



The government was taking steps to increase foreign investment in the petroleum sector by resolving the key issues of the sector

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister
Ishaq Dar

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'Faiz-Niazi nexus' embodied 'worst example' of hostility towards state: Tarar

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, Culture and National Heritage Attaullah Tarar on Sunday said the anti-state decisions made by the "Faiz-Niazi nexus" had been emerged as the "worst example" of the hostility towards the country.

The minister, in a news statement, strongly condemned the "unholy alliance" of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and ex-spy chief Faiz Hameed, PTI's alleged links with anti-Pakistan journalists from across the eastern border and its decision to resettle the Fitna-ul-Khawarij from western border in the country.

He said PTI spokesperson Rauf Hassan's "provocative and terrible" conversation with an Indian journalist, that surfaced earlier in the day, had fully exposed the PTI's anti-state agenda.

The minister branded the PTI as a "foreign-funded party" which has been committed to anti-national agenda, resorting to seek support of its foreign masters to undermine the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the country after harming its foreign policy with the cipher conspiracy.

Tarar said Rauf Hassan's conversation with the Indian journalists, who holds anti-Pakistan sentiments, was a true reflection of the ideology of the PTI which has been harboring conspiracies against the country including the May 9 arson.

He alleged that the PTI social media cell in Islamabad, which was in constant contact with the enemies of the country, was involved in running a smear campaign against the Pakistan Army and the Army Chief.

Their clamor for a "bloody revolution" in the country proved that the PTI had received foreign funding from India for the purpose, he said, adding it was also revealed by the investigation into the prohibited funding case of the PTI.

"Now, the PTI leader's contact with Indian journalist proves that he is running anti-Pakistan campaign at the behest of anti-national forces," he said, regretting that the "foreign funded group" had crossed all limits of anti-nationalism.

"There is no doubt that their main goal is to harm Pakistan's national interests and the army," he stressed.

"These people are pursuing Indian agenda while sitting in Pakistan," he said, while accusing the PTI of resettling the terrorists in the country at the behest of Indians.

Faiz Hameed also became a stooge to the PTI founder and resorted to create instability in the country on his behest, the minister noted.

He said the nation fully knew that it was Faiz Hameed who was the agent of the wife of the PTI Founder Bushra Bibi, a central figure in all these conspiracies.

"Faiz-Niazi-Bushra nexus" had harmed the country to achieve their ulterior motives, he said alleging that the alliance was involved in inciting revolt in the state institution, he said adding, the Faiz-Niazi nexus also tried to create an impression that there was some kind of confusion or division in rank and file of the Pakistan Army. APP



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on the matters related to Power Division, Ministry of Energy.

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

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed the government's resolve to stop electricity theft, reduce line losses, and improve the power distribution system across the county. He informed that recently the government had appointed new board chairmen and members in five power distribution companies (DISCOs) through a transparent process. He hoped that these appointments would further improve the performance of DISCOs.

Presiding over a meeting held here to review the matters of Power ministry, the prime minister directed the Power Minister and Secretary Power Division to coordinate with the provinces concerning halting the electricity theft, performance of DISCOs and other matters of the sector.

"A whole of the government approach

"A whole of the government approach should be adopted to resist power theft across the country," the prime minister said

should be adopted to resist power theft across the country," the prime minister said. He directed the provincial governments to maintain the number of police force and Tehsildars as per the DISCOs' needs. He also ordered the concerned authorities to deal with the corrupt elements in the power dis-

tribution companies with an iron hand and take strict action against them. He directed DISCOs to make the kutchehri system more effective and result-oriented for public complaints.

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

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

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

Govt taking steps to increase investment in petroleum sector, says Ishaq Dar

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Sunday said the government was taking steps to increase foreign investment in the petroleum sector by resolving the key issues of the sector.

The Deputy PM, presiding over the first meeting of a committee, formed to consider the issues faced by the petroleum sector's E&P companies and to resolve issues of the industrial sector, resolved to take every possible step to provide all facilities to the foreign companies that would help attract further investment in the country.

The meeting considered the recommendations to improve the financial system for off-shore exploration.

Deputy PM also directed to prepare a framework to implement the recent amendments made in the Petroleum Policy 2012.

Heads of local and foreign E&P companies, on the occasion, highlighted concerns about the security and stability of the sector due to increased circular debt. Deputy PM directed the relevant authorities to resolve the issue of circular debts in the power sector on priority. Private sector members of the committee also expressed their concerns regarding the downstream gas sector and stressed the need to open up the sector to private companies to improve its sustainability.

After detailed discussions, the forum directed the Petroleum Division to work closely with the industry and other stakeholders.

The forum also directed the Petroleum Division to suggest appropriate amendments to the Ogra Ordinance to introduce a mechanism for the adjustment of gas rates on a monthly or quarterly basis.

On security issues, the Forum directed the Interior Division to work closely with E&P companies and other stakeholders.

The Interior Division was also mandated to develop a dedicated one-window facility system at the federal and provincial levels to ensure security for operations in challenging areas.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Petroleum Musadiq Malik, Minister for Power Awaiz Khan Leghari and other members of the committee. DNA

Ahsan Iqbal says restoration of economy is biggest challenge

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal has said the restoration of the country's economy is the biggest challenge being faced by the nation. Talking to newsmen in Lahore on Sunday, Ahsan Iqbal said the major reason behind the current economic challenges is that in 2018, the country was handed over to an inexperienced individual. He expressed confidence that, In Sha Allah, within two to three years, the country will once again be on the path to progress and development. SABAH

Prosperity in Balochistan linked to sustainable peace: Naqvi



QUETTA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday said that the prosperity and development of Balochistan are linked to sustainable peace.

