



Reforms in the areas of taxation, energy, privatization and digitalization, and underlined the need to bring in more private sector investment and leverage the "Adaptation Fund" to help the country deal with adverse impacts of the climate change

Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue
Muhammad Aurangzeb

Empowering women economically crucial for development of our society, Nilofar Bakhtiar

National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Distributes Certificates to Trade Fair Champions on Eid Milan



VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), hosted a vibrant Eid Milan Trade Fair certificate distribution. This event celebrated the spirit of Eid and awarded the champions of trade fair for showcasing a diverse range of products and services from various sectors. These certificates recognized the outstanding contributions and achievements of participants, encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation in the local community.

We were honored to have Mr. Lasana Woneh, the Country Representative of UNWOMEN, as the Chief Guest for the occasion. His presence added prestige to the event and highlighted the importance of empowering women in trade and commerce.

Welcoming the guests Chairperson NCSW, Ms. Nilofar Bakhtiar said:

"Empowering women economically is crucial for the development of our society. Through events like this Eid Milan and Trade Fair, we are providing women entrepreneurs with opportunities to enhance their skills, expand their businesses, and contribute to the economy. We appreciate the support of academia, civil society, and our partners in making this event a success. Different chambers across Pakistan are doing a great job as they are providing essential facilities and support, today's event remarks and important development as experts from walks of life to support economic empowerment which will be a turning point to eradicate violence against women. We are completely focused on strengthening women economically. We do need to look at women beyond 5 stars of Islamabad and provincial capitals. The same are the women who are still beyond the chamber of commerce.

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ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Pakistani and Saudi delegation with Foreign Minister, Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal Bin Farhan Al Saud on the occasion of Saudi Arabia - Pakistan Investment Conference.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia reiterate commitment to enhanced bilateral strategic, economic partnership

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Tuesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, wherein the two sides reiterated their commitment to strengthening the bilateral relations focused on mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

Led by Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, the high-powered Saudi delegation arrived here Monday on a two-day visit essentially to expedite follow-up on the understanding reached between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during their recent meeting in Makkah Al Mukarramah to enhance bilateral economic cooperation. Recalling his warm and productive meeting with the Saudi crown prince, the prime minister said that the Saudi delegation's visit after his trip was a manifestation of the strong commitment of both countries to the strengthening of bilateral relations focused on mutually beneficial economic cooperation, according to a PM Office press release.

In this regard, he said that both sides needed to work closely to expedite the first phase of Saudi investments in Pakistan under the new arrangement. During the meeting, the prime minister expressed his deep appreciation for the Saudi



leadership and conveyed his sincerest wishes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud. Prime Minister Shehbaz underscored the significance accorded by Pakistan to its long-standing fraternal, economic and strategic relations with Saudi Arabia and said that both countries had always stood together at all times. He informed the delegation about the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) and its initiatives to promote investment in Pak-

istan. He also highlighted the key role of Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and the cooperation of all institutions for the promotion of investment in the country through SIFC. The Saudi foreign minister expressed gratitude for the warm welcome accorded to his delegation and highlighted that Saudi Arabia attached high importance to its strong and close ties with Pakistan. He also conveyed the Kingdom's commitment to an enhanced strategic and economic partnership with Pakistan. The escalating situation in the occupied Palestinian Territories was also discussed.

Pak, Saudi finalise implementation mechanism to execute investment matters

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Investment Conference held in Islamabad

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia finalized a bilateral implementation mechanism to closely coordinate and execute investment related matters at the functional level to turn the sovereign commitments into tangible economic outcomes.

The high-level Saudi delegation led by His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan A.F. Al Furhan Al Saud, Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) attended the 'Saudi Arabia-Pakistan Investment Conference' held in Islamabad.

The Foreign Minister emphasized the deep-rooted ties and mutual strategic interests between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. He highlighted the significance of enhanced bilateral strategic and economic partnership and the crucial role of Saudi investments in nurturing this relationship. He explained how Pakistan through the SIFC platform aimed to streamline investment processes and ensure rapid decision-making, fostering a flourishing investment-friendly environment in Pakistan. He showcased Pakistan's abundant opportunities in agriculture, IT, and mining sectors, inviting Saudi investors to engage in mutually beneficial partnerships.

The Foreign Minister expressed confidence in the strengthened bonds between the two countries, envisioning significant economic growth and lasting benefits. He concluded with a call for constructive engagement and collaboration towards mutual prosperity and development.

The SIFC officials gave comprehensive briefings encompassing the potential and investment opportunities in key sectors of Pakistan's economy. Both sides held exhaustive deliberative sessions at functional level to crystallize investment opportunities in Pakistan.

