir Waliuddin Chisti was briefed by the DRAP on its working and performance over the last five years.

CEO DRAP, Asim Rauf, informed that it focuses on licensing and manufacturing of drugs for import and export.

Additionally, DRAP regulates quality assurance and quality control of drugs countrywide. However, sales, storage, and distribution of drugs fall under the ambit of the provinces.

Recently, DRAP has been integrated with Pakistan Single Window for import and export licenses, and DRAP has also

implemented its E-Office.

It was apprised that DRAP is a self-sufficient organization and the budget of DRAP for the financial year 2024-25 is 2.33 billion rupees.

He said that DRAP is also working on the establishment of an Export Directorate to facilitate the exports of 'Therapeutic Goods'.

The committee recommended that the quality of drugs produced countrywide is not up to international standards and DRAP should focus on enhancing the quality of drugs.

DRAP officials stated that recently the authority has filed a suit against 'GSK' for manufacturing ill-quality drugs.

The committee inquired about the number of multinational pharmaceutical companies that are currently working in the country and also inquired about the authenticity of claims with regard to the exit of these companies from Pakistan.

DRAP officials informed that 30 multinational companies are working in the country and that no company has left, however, there has been a merger of several companies.

Chairman Committee, Senator Amir Waliuddin Chisti, highlighted the matter of 'formula milk'.

CEO DRAP stated that formula milk companies have filed a suit in the High Court against the inclusion of formula milk in DRAP. However, the suit has been decided in favor of DRAP.

He recommended that DRAP initiate work on the regulation of formula milk if the companies have not filed a suit in the Supreme Court.

He also opined that an awareness campaign should be initiated among mothers highlighting the detrimental effects of formula milk.

The committee deliberated on the new policy for the National Registration Examination (NRE).

President, Pakistan Medical and

Dental Council (PMDC), Dr. Rizwan Taj, stated that, under the new policy, PMDC has lowered the passing criteria for foreign medical students from 70% to 60%. As a result, the passing ratio for NRE exams has increased from 4% to 40%.

The committee was briefed on the total strength of doctors working in federal government hospitals.

Secretary Ministry of National Health Services, Nadeem Mahbub, informed that a total of 500 doctors were appointed in federal government hospitals during the period of 2018-23. He added that eight doctors were appointed in federal government hospitals, three in NIRM, 143 in Federal Government Polyclinic Hospital, and 346 in PIMS.

Provincial quotas were also followed in the appointment of these doctors. Only six were allotted residences while the remaining are on hiring and allowances.

Sikandar Sultan meets Chairman Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan



Spokesman Report

BAKU: Chief Election Commissioner, Sikandar Sultan Raja met with Chairman of the Central Election Commission of Azerbaijan, Mr Mazahir Panahov, at Central Election Commission in Baku, on Friday.

During the meeting, the Chief Election Commissioner of Paki-

stan stated that Pakistan is a friendly country to Azerbaijan and has always supported Azerbaijan on the issue of regional integrity. As an election observer, he praised Azerbaijan's electoral preparations.

Sikandar Sultan Raja is visiting Azerbaijan on a special invitation from Mazahir Panahov to observe the parliamentary elections, said a press release.