During his visit to Frontier Corps South Balochistan, he praised the Frontier Corps for their exemplary services in maintaining peace under challenging circumstances.

Inspector General of Frontier Corps South, Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan, accompanied the minister.

During his visit to the Frontier Corps South headquarters, the minister paid his respects at the Martyrs' Memorial, laid a wreath, and

offered prayers for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks. He also paid tribute to the sacrifices of the martyrs of the Frontier Corps.

Earlier, he chaired a meeting wherein he was briefed on operations against the Khawarij and anti-smuggling efforts.

He was told that over the past six months, illegal goods worth 4.7 billion rupees have been seized. Frontier Corps South is on the front line in thwarting the malicious intentions of the Khawarij.

The minister emphasized that the officers and soldiers of Frontier Corps South are playing a pivotal role in maintaining peace in Balochistan. He expressed pride in their professional skills and bravery, and assured that their needs would be met within available resources.

He reiterated that the prosperity and development of Balochistan are tied to sustainable peace, and stressed the need for comprehensive measures to empower the youth of Balochistan.

Furthermore, he emphasized that all stakeholders must come together for the sustainable development of Balochistan. INP

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

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

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

MOFA starts apostille attestation service through courier companies for Gujrat, Quetta. As part of this initiative, designated courier companies are collecting documents from applicants, which will then be attested by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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

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

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Meets British HC H.E. Jane Marriott in Murree Along With PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif

LAHORE: "Punjab has entered an era of digitalization, will soon lead it," said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her meeting with British High Commissioner H.E. Ms Jane Marriott in Murree along with Pakistan Muslim League (N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in order to discuss mutual cooperation in the fields of education, health, climate change and others. Matters related to increasing opportunities for higher education in top UK universities for the students of Punjab were also discussed in the meeting. Political Counsellor of British High Commissioner Islamabad H.E. Mr Zoe Ware was also present in the meeting.

Madam Chief Minister briefed the visiting British High Commissioner about ongoing IT projects in Punjab. She said, "The project of Nawaz Sharif IT City Twin Towers in Lahore is fast-tracked to completion." She invited British companies to invest in Nawaz Sharif IT city,



and said, "British institutions will be welcomed to establish IT universities."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif briefed H.E. Ms Jane Marriott about sustainable measures taken by the Punjab government to eliminate environmental pollution. Both leaders agreed to benefit from mutual expertise in tackling challenges of climate change.

Madam Chief Minister apprised Ms Jane Marriott about KPI system for the monitoring of police and administration in Punjab to improve governance quality. She also updated H.E. Jane Marriott about the solar panel project in Punjab. PR

Internet neither blocked nor slowed by govt, claims IT minister

VOM Report

ISLAMABAD: State Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja Sunday denied the involvement of the government as the reason behind the recent internet slowdown across the country.

Instead, the minister blamed the use of virtual private network (VPN) by internet users as the reason "their phones" slowed down.

"I can swear that the government of Pakistan did not block the internet or slow it down," said Khawaja while addressing a press conference in Islamabad today, acknowledging the public's outrage over the intermittent internet issues.

The minister said that the government

talked to experts and tried to figure out the situation day and night. She added that some applications were not downloading so people used VPN. "Turning VPN on slows down the phone."

The minister's statement comes after millions across the country continue to face trouble accessing internet services due to limited connectivity, particularly while using mobile data in some regions.

Several experts, including Wireless and Internet Service Providers Association of Pakistan (WISPAP), blamed the phenomenon on increased security and surveillance owing to the installation of a firewall in the country to control unwanted content from reaching a wider audience.

Earlier this week, Khawaja had



defended its decision to enforce an internet firewall terming it a cybersecurity measure "that every country in the world takes".

"Look at the cybersecurity attacks being carried out on the country and the world as well. With the evolution of cybersecurity threats, states need to

have a better capability to ensure that the threats are [well] responded to," she said on Thursday.

The minister maintained she is in contact with IT authorities regarding internet issues. "There will be a meeting on the issue of Internet next week as well." Revealing government efforts to tackle the issue, Khawaja said that four more internet cables are being laid in Pakistan to increase internet connectivity.

Before addressing the internet slow down issue during the presser, the minister informed journalists that the government is set to introduce 5G spectrum in the country in 2025.

"5G will provide the fastest internet," she said.

She added that Islamabad has laid foundation stones for IT Parks in Islamabad

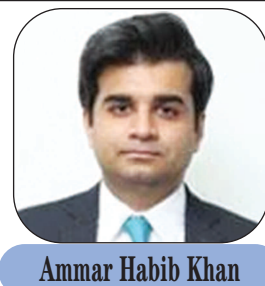
and Karachi, which will create more than 10,000 jobs and millions of dollars will be earned.

"IT parks are being built with the help of South Korea," said Khawaja. The IT minister revealed that at least 250 e-employment centers will be created in collaboration with provinces across the country.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Khawaja added, has allocated more than Rs60 billion for IT in the budget despite difficult conditions, while praising the exports worth Rs3 billion in the sector.