The Saudi side expressed great significance and interest in the improving investment ecosystem in Pakistan, appreciated SIFC's role in amicable resolution of KSA's legacy investment/business related issues, and showed keen interest to invest in key sectors of Pakistan. The Pakistan side assured the Saudi side of maximum support and facilitation in fast-tracking the Kingdom's prospective multibillion dollars investments in Pakistan.

The two sides also finalized a bilateral implementation mechanism to closely coordinate and execute investment related matters at the functional level to turn the sovereign commitments into tangible economic outcomes.

CCC resolves to launch stern legal action against baseless propaganda about security forces

RAWALPINDI: The 264th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) presided over by Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters on Tuesday took serious notice of the baseless propaganda against the law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and the security forces, and resolved to launch strict legal action against the perpetrators. "The forum noted with concern the malicious propaganda campaign meant to demoralise the armed forces and underscored that unfounded and baseless allegations on law enforcement agencies and security forces have become a fashion and are part of the larger design to drive a wedge between the people and the Armed Forces of Pakistan. We will not allow such efforts to succeed and as per the law and Constitution, stern action will be ensured," an Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) news release said.

The forum paid rich tribute to the supreme sacrifices of Shuhada (martyrs) including officers and men of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and the citizens who have laid their lives for peace and stability in the country.

The COAS appreciated the untiring efforts of Pakistan Army and LEAs in successfully thwarting several terrorist attacks and neutralising key terrorist commanders during the ongoing counterterrorism operations. He directed the commanders to pro-actively deny any space to the terrorists. The Army Chief said, "The Armed Forces and LEAs of Pakistan, fully backed by the resilient nation, remain determined to permanently eliminate this menace from Pakistan, INSHA'ALLAH". The forum condemned the heinous terrorist attack against Chinese nationals in Besham as well as the killing of innocent civilians in Balochistan. PR

IT, Telecom sector having vast investment opportunities: Shaza Fatima



ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja has said that there are vast opportunities for investment in the IT and Telecom sector of Pakistan.

She said that the present government, under the vision of the Prime Minister, is committed for the promotion of investment in the country.

Minister of State for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja was talking to CEO Taavun (Pvt) Limited Muhammad Shahbaz Khan, and CEO Wateen Adil Rashid who called on her here on Tuesday, said a news release.

She said that private sector will be fully supported as it has vital role in increasing our exports. About youth, she said youth are our great asset and the steps are underway for their development. Shaza Fatima appreciated Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak Al Nahyan of UAE for his special interest in further investment in Pakistan's Telecom sector.

COAS Syed Asim Munir affirms traditional bond of fraternity between Pakistan & the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Saudi FM Prince Faisal bin Furhan Al Saud meets with General Syed Asim Munir

RAWALPINDI: Prince Faisal bin Furhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, accompanied by a delegation, met with General Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS) on Tuesday.

According to the statement issued by the ISPR, discussions centered on mutual interests and policies to further bolster bilateral cooperation across various sectors. The esteemed visitor underscored the enduring and strategic nature of the relationship between the two nations, emphasizing on exploring multiple avenues for continued reinforcement of bilateral ties.

In response, COAS conveyed appreciation for the delegation's visit, affirming traditional bond of fraternity between Pakistan and the Kingdom



of Saudi Arabia. He underscored the reverence and affection that the people of Pakistan hold for their Saudi brethren. COAS reiterated full support for the delegation and conveyed his best wishes for mutually beneficial outcomes from the interaction for both states. PR

Public-private partnerships vital for mineral sector development, Mushahid Hussain

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Mushahid Hussain Syed in his speech highlighted the issue of licensing and the legal difficulties faced by mining companies in Pakistan. He also stressed that accurate empirical data about mineral wealth in Pakistan should be there to help the mining sector. He suggested that mineral experts and institutions be given the license to mine and extract mineral resources.

Karachi Council on Foreign Relations (KCFR) in collaboration with the Investment Department of Sindh organized a seminar on "Exploring Pakistan's Mineral Wealth: Navigating Global Dynamics to Monetize Pakistan's Untapped Mineral Wealth". The seminar first session was "Unlocking Potential: Assessing Pakistan's Mineral Reserves," and the topic of the second session was "Building Strategic Partnerships: Identifying Opportunities for Collaboration with

International Partners." The event was generously sponsored by Pathfinder Group of Companies.

Commodore Sadeed A. Malik, a Member Board of Governors of KCFR, in his opening remarks, thanked the Chief Guest, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, delegates from different Embassies and other participants for attending the seminar, on behalf of Chairperson KCFR Ms. Nadira Panjwani. He also thanked Pathfinder Group and Sindh Investment Department for making this event possible. The first session was moderated by Ms. Saira Ijaz, Managing Editor at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (SSI). Dr. Sajjad Ahmed, Director General of the Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP) was the keynote speaker of the first session. Other panelists were; Mr. Shamsuddin A. Shaikh, Chairman of Pakistan Minerals Development Corporation (PMDC), Dr. Syed Akhtar Hussain Shah, Former Member and Joint Secretary Implementation Planning Commission of



Pakistan and Dr. Abbas Ali Naseem, Associate Professor Department of Earth Sciences (QAU).