"IT sector is among the priorities of Prime Minister and Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC)," she said, adding that a digitisation commission is being established and will be headed by the premier himself.

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Ammar Habib Khan

Electrifying the future

age males. Expenses on transportation and household energy use remain a major component of any household budget. Almost 40 per cent, or roughly \$5 billion, of petrol that is imported in the country is utilized by motorbikes. There is a case to accelerate the conversion of petrol-fueled motorbikes to electric bikes through a transition plan. Conversion kits that convert petrol fueled motorbikes to electric motorbikes can be easily installed, and the savings that materialize through the conversion can pay off the costs in less than one year. Similarly, at a sovereign level, there needs to be clear policy direction to eliminate manufacture of petrol fueled motorbikes while moving towards electric bikes, with a clear sunset date in place. It is estimated that even if only one million motorbikes are converted (roughly 3.3 per cent of current stock), utilizing an average of 3.0 kilowatt-hour per charge – this would entail monthly electricity consumption of 234 million kilowatt-hours, or a load requirement of 321MW. Such a maneuver would also save \$165 million in petrol imports every year, while improving energy security in the process. Similar interventions can be done for cars and buses. Rolling out public transportation exclusively powered by electricity can unlock the mobility of the labour force and improve overall household balance sheets in the process. The core ingredients are already in place; what is required is the execution to optimize and push things forward. To encourage market-driven transition to electric vehicles, the private

sector can be incentivized to roll out charging infrastructure, while enabling the charging of electric vehicles through the same at the marginal price of electricity. The surplus power problem can be resolved by inducing incremental consumption of electricity at marginal prices. Consumers will then optimize when and how they want to charge their vehicles – whether late at night or during the day when solar energy is peaking. This would accelerate the transition of mobility pricing from a biweekly fixed pricing regime of petrol to a dynamic electricity price that is changing on an hourly basis. There will be more competition for available electrons, and prices will reduce as the market clears out. This will effectively lay the foundations of a competitive market of electricity, which is currently bogged down by a horribly inefficient single-buyer model. Just like the price of solar panels has reduced by many multiples over the last ten years, the price of batteries is following the same trajectory. The learning curve of any such technology suggests that as demand for a product doubles, its price reduces by a certain percentage, as more technology and efficiency comes into play. Following the learning curve of batteries, they would be at a parity with the grid before the end of this decade. This will accelerate a mass exodus from the grid to distributed solutions, and micro-grids. It is time to embrace the future and work towards developing infrastructure and policy frameworks that can cater to the future, rather than mimicking something that worked well in the last century. The distribution

companies ought to be re-positioned to cater to community grids and micro-grids, wherein the potential of renewables can be harvested optimally through a mix of both distributed generation, and storage capacity that would be entering the system sooner. In the context of power, all of our earlier problems were due to a shortage of it. This time around, the problem is due to a surplus. It is easier to solve this problem by relying on basic economic principles, rather than creating incessant noise that never solves any problem. Finding a bogeyman to blame is easy, while solving the problem is actually hard. The solution to surplus power capacity is by inducing incremental demand in the system through marginal pricing, whether that is for electric vehicles, or for industrial demand. Sending out the right price signals to the market will bring in additional demand, so much that even surplus capacity right now may not be seen enough for the future. Pakistan is in the very early stages of development and we need more power, not less. All we need is a focus on utilizing it in a manner that maximizes productivity and output, while reducing inefficiency in the process. The country does not have a resource problem, nor a financial problem – we have an efficiency problem which can be addressed through better utilization of resources rather than through targeting a non-existent bogeyman.

The writer is an assistant professor of practice at the School of Business Studies, IBA, Karachi.

Is nuclear the answer to our energy SOS?

DR KHAQAN HASSAN NAJEEB

Energy security serves as the cornerstone of socio-economic development for any nation. Unfortunately, Pakistan has been ensnared in a web of energy challenges for decades, struggling to find a sustainable path forward. The energy sector, dominated by inefficient state-run enterprises, has become a labyrinth of mismanagement, where the state's overwhelming influence in generation, transmission, and distribution has stifled innovation and market dynamics. The country has struggled to establish a competitive energy market, resulting in suboptimal decisions that have exacerbated the crisis. Weak planning and short-term expediencies have led to policy frameworks that impose an unbearable burden of escalating energy costs on the populace, disproportionately impacting the vulnerable and hindering economic growth. As the nation grapples with these systemic issues, the urgent need for a transformative approach to energy policy is evident – one that prioritizes efficiency, sustainability, and equitable access for all citizens. Pakistan must embark on a bold quest to redefine the institutional framework of its energy sector. A robust regulatory backbone is needed, anchored by a unified and authoritative energy regulator, and a dynamic, professional energy ministry. It is time to employ the concessions model or divest state monopolies to usher in an era of competition within the electricity transmission and distribution networks, promoting innovation and efficiency. The country needs to redesign its electricity tariff structure to incorporate seasonal pricing to address the demand drop of over 10,000MW during winter, and ultimately transition away from a uniform tariff system. Optimizing gas allocation and transitioning imported coal plants to local resources are crucial moves for alleviating the energy crisis. However, it is important to acknowledge that there is no silver bullet for these complex challenges. The journey ahead will be long and fraught with obstacles as we navigate the intricate maze of deregulation, commercial viability, and sound policymaking. Implementing these changes will require tenacity, collaboration, and a shared vision for a sustainable energy future. In a critical moment for the energy sector, where reorganization towards sustainability is imperative, crafting a balanced energy mix becomes not just essential but transformative. Pakistan has a generation capacity of 45,885MW, including 'take or pay' and must-run power plants. In this configuration oil and gas dominate the landscape at 46.85 per cent (21,499MW), followed by hydro at 23.18 per cent (10,635MW) and imported coal at 10.18 per cent (4,672MW). Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) which offer an economical, reliable, and environmentally safe solution for base-load electricity generation have a modest share of 7.9 per cent (3,620MW). Despite their relatively small footprint in the energy mix, NPPs have demonstrated their usefulness by generating over 17.43 per cent of the nation's electricity during 2022-23. In a country where the average nuclear energy costs Rs14.86 – compared to the hefty Rs47.05 for oil and Rs40.22 for RLNG – sticking to these pricey options highlights a puzzling trend in energy policy. Surely, this misalignment burdens consumers with inflated costs and amplifies the ongoing energy crisis. It is important to mention that Pakistan has assured lifetime fuel supply contracts for each NPP. A mix of factors has conspired to keep nuclear power simmering on the back burner of Pakistan's energy strategy, casting a shadow over its real potential. The story of nuclear energy is often muddled with myths of sky-high costs and misunderstood tariffs, serving as handy excuses to stick with pricier, less sustainable energy sources and keep the energy crisis alive. The long gestation period of nuclear plants is a stumbling block for regimes chasing quick political wins instead of long-term solutions. Without the lure of immediate political payoffs, governments shy away from nuclear energy, even though it promises stable, affordable and clean electricity. As a result, this energy source remains largely untapped, leaving Pakistan exposed to volatile fuel prices and an unsustainable energy mix. It's time to dispel these myths and recognize that embracing nuclear power can unlock energy security and economic resilience for the nation. In the 1970s, skyrocketing fossil fuel prices nudged many countries toward nuclear power. Today, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), nuclear energy meets nearly 10 per cent of global energy demand, with many new plants sprouting up worldwide. This shift is fueled by the compelling benefits of nuclear energy, making it an attractive choice in the quest for sustainable power. Firstly, NPPs operate at an impressive capacity factor of around 80 per cent, far surpassing the sub-50 per cent performance of most other energy sources. This efficiency translates into reliable and consistent electricity generation. Additionally, NPPs have an operational lifespan of 60 years, extendable to 80, compared to the 25-30 years typical for other technologies. This combo of longevity and high-capacity factor makes nuclear energy economically viable despite its initial higher capital costs. Once fueled, a nuclear plant can hum along for 14 to 18 months, making it remarkably resilient to supply chain disruptions and infrastructure challenges. Nuclear power emits negligible greenhouse gases as a clean energy source, often producing lower CO2 equivalent emissions than some renewable sources. Moreover, NPPs require significantly less land compared to wind and solar farms, making them a more space-efficient option for energy generation.

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Pakistan's current economic conundrum can be attributed to surplus power generation capacity, which is a good problem, not a bad one. There is more power capacity that will be operational soon, and the cost of renewable capacity additions has seen a significant decline. A myopic view would consider this to be a problem that cannot be solved. The long-term view would consider this a boon that can be capitalized upon to accelerate growth and move millions out of energy and economic poverty. More than 55 per cent of Pakistan's electricity generation is through a mix of hydel and nuclear – one of the better low-carbon energy mixes in the world. Utilization of indigenous coal will continue to provide baseload electricity, and upon potential conversion of imported coal power plants to local coal, the utilization of indigenous sources for energy would exceed 85 per cent – making the country energy secure, while saving precious foreign currency in the process. In such a context, the challenge is to generate additional demand for electricity, which shouldn't be a problem with a population greater than 230 million. There are more than 30 million two-wheelers, and three-wheelers in the country. Effectively, one motorbike for every three working-

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



Each region (and, often, each household) has its own preferred mixture of spices—the term masala is used to describe such a mixture. In addition to the many spices that are also associated with other countries of South Asia, yogurt is a common ingredient. Favourite meats include chicken, mutton, and lamb. Lentils are a standard dish, and various types of wheat bread are the national staple. The most common breads are chapati (unleavened flat bread) and naan (slightly leavened). Pakistanis drink a great deal of hot tea (chai), and lassi (a type of yogurt drink), sherbet, and lemonade are popular. As in most Muslim countries, alcoholic beverages are considered culturally inappropriate, but there are several domestic breweries and distilleries. Father and child leaving a mosque after Eid al-Fitr prayer in Lahore, Pakistan. Muslim Pakistanis celebrate the two major Islamic holidays, Eid al-Fitr (which marks the end of Ramadan) and Eid al-Adha (which marks the