Dr. Sajjad Ahmed talked about the mineral resource wealth in different regions of Pakistan highlighting the importance of minerals like copper, lithium, polonium, and other rare earth minerals. He also highlighted the efforts of GSP

regarding Pakistan's mineral wealth. ; Mr. Shamsuddin A. Shaikh talked about the mining sector and highlighted the efforts of PMDC regarding mining. He also talked about the lack of investments in the mineral and mining sector of Pakistan despite the country having an abundance of minerals. He stressed the need for investments in the mining and mineral sector.

Dr. Syed Akhtar Hussain Shah discussed the current deficiencies in the suboptimal exploitation of mineral resources across various sectors, including the government and the private sector. He also addressed strategies aimed at enhancing productivity and the overall contribution of the mineral sector. Additionally, he emphasized the importance of ensuring that mineral sector policies and practices align with international climate change policies.

The second session was moderated by Dr. Abbas Ali Naseem. Mr. Mushahid Hussain Syed was the keynote speaker of the second session in addition to being the Chief Guest of the seminar. Other panelists were: Dr. Brig Raashid Wali Janjua Director of Research at the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI), Dr. Afsah Qazi, Assistant Professor Department of Strategic Studies, Air University, Islamabad and Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz.

The chief guest, Mushahid Hussain Syed said, "Pakistan's potential is blocked by the absence of policy, stressing that the government should make feasible and implementable policies regarding the mining and mineral sector." Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed then related the security situation in Pakistan to the development of the mineral sector and the minimal foreign investment regarding the extraction of these minerals. He said that by being a safe and secure state, Pakistan can attract foreign investment in the mining and mineral sector and the government has to work on it and make policies accordingly. He appreciated Pathfinder Group and Ikram Sehgal for their initiative to support such events, which is a need of the time. Private and public partnerships can play a significant role in development. He also shed light on the role of the Investment Department of Sindh and their contributions.

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A new approach to governance

GOBIND MENGHWAR

Shortly after securing the last tranche of around \$1.1 billion as part of the 24th staff-level agreement with the IMF last month, the country is eyeing another such engagement (bringing the total of such bailouts to 25) before the end of the current fiscal year. As usual, any such deal, aiming to resuscitate the ailing economy, brings to the fore the urge and resolve to halt further engagements with the Fund from all quarters concerned. But the question is: are we really prepared to lay the foundation of sustainable structural reforms to avoid that inevitability? What options are we left with that may take the economy out of this quagmire and lead to the path of self-reliance?

Broadly speaking, with a meagre amount of international trade, a negligible industrial network and a geographic location of declining yield on land due to climate change triggered catastrophes, Pakistan presents a clear picture of Malthusian stagnation – the 18th-century concept in which population growth tends to outstrip the growth of resources, leading to stagnant living standards and economic conditions for the majority of the population.

Given such circumstances, technological change or innovation is the only lever of public-sector reforms that can help bring a fiscally stressed country like Pakistan to the point where economic growth begins. Technology is a non-rival and binding factor of production. More than one organization can benefit from it at the same time, improving its efficiency and effectiveness. Besides, technology is endogenous in its characteristics – instead of bringing it from outside, it can be launched from within through knowledge and adoption of new ideas and processes. To put it more simply, instead of making more pancakes, train the bakers to think about the processes and learn how to make the same number of pancakes more efficiently. But is our 'pampered in primacy of process and procedure' and traditionally 'inhospitable to any kind of innovation' public sector ready to address such new and varied challenges essential for laying the foundation of a sustained growth and better governance model?

As usual, any such deal, aiming to resuscitate ailing economy, brings to fore urge and resolve to halt further engagements with Fund from all quarters concerned

Some positive signals are there, at least. Newly appointed Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's reiteration of the PM's vision of the automation and digitization of the country's tax apparatus during his maiden visit to the FBR headquarters and the formation of a steering committee for reforms in the FBR by PM Shehbaz Sharif to develop a concrete technology-based strategy to make our taxation system efficient are two key developments which indicate that our policy priorities are being rightly aligned.

However, the FBR is not the only organization which requires automation and digitization, as it cannot act as an island but rather as part of an ecosystem where all other public-sector organizations directly interact with the natural system of businesses.