end of the hajj), as well as the Prophet Muhammad's birthday (the religious holidays are based on a lunar calendar and vary from year to year). Mohammed Ali Jinnah's birthday (December 25) is a celebrated holiday. Independence Day is August 14, and Pakistan Day is March 23 (celebrating the Lahore [Pakistan] Resolution of 1940). There are a number of other major and minor holidays. Pakistan's cultural heritage dates to more than 5,000 years ago, to the period of the Indus civilization. However, the emphasis on Islamic ideology has brought about a strong romantic identification with Islamic culture—not only that of the Indian subcontinent but of the broader Islamic world. Literature, notably poetry, is the richest of all Pakistani art forms; music and, especially, modern dance have received less attention. The visual arts too play little part in popular folk culture. Painting and sculpture, however, have made considerable progress as expressions of an increasingly sophisticated

urban culture. Pakistan shares with the other parts of South Asia the great Mughal heritage in art, literature, architecture, and manners. The ruins of Mohenjodaro, the ancient city of Taxila, and the Rohtas Fort of Sh r Shah of S r are but a few of the places in Pakistan that have been named UNESCO World Heritage sites. The Mosque of the Pearls, Badshahi Mosque, and Shalimar Garden, all in Lahore, are among the country's architectural gems. Bhangra, folk dance of the Punjab region of Pakistan and India. Popular traditional folk dances include the bhangra (an explosive dance developed in Punjab) and khatak steps. The khatak is a martial dance of the tribal Pashtuns that involves energetic miming of warriors' exploits. There are a number of traditional dances associated with women; these include a humorous song and dance called the giddha, a whirling dance performed by girls and young women called the kikli,

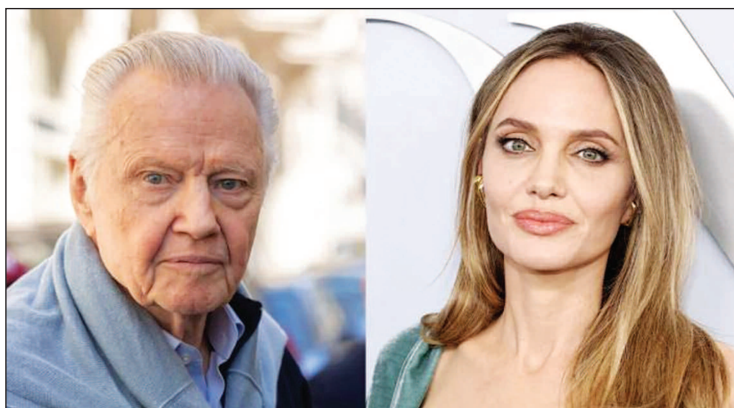
and a form in which dancers snap their fingers and clap their hands while bounding in a circle. The luddi is a Punjabi dance usually performed by males, typically to celebrate a victory—formerly victory in a military conflict but now in a sports contest. Music has long been a part of Pakistani culture, and the country was greatly influenced by the northern Indian tradition of Hindustani music. Traditional and local styles abound. The ghazal, a type of romantic poem, is often put to music. Ghazal singers such as Mehdi Hassan and Ghulam Ali have developed a broad following at home and abroad. Qawwali, a form of devotional singing associated with Sufism, is also widely practiced and has influenced a number of popular styles. One of its greatest adherents, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, became famous in Pakistan and the broader world. Traditional instruments include the sitar, rabab (a fiddlelike stringed instrument), and dhol (bass drum).

To be continued.....

Angelina Jolie not on speaking terms with estranged father Jon Voight: Here's why

Angelina Jolie shares rocky relationship with her father Jon Voight over the years, says source

Angelina Jolie is not on speaking terms with her father, Jon Voight, because he's been talking about her private life. A source told In Touch Weekly, "Despite previous attempts at reconciliation, Jon's loose lips have pushed Angie to cut off communication once more." "He just can't help himself. Angie has made it very clear she doesn't want him talking about her private life — but he keeps opening his big mouth!" shared an insider. This news came after Jon criticized his daughter for her pro-Palestine views during Variety interview last month. "She has been exposed to propaganda. She's been influenced by anti-



semitic people," said The Painter actor. Jon mentioned, "Angie has a connection to the U.N., and she's enjoyed speaking out for refugees. But

these people are not refugees." "Angie, I think she hasn't been available to this information because in Hollywood people don't share this kind of stuff," he continued. Jon stated, "They're way off. They have no idea what's going on. It's a bubble." Calling Angelina "naive dupes," the Mercy actor described all those supporting Palestinian refugees in Gaza as "dupes who never get outside of their bubble." When asked why he didn't just try to make amends with his daughter Angelina, to which he replied, "It's hard for me to talk to her about this." "She doesn't really want to share this kind of stuff, because she's of another mind about it," added the actor.

Showbiz

Tech

Chinese scientists develop brain-mnspired model linking AI and neuroscience

BELJING: A team of Chinese scientists has established a novel brain-inspired network model based on internal complexity to address challenges faced by traditional models, such as high consumption of computing resources, according to the Institute of Automation under the Chinese Academy of Sciences on Friday. One of the key objectives in the current development of the artificial intelligence (AI) is to build more general-purpose AI, enabling models to possess a broader and more general cognitive ability. The current popular approach used by large models is to build larger, deeper, and wider neural networks based on the law of scale, which can be referred to as a method for achieving general intelligence based on "external complexity," said Li Guoqi, a researcher from the Institute of Automation. However, this approach faces challenges such as unsustainable consumption of computing resources and energy, as well as a lack

of interpretability. On the other hand, a human brain has about 100 billion neurons and nearly 1,000 trillion synaptic connections, with each neuron having a rich and diverse internal structure. But the power consumption of a human brain is only around 20 watts. Inspired by the dynamics of brain neurons, the scientists, from the Institute of Automation and other research institutions such as Tsinghua University and Peking University, used an "internal complexity" approach to achieve general intelligence. Their experiments verified the effectiveness and reliability of the internal complexity model in handling complex tasks, providing new methods and theoretical support for integrating the dynamic characteristics of neuroscience into AI, and also offering feasible solutions for optimizing and enhancing the practical performance of AI models. The study was published recently in the journal Nature Computational Science.