Pakistan's entire public sector requires an overhaul, as it is – like many former colonial societies – anchored on a model which sustains existing, outdated solutions, not challenge them. Quite unsurprisingly, our bureaucratic apparatus still adheres to the traditional model of administration which tends to breed time servers rather than innovators.

In a world dominated by technology, citizens are more informed and have come to expect more from their governments. Use of technology has transformed the way citizens interact with their governments and led to more sophisticated demands. These increased expectations, combined with new challenges due to complex issues and fiscal pressures, require more innovative approaches in the public sector. It is the public sector's time to embrace new ways of service delivery. Innovation in the public sector refers to both the content of services intended for supply to people and the instruments used to deliver them. We need to improve our service delivery instruments so that they can produce good results at a lower cost. By adopting new ways of doing things, our public sector can reduce the wastage of already depleting resources. A penny saved in one area can be used for other organizational goals. More automation will make public-sector organizations more customer-oriented, which will ultimately bring more effectiveness, transparency and accountability.

In economics, knowledge is a production function depending, internally, on the inputs each organization devotes to accumulate it and on the total public stock of knowledge available externally. This digital knowledge and technology-driven automation of the FBR is the right step in the right direction and can be used as a launching pad for the revamping of the entire public sector. This is because the resource cost of creating that technological knowledge will be lower if we apply it to more organizations. The more such organizations, the greater will be the economy's output. While this 24th IMF package may have rejuvenated our ailing economy, the renowned British economist Diane Coyle once said: "the accumulation of productive capital assets is only a proximate cause of prosperity; the real cause is progressive institutions."

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Mosharraf Zaidi

The Daanish debate

we naturally will not be open to liking anything he does.

My challenge is the opposite. Being partial to the kind of obsessive work ethic and appetite for delivery that the current PM has demonstrated, I need to establish an objective view of public policy efforts like the Daanish schools. Additionally, as a trusted voice and often an adviser to governments and international organizations, my perspective on Daanish schools needs to be consistent with the wider philosophy I espouse in education, and my positions on an array of other, relevant and related public policy issues.

What should the primary metric for assessing Daanish schools be? First, let's get rid of the branding – for the sake of objectivity. 'These' schools are supposed to be premium quality government schools for capable students from the most underprivileged circumstances. The schools are publicly funded and are capital-intensive, but this is a modality of how these schools are delivered. It is not germane to the purpose of establishing and running them.

The primary purpose of these schools is not how cheaply or efficiently they can be run. The primary purpose of these schools is to 'level up' children who would otherwise have no route to a better life. The means of achieving this purpose is through the provision of a world-class learning experience for these poor kids – absent the burden of economic, social, opportunity, or other kinds of costs. These schools are the delivery instrument for this 'world-class learning experience'.

The first-order question about these schools then should be: 'Are these schools providing a world-class learning experience?' Instead of this line of questioning, critics of these schools jump ahead to the more mundane, but more readily 'viral' question of costs and financing. The issue of the costs of building these schools, and running these schools is important if your job is to track public expenditure. It is also important if you have a generic scepticism of all government spending. It is also important if you believe that all politicians and bureaucrats are corrupt and all money in the public sector is vulnerable to being stolen. The issue of the costs of building these schools and running these schools, however, is not more important than the quality of learn-

ing experience being provided at, or the end product graduating from these schools.

This doesn't mean that the quantum of expenditure on these schools does not merit serious scrutiny or reflection. But it does mean that the key metric for assessing whether this is a good idea and whether it is working needs to be the purpose for which the idea was conceived and executed.

Here, the Punjab Daanish Schools and Centers of Excellence Authority Act of 2010 becomes instructive. This is the law through which the Daanish schools were codified as part of the law. This law offers a keen insight into the structural inclinations and habits of the Pakistani public sector. And it merits deep reflection as the current prime minister tries to fulfil his well-founded and important passion for high-quality education.

If you read through the law, two things will strike you powerfully. One is obvious (and inspiring and noble). The other is invisible, requires objective scrutiny and is worrying.

First, the good news. The law clearly articulates who the Daanish schools are for. In its own words, they are for "the destitute, most deprived and marginalized student, if the total combined gross income of the members of the household of the student does not exceed six thousand rupees per month." Over the years, this baseline income level has increased to Rs15,000 – but the principle this stipulation espouses is absolutely one that should excite and engage every reasonable Pakistani.

Now the bad news. The word 'excellence' appears in the law fourteen times but is capitalized in each instance. It refers to the "Centres of Excellence" that the law is authorizing. Not once in the entire law is the notion of excellence unpacked or defined. We can't know what quality education Daanish schools are providing if the law itself doesn't commit to that quality. Speaking of which, the word 'quality' appears three times in the law. Again, there too, the word is not defined. We don't know what the law intended when it articulated its commitment to quality.