Airport authorities directed to take precautions against monkeypox

KARACHI: The Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority (PCAA) on Sunday directed the authorities concerned to implement precautionary measures against monkeypox at airports after a case of the infectious viral disease was reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Since a new strain of the virus appears to spread more easily through close contact, it has raised concerns throughout the world. The first indication of the new variant's global spread was a case that was verified in Sweden on August 15 and linked to an expanding outbreak in Africa. In this regard, the PCAA directed all the airlines arriving from abroad to provide masks to their passengers. "Whereas, it has been made mandatory for staff of the airlines and ground handling service as well to wear masks," it said. The authority instructed airlines to ensure sani-

"It has been made mandatory for staff of airlines, ground handling service too to wear masks," says PCAA

tising hands of the staff and passengers, while their luggage should also be disinfected. The passengers having symptoms of monkeypox should be isolated, it ordered. A health officer in KP's Mardan district had said the location of the confirmed mpox patient, a man the officer said had recently returned from Saudi Arabia, was unknown. He had initially received tests and advice at a hos-

pital in Peshawar, Dr Javed Iqbal had told Reuters, but later returned to his home a few hours away in Mardan and then went to another district. "When we visited his home in Mardan, it was locked from outside and his neighbours told us that the family has left for Dir," said the DHO Mardan. "We approached our fellow colleagues of the health department in Dir district, but they couldn't trace him even in Dir." The national health ministry had said it was carrying out contact tracing of the patient it had identified, who they said was from Mardan. They were also boosting airport surveillance and monitoring with extra health personnel, the ministry had stated. Federal Ministry of Health spokesperson Sajid Shah had said so far they had no confirmation of the new variant, but the sequencing of the sample of the confirmed patient was underway.



Health

Every possible effort underway to extend relief, basic facilities to masses: Senate Chairman

MIAN CHANNU: Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, on Sunday, stated that every possible effort was underway to extend relief and basic facilities to the masses and they should be relieved of inflation. He expressed these views while addressing a convocation as the chief guest at a private college.

"We are giving the incumbent government the right advice, and I am hopeful that we will soon steer the country out of crises and set it on the path to progress. All political parties should play their role in the country's development and prosperity", he maintained. Gilani congratulated the students who completed their degrees, especially their parents. He said that the youth should make the nation proud with their education and skills and it must become an essential part of the country's economic development along with their families. The educated youth needs to bring about significant change in society with their acquired education, he said and added that they should introduce new research and innovations in their respective fields.

"Our youth is second to none in terms of talent and capability", Chairman Senate observed. Later, speaking to the media, he said that Arshad Nadeem was a national hero and he commended him for winning a gold medal for the country in the Paris Olympics. He said that their elders were among those who made Pakistan, and the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has rendered great sacrifices for the restoration of democracy. The 1973 constitution given by the late Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a monumental achievement while differences of opinion were the beauty of democracy, he informed. INP

Youth urged to take lead in shaping Pak destiny

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Youth Programme Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan on Sunday emphasized the crucial role of Pakistan's talented young generation in driving the country towards development, stressing that their energy, creativity, and innovative ideas were essential for propelling the nation forward. Talking to a private news channel, Khan highlighted the significance of empowering and engaging the youth in the development process, as they possess the potential to bring about transformative change and shape a brighter future for Pakistan. The Chairman also highlighted the need for youth to adopt a positive mindset, focusing on hope, resilience, and optimism. He believed that by spreading positivity, the youth could create a ripple effect, inspiring others to work towards a brighter future for Pakistan. Mashhood also emphasized that the PM's pro-women initiatives are a testament to his dedication to creating a more inclusive and equitable society. He noted, "Government is working tirelessly to address the challenges faced by women and to provide them with the resources and support they need to succeed." The Chairman also highlighted the importance of women's participation in the country's development, stating that empowering women is essential for achieving sustainable growth and prosperity. DNA



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar has said that government is taking steps to increase foreign investment in petroleum sector by resolving key issues, being faced by the sector. (Story on page 1)

President stresses to enhance national forest coverage to mitigate impacts of climate change

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari has stressed the need of enhancing national forest coverage by planting more trees to help mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change and global warming.

He said that Pakistan was one of the most vulnerable countries to climate change and global warming, and urged the youth and civil society in helping increase forest cover and planting more trees to mitigate their adverse impacts.

These views were expressed by the President while speaking after planting a "Neem" sapling at Bilawal House, Karachi, as a part of the annual Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign, on Sunday. August 18 also marks the National Tree Plantation day in Pakistan.

Asif Ali Zardari said that "Neem" was an environment friendly tree, offering numerous environmental benefits, such as clean air, cool shade, and acting as a natural mosquito repellent. He recalled that during Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed's first tenure as Prime Minister, he had served as the Minister for Climate and had initiated a tree plantation campaign, wherein Neem trees were planted throughout the country. He said that the need to plant trees had become of paramount importance in view of the rising temperatures in Pakistan.