The Daanish schools law is an ample case study of how the framing of really high quality (no pun intended) public policy instincts results in

amorphous public policy results. Daanish schools have been in operation for over a decade. The core instinct of PM Shehbaz Sharif in initiating these schools was noble, righteous, and urgent – then as it remains now. The core instinct of critics of these schools in questioning the per unit cost of delivering high-quality education, synonymous with 'excellence', is misguided and off the mark.

The reason is that neither the law that established Daanish schools itself nor the critics of the effort are focusing on the core purpose of the schools – a life-altering, path-breaking and globally competitive, premium quality education.

On April 9, at the inauguration of the Daanish school in Islamabad, PM Shehbaz Sharif renewed his longstanding commitment to education by responding to the calls for a robust and concerted effort to address the massive learning crisis in the country – one that is reflected in part in the large numbers of out of school children. Federal Minister for Education Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui also spoke at the event of the urgency of taking action on this front. His delivery was passionate and reflective of a degree of sincerity. All of this is welcome. It is exciting news for those invested in education.

The real question in all this – be it Daanish schools, or of convening the Council of Common Interests to establish a national agenda for education, or of finding more efficient ways to deliver education, or of school meals programmes, or the vitality of government school buildings as centres of convening communities around the country – is what the purpose of all of it is.

If Pakistani children do not learn they will not prosper. An education system (public and private) cannot only serve the needs of teachers, consultants, bureaucrats, or private school owners. An education system – and all efforts to improve it – must be for the children that the system claims to be serving. The metric for this service is learning. It is excellence. It is quality. If we aren't talking about learning, the quality of teaching, and what constitutes excellence, we are repeating mistakes we have already made.

The writer is an analyst and commentator.

Disclaimer: Views expressed by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect The Asian Telegraph's point-of-view

Today in History

History of Pakistan



Exhausted, outflanked and overwhelmed, they could no longer continue the fight against the intense guerrilla insurgency, and finally surrendered to the Allied Forces of Bangladesh and India in Dhaka on 16 December 1971.[112]

Nearly 90,000 Pakistani soldiers were taken prisoners of war and the result was the emergence of the new nation of Bangladesh,[115] thus ending 24 years of turbulent union between the two wings[112] although the Pakistani Army had

fought gallantly according to Indian Army Chief Sam Manekshaw.[116] Independent researchers estimate that between 300,000 and 500,000 civilians died during this period while the Bangladesh government puts the

number of dead at three million.[117]//Amazing Facts (Excited Facts) a figure that is now nearly universally regarded as excessively inflated.

To be continued....

Showbiz

Tech

Olivia Culpo rejects claims of undergoing any 'plastic surgery'

Olivia Culpo confessed that she opted for a few non-surgical facial treatments

Olivia Culpo opened up about the claims of undergoing cosmetic procedures in her new Get Ready With Me video. On April 14, the model shared a video on TikTok in which she can be seen doing her makeup before heading to Coachella.

While sharing tips for achieving a flawless makeup look, the 2012 Miss Universe addressed the rumours of getting facial surgery.

She said, "Everybody's always interested in talking about, 'What fillers did you — What botox did you do?'"

All these things." Olivia added, "Well, I, for the record, have never had plastic surgery. I don't judge anybody that has."

The model shared that people think that she has gotten buccal fat removal "because my face is more sunken in now than it was 10, 12 years ago."

Olivia confessed to getting a few non-surgical facial treatments.

Moreover, she revealed that she used to get Botox in her jaw to make it slim. However, now she is embracing her "natural structure."



Meta's move against AI deepfakes: Oversight Board steps up to protect users

Meta's Oversight Board is going to review two cases about how Facebook and Instagram dealt with the content containing artificial intelligence. (AI) generated nude images of two famous women, as per an announcement by the board Tuesday.

The board is requesting public comments about concerns around AI deepfake pornography as part of its review of the cases, according to The Hill.

One case is based on the concerns relating to an AI-generated nude image made to look like an American public figure.

The image was removed automatically by Facebook after being identified by a previous poster as violating Meta's bullying and harassment policies. Parallel to this, the other case is around an AI-generated nude image made to resemble a public figure from India, which Instagram did not initially remove after it was reported. After the board selected the case and Meta determined the content was left up "in error," the image was later removed, according to the board.



"In order to prevent further harm or risk of gender-based harassment, the board is not naming the involved individuals," a spokesperson for the Oversight Board said.

The board, which is funded by a grant provided by the company and is run independently from Meta, can issue a binding decision about the content. However, policy recommendations are non-binding and Meta has final say about what it chooses to implement. Comments that address strategies for how Meta can address deepfake porn are being sought by the board. They are also focusing on the challenges of relying on automated systems that can close appeals in 48 hours if no review has taken place.

Vaping is not good for your heart, reveals study

America was attacked by an outbreak in the summer of 2019. US health authorities claimed that 68 people died and over 2,500 people were hospitalised.

The common and the most likely reason was a substance that causes lung tissue destruction, found in some vapes, which caused people to cough and gasp for air, according to Science Alert.

The outburst about lung injuries prompted academics to look into the negative effects of vaping on health.

Five years later, there is growing evidence from extensive, long-term research showing e-cigarette use is associated with an increased risk of heart attacks, strokes, and respiratory illnesses.

These findings are now reinforced by a new study that was presented at the American College of Cardiology's annual scientific meeting last week.

Researchers discovered that e-cigarette users who have ever used them have a 19% higher risk of developing heart failure than non-users who

are 18 years of age or older.

Heart failure, as opposed to a sudden attack, is the gradual weakening or hardening of the heart to the point where it becomes difficult for it to pump blood throughout the body.

"More and more studies are linking e-cigarettes to harmful effects and finding that it might not be as safe as previously thought," Yakubu Bene-Alhasan, a physician and researcher at MedStar Health in Baltimore, said in a statement after presenting the results. "The difference we saw was substantial."



Health

Finance Minister appreciates IMF, WB support extended to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday appreciated the support of International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank extended to Pakistan for economic development. Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, attended the G-24, Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors' Meeting, said a press release issued here. The Minister talked about reforms in the areas of taxation, energy, privatization and digitalization, and underlined the need to bring in more private sector investment and leverage the "Adaptation Fund" to help the country deal with adverse impacts of the climate change.

Pakistan expresses sympathies over damages caused by heavy rains in Afghanistan



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Tuesday offered its heartfelt condolences for the loss of precious lives and livelihoods in Afghanistan, extending its sympathies to the affected families.

"The government and people of Pakistan express deepest sympathies and condolences at the loss of precious lives and livelihoods and damage to properties caused by heavy rains and flash flooding in several provinces of Afghanistan," a statement issued by the foreign office spokesperson said.

"We pray that the Almighty may grant patience and fortitude to the bereaved families to bear the irreparable loss and wish a swift recovery to the injured," it added.

CJP visits LHC with senior judges

LAHORE: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, along with other senior Supreme Court judges, visited the Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday.

The CJP, accompanied by Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Yahya Afridi, Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail, and Justice Athar Minallah, arrived at the LHC during the tea break.

LHC Chief Justice Malik Shahzad Ahmed Khan welcomed the distinguished guests upon their arrival. Justice Shujaat Ali Khan, Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan, Justice Aliya Neelam, Justice Abid Aziz Sheikh, and other judges working at the LHC Principal seat were also present on the occasion. APP

Azerbaijani ambassador calls on Defence Minister



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Khazar Farhadov called on Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Tuesday. Welcoming the ambassador, the minister said Pakistan viewed Azerbaijan as an important country due to its strategic location, immense resources, progressive outlook and fast grow-

ing economy. The minister highlighted the importance of bilateral brotherly relations between two countries which were based on historical, cultural and religious commonalities, a Defence Ministry news release said.

Khawaja Asif expressed the desire to enhance defence relations, which had immense potential to grow to the benefit of both countries. He stressed the need for continued interaction between higher military and defence level leadership of the two countries.

During the meeting, the prospects of holding the 8th Meeting of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Intergovernmental Joint Commission in Islamabad was also discussed.

Both sides appreciated the launching of Baku-Karachi-Baku flight after Lahore and Islamabad cities, by the Azerbaijan Airlines Closed Joint Stock Company (AZAL) on April 18. APP

Empowering women economically...

Continued from Page 1

I am speaking here on behalf of 160 million women of Pakistan. We do need to look for the women who are working as support staff at our houses, have we thought of their children? Have we established day cares for them and the list goes on. **Chief guest of the event Representative UNWOMEN, Mr. Lasana Wonneh said:** "Women's economic empowerment is not just a women's issue; it's a human rights issue and a development imperative. By supporting women entrepreneurs, we can create a more inclusive and sustainable economy. Events like these trade fairs play a vital role in connecting women

with resources, networks, and opportunities to thrive. I commend NCSW and ICCI for their efforts and encourage everyone to continue supporting women's economic empowerment."

The Eid Milan and Trade Fair certificate distribution provided a platform for women entrepreneurs to network to expand their businesses. It also promoted economic growth and sustainability by supporting local businesses and fostering collaboration between different sectors. NCSW and ICCI express their gratitude to all participants, sponsors, and attendees who made this event a great success. We look forward to organizing more such events in the future to promote gender equality, women's empowerment, and economic development in Pakistan.

Public-private partnerships vital...