He urged the nation, particularly the youth and civil society, to actively participate in the Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign and plant as many trees as possible in their neighbor-



hoods and surroundings for a better environment. Asif Ali Zardari stated that Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign was a great opportunity to enhance forest cover, increase greenery in Pakistan, and make our environment healthy and clean. He remarked that enhancing forests and greenery would make our environment healthier and safer for our future generations. He said that Pakistan had undertaken suc-

cessful mangrove restoration, under which mangroves on millions of acres of land had been planted in Sindh. "We are committed to further enhance mangroves cover and plant more trees", he added.

President Zardari said that all segments of society should actively participate in tree plantation campaigns to bring down the temperatures, increase greenery and forest coverage. INP

19 August will always be remembered as Black Day in Parliamentary History of Pakistan: Sardar Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that August 19 would always be remembered as the darkest day in the parliamentary history of the country as ten years ago on the same day conspiracy against democracy was hatched and Parliament House building was sieged and ransacked by the workers of the so-called political parties. He said that the shameful act is highly condemnable in every sense of word. The Speaker said that Parliament, being the supreme institution, deserves respect and dignity. He also underscored that protecting the sanctity of the Parliament is a collective responsibility. He expressed these views in his message on the eve of completion of 10 years of the attack on the Parliament of Pakistan.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that violating the sanctity of Parliament is unimaginable for any democratic individual. He lamented that the heartbreaking memories of the day would remain etched in the minds of the people and keep reminding them of the attack on democratic values and principles. He also noted that the attack on the parliament was not only an attack on democracy but also a blow to the basic pillars of the State.

The Speaker praised the bravery and perseverance of all the parliamentarians, staff and security personnel of the Parliament, for defending the Parliament under such hostile circumstances. The Speaker also appreciated the role of the leadership and MPs of the then government, the largest opposition party in the Parliament i.e. Pakistan Peoples Party and other political parties as they played an active role in thwarting the attack on the Parliament and the heinous conspiracy against democracy.

He said that during the heinous attack on Parliament in August 2014 the passage of the MPs was blocked off & attempts were made to paralyze the democratic process. He also noted that an aborted attempt was made, but the Members of Parliament bravely foiled this nefarious conspiracy. He also said that the 2014 protests and sit-ins compromised the image of Pakistan around the world.

He said that because of sit-ins outside the Parliament, the President of China had to cancel his visit, and as a result Pakistan lost foreign investments worth billions of dollars. He remarked that such attacks have further strengthened our determination and resolve to protect democratic institutions. The Speaker urged the people to unite and keep on playing their constructive role to protect democracy in the country. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah in his message said that the attack on Parliament during 2014 was a tragic incident. He said that these attacks indicated the ill intentions of those involved in sit-ins, which were tantamount to weakening the democratic institutions and democratic system. The Deputy Speaker stressed the need for all political parties to take essential steps to prevent such incidents in the future. SABAH

CM House bans plastic bottles, introduces glass jugs for environmental sustainability



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has raised the bar for environmental accountability by prohibiting disposable plastic water bottles in all government offices, beginning with the CM House. The initiative aimed at cutting plastic waste and bolstering sustainability, was enacted immediately after a notification on August 16, the CM said.

To support this mission, Murad Shah instructed his secretariat to substitute all plastic water bottles with glass jugs during meetings at the CM House. Footage from Sunday showed glass jugs and cups on the meeting tables, showcasing the government's effort to minimize plastic waste. The CM emphasised the importance of this

change during a meeting, directing participants to follow suit by eliminating plastic bottles and other disposable plastic items from their offices and public spaces.

He advocated for the use of sustainable alternatives, such as glass and biodegradable materials, to help protect the environment and improve public health.

"Our drains, rivers, ponds, and seas are being choked by plastic waste, which is endangering marine life and polluting our environment," said Mr Shah. "We, as a nation, must adopt environmentally friendly practices to safeguard our natural resources and ensure a cleaner, healthier future."

In addition to banning plastic bottles, CM Murad Ali Shah promised further actions to fight environmental degradation. He detailed plans to tackle air pollution throughout the province, showing his administration's commitment to comprehensive environmental reform.

"This initiative is just the start," CM Shah stated. "We are determined to take significant steps to control air pollution and improve our overall environmental quality."

The introduction of glass jugs at the CM House is a symbolic but important move towards a greener Sindh, setting a precedent for other government institutions and the public to combat plastic pollution.

PTI severely damaged country's economic, political landscape: Talal

ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), Senator Talal Chaudhry said on Sunday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, during its four-year tenure, severely damaged the country's economic and political landscape.

Reacting to an alleged chat with an Indian journalist by Raouf Hassan, Talal Chaudhry claimed that Hassan had been in contact with anti-Pakistan foreign journalists, including those from India. He further alleged that PTI's team was advising the IMF against making deals with Pakistan at the time, and that Hassan was sharing sensitive material with anti-Pakistan journalists.