Continued from Page 1

Ambassador Nadeem Riaz talked about diplomacy in the mining sector and exploiting Pakistan's mineral resources. He highlighted the regional challenges, international environmental standards, technological advancements and legal challenges faced by the mineral sector of Pakistan. He also talked about the importance of exploring mineral wealth and its relation to mineral diplomacy with other regional and international countries. He suggested conflict prevention and resolution, international agreements regarding minerals and mining, infrastructure and regulatory development and environment protection as the way forward for Pakistan's

mineral sector growth. Dr. Brig Raashid Wali Janjua highlighted the internal and external security challenges facing Pakistan, alongside discussing the prospects and potential of the mineral sector, as well as the way forward. He emphasized the imperative of ensuring internal stability as a prerequisite for attracting foreign investment in the mineral sector.

Dr. Afzah Qazi emphasized the crucial role of strategic partnerships for Pakistan's untapped mineral potential, which is influenced by political elite preferences. She also highlighted the importance of shifting from exporting raw resources to value-added goods for economic prosperity. Moreover, she stressed that collaboration with international partners must prioritize capacity building and value addition to succeed in the global mineral market.



Washington DC: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with Ms. Hela Cheikhrouhou, Regional Vice President for MCT, International Finance Corporation (IFC).

Pakistan, KSA resolve to further build strong partnership, promote economic cooperation

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on Tuesday reiterated their resolve to build a strong partnership and further promote economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries. This was discussed during a meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Welcoming the delegation, the president said that Pakistan and KSA enjoyed a long-standing and decades-old relationship and Pakistan wanted to transform the existing ties into a long-term strategic and economic partnership. The two sides discussed the regional dynamics and recent developments in the Middle East and called for an immediate and unconditional ceasefire and end to the Israeli atrocities in Gaza. Both sides also exchanged views on issues of bilateral importance and the challenges being faced by the Muslim Ummah. The Saudi foreign minister was accompanied by a high-powered delegation, comprising the Minister of Water and Agriculture, the Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, the Assistant Minister of Investment, the Head of the Saudi Special Committee and senior officials from the Ministry of Energy and Saudi Public Investment Fund.

Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP)



Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Minister for Foreign Affairs Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Privatization and Board of Investment Abdul Aleem Khan, Minister of Petroleum and Water Resources Musadik Masood Malik, Minister of Industries and Production Rana Tanveer Hussain, Foreign Secretary Syrus Sajjad Qazi and senior government officials also attended the meeting.

President Zardari also highlighted that the Government and the people of Pakistan had the highest regard for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and would continue to stand with KSA.

He said that the prosperity of the Islamic world was linked to the progress of KSA. The president lauded the courageous and visionary leadership of Crown Prince and

Prime Minister of KSA Muhammad Bin Salman and the remarkable progress being made under the Vision 2030.

He also thanked the leadership of KSA for its support to Pakistan in difficult times. The Saudi Foreign Minister said that KSA considered its relations with Pakistan very critical and was committed to building a strong partnership with Pakistan. He highlighted that both countries enjoyed strong bonds and had helped each other for decades. He appreciated the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in the development of KSA. He also conveyed the greetings of Saudi leadership and underlined the importance of Pakistan for the Kingdom.

President Zardari also conveyed best wishes to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

NDMA, IRC sign LoU for cooperation on disaster resilience, preparedness



ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) on Tuesday signed a Letter of Understanding (LoU) to foster disaster resilience in Pakistan. NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik witnessed the signing of LoU. Shabnam Baloch, Country Director of IRC-Pakistan and Raza Iqbal signed the LoU on behalf of their respective organisations. "This initiative marks a significant collaboration between the NDMA, Pakistan's leading disaster management authority and IRC - a global humanitarian organization," as NDMA news release said.

The NDMA chairman, in his remarks, said that the Authority's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC) had provided a comprehensive outlook on potential hazards and emergencies expected in next six months.

"This crucial information serves as a foundation for the country's disaster management organizations to strategize and outline their response plans effectively, ensuring readiness and swift action in the face of adversity," he added.

He called for incorporation of anticipatory actions for resilient interventions in humanitarian organisations' annual plans. Ms Shabnam Baloch of the IRC-Pakistan on the occasion expressed her organization's commitment to the newly formed partnership, stressing the critical significance of collaborative initiatives, tackling the multifaceted challenges presented by climate change and natural disasters specifically in the context of Pakistan.

Both the NDMA chairman and the IRC Pakistan Country Director expressed their resolve to advancing the resilience agenda through tri-party partnerships involving relevant state institutions, civil society, and community voices into decision-making processes.

The scope of the IRC-NDMA collaboration encompasses joint efforts in strengthening community-based disaster risk management/reduction models, creating toolkit of best practices and the outlook for anticipatory actions. This includes consultations on innovative programmes and stakeholder engagement for strengthening resilience in communities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and other local institutions. According to the LoU, the partnership involves extending technical assistance for the development of a multi-sectoral resilience building initiatives, through capacity-building sessions for stakeholders and technical support for the robust functioning of National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC). PR

Amb Munir Akram discusses 'important matters' with UN peacekeeping chief

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan's Ambassador to the United Nations, Munir Akram, met with the UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Jean-Pierre Lacroix, and discussed a range of peacekeeping matters.

A press release of the Pakistan Mission said that they discussed "important matters related to Pakistan's current & future peacekeeping endeavours.

USG Lacroix lauded Pakistan's role as a leading troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping, a world body's flagship activity.

Since the 1960s, Pakistan has contributed over 200,000 troops to 43 missions UN peacekeeping missions around the world. In its service to the cause of peace, Pakistan lost 171 of its bravest who made the ultimate sacrifice. APP

Pakistani-American philanthropist partners with USAID for \$9 m boost to NUST

ISLAMABAD: United States International Aid Agency (USAID) teamed up with Tanveer Ahmed, a prosperous American-Pakistani entrepreneur from Houston, who donated \$9 million to Islamabad's National University of Science & Technology (NUST).

Tanveer Ahmed stated, "This initiative involves a three-way collaboration between my company Pakfoods, NUST, and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The agreement was signed on September 9, 2023, in Islamabad, coinciding with the USAID-supported Invest in Pakistan Conference, which was organized in collaboration with the American Pakistani diaspora." Tanveer Ahmed and USAID previously partnered during the 2022 floods in Pakistan. The donation, facilitated by Pakfoods, one of

the many businesses owned by Tanveer Ahmed in the US, will be overseen by USAID as a project watchdog.

The philanthropist commended the work of USAID in Pakistan. "The work of USAID in Pakistan's development is highly appreciated. The agency has done a great deal of work in areas of health, education, employment, and promotion of cultural and trade ties between the US and Pakistan. USAID's involvement as a partner in the NUST Technology Tower initiative will be of immense help." Houston based Tanveer Ahmed announced last year in 2023 he will be donating \$9 million to Islamabad's National University of Science & Technology (NUST) to help students from poor backgrounds to gain access to quality education through scholarships. APP

Pakistan, KSA call for immediate ceasefire in Gaza, regret int'l community's failure

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) on Tuesday, while regretting the failure of the international community to ensure ceasefire in Gaza, demanded its immediate enforcement, opening of a humanitarian corridor and averting of famine that was leading to a catastrophe. Addressing a joint presser along with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan was deeply concerned over the catastrophic situation in Gaza. Both the brotherly countries shared the same feelings on Gaza, he said, stressing upon the international community to help end the genocide. More than 33,000 Palestinians had been killed, the world conscience must wake up and enforce an immediate and unconditional ceasefire to ensure unimpeded humanitarian aid, he added.

More Palestinians should not be killed due to starvation, he said, demanding for a global probe into the crimes committed against humanity in Gaza.



Foreign Minister Dar said that different investigations had been carried out across the world over the war crimes against humanity so why it could not take place in Gaza! He reiterated that Pakistan believed that the perpetual solution to the issue was in the establishment of an independent state of Palestine with its pre-1967 borders and Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. He shared views of the Saudi Foreign Minister that the world woke up after the killing of six aid workers from the West but not on the deaths of thousands of Palestinians. The foreign minister said that the world must act fast and quick.

Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud said that in Gaza, so far more than 33,000 people had been killed. "They are now facing a famine like situation and starving to death as the international humanitarian aid is not getting in. It is a complete failure of the international community," he added. Terming the situation unacceptable, he said there was no justification to it. In reality, he said, the two United Nations resolutions regarding immediate ceasefire in Gaza had not seen implementation. Efforts were seen after six Western aid workers were killed but not when 33,000 Palestinians died which

showed the double standards, he regretted.

Prince Faisal called for an immediate end to the killings and sufferings of the people of Gaza.

He said that they were already living in an unstable region leading to a catastrophe in Gaza and 'there is no need for further confrontation', adding that 'de-escalation should be everybody's priority'.

Replying to various queries, both sides reiterated to further build up and convert the strong partnership into a strategic partnership and further promote economic cooperation for the mutual benefit of the two brotherly countries.

Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar expressed his pleasure on the arrival of the high-powered delegation from the KSA, terming it an 'impressive group of dignitaries visiting Pakistan for the first time during his long political career'.

About their deliberations, he said that they had discussed ways and means to transform the cordial cooperation between the two brotherly nations into a strategic partnership and enhancement of investment in Pakistan. APP