He said that the chaos and divisive politics in Pakistan were not the result of a single individual, but involved various politicians, political parties, and even individuals within institutions. Chaudhry alleged that efforts to weaken Pakistan were orchestrated by multiple actors. He asserted that now, there will be zero tolerance for anti-state elements. Stressing the need to improve the quality of life for ordinary citizens, Talal Chaudhry said, "Pakistan is here to stay, and we must strengthen its economy once again." APP

Pak-Indonesia direct flights vital to take bilateral ties to new heights: Zafar Bakhtawari

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

Zafar Bakhtawari stated this while talking to media persons on Sunday after attending the Indonesian flag hoisting ceremony held at the Embassy in connection with the 79th Independence Day of Indonesia, led by the Charge d' Affaires Rahmat Hindiarta kussuma. He further stated that Indonesia the largest economy in ASEAN and the world's 13th big economy was predicted to be the 4th largest economy in the world by 2045. He empha-

sized that direct flight between the two countries are much needed to further strengthen the existing relations between the two countries and for the economic advancement and unlocking the tourism potential of both the sides.

The business leader also extended his sincere congratulations to the Charge d' Affaires on behalf of the business community by wishing economic well being of the two countries. Embassy's officials along with their families and hundreds of Indonesian diaspora based in different cities of Pakistan, attended the ceremony in Indonesian traditional fervor. Prominent religious leaders, representatives of the dynamic business community, experts from reputable think tanks, and journalists were also present on the special occasion. The Indonesian Chargé d' Affaires expressed his sincere gratitude to all the guests for joining the celebration by raising the slogan, Indonesia, Pakistan dosti zindabad. INP

Israeli strike kills at least 17 Palestinians in central Gaza, health officials say

GAZA: At least 17 Palestinians were killed and dozens wounded in an Israeli strike in the central Gaza town of Zawayda on Saturday, health officials said, as Israel issued new evacuation orders, citing Hamas rocket fire nearby. Israel also announced the names of two soldiers Israeli media reported were killed on Saturday afternoon when a roadside bomb exploded in the central Gaza Strip, and an air strike in the occupied West Bank that it said killed two senior Hamas militants involved in the killing of an Israeli.

The violence occurred before U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken was expected to land in Israel on Sunday and meet Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday, amid stepped-up diplomatic efforts to conclude a deal to end the fighting between Israel and the militant Islamist group and free Israeli hostages. Most of the people killed in Zawayda were from the same family and they included eight children and four women, according to health officials

in the Hamas-administered enclave. "They were asleep in their beds, kids and babies, then three missiles targeted their place," said Abu Ahmed Hassan, a neighbour. The owner of the house was a known merchant, he said. "There are no military activities here at all," he added. The Israeli military said in response it had struck militant targets in an area from which rockets were fired at its troops. It said the incident was under review.

Israel's military spokesperson posted instructions in Arabic on X on Saturday for people in parts of central Gaza, including in the Maghazi district near Zawayda, to evacuate to a designated humanitarian zone. On Friday, two sections of the southern Gaza city of Khan Younis within what Israel has designated as a humanitarian zone were deemed dangerous by the military, which ordered people to evacuate them, saying militants had been regularly firing rockets from there.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said Friday's orders, which also included other areas of the enclave outside the humanitarian zones, had affected around 170,000 displaced people. "This is one of the largest evacuation orders affecting the zone to date and it shrinks the size of the so-called 'humanitarian area' to about 41 square kilometres, or 11 per cent of the total area of the Gaza Strip," an OCHA report said.

In the central part of the enclave, residents said Israeli tanks advanced further on Saturday into the eastern area of Deir al-Balah, an area they had not entered before, where hundreds of thousands of displaced Palestinians are sheltering.

The Israeli military said that since Friday its forces had killed dozens of militants, including some who had fired rockets from central and southern Gaza. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million population has been displaced by the 10-month-old Israeli offensive, which has laid waste to much of the enclave.

Another Israeli airstrike on a car in the occupied West Bank city of Jenin on Saturday killed at least two more Palestinians, one an 18-year-old, the Palestinian health ministry said. Gaza ceasefire talks in Doha, mediated by the U.S., Qatar and Egypt, were due to resume next week. A statement from Netanyahu's office said Israel's negotiating team had expressed "cautious optimism" on the possibility of advancing a deal "in accordance with the updated American proposal (based on the May 27th framework), including components acceptable to Israel." U.S. President Joe Biden said on Friday, following two days of talks in Doha, that efforts to reach a deal were now in sight, although he warned that negotiations were "far from over". Hamas spokesman Jihad Tahar told Al Jazeera TV on Saturday that Israel had added conditions in the ceasefire talks and accused Netanyahu of using these to hinder the efforts. Asked about Blinken's visit to the region, he said the group did not rely on the U.S. as it has been biased towards Israel. INP

KP Governor emphasizes critical issue of maintaining peace in province

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday emphasized the critical issue of maintaining peace in the province.

During a meeting with a delegation from the Peoples Lawyers Forum led by Sardar Hashmat Nawaz Khan Saddozai, he said that the situation was dire when judges themselves were not safe, highlighting the deteriorating conditions in the province.

The meeting included key figures such as Shah Fahad Ansari, Advocate Supreme Court and Divisional President of Peoples Lawyers Forum, Sardar Adnan Saddozai, District President, Sardar Hizbullah Khan Gundapur, Divisional General Secretary, Sardar Qaiser Zaib, District General Secretary, and Abid Awan Advocate District General Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party. Also present were Gohar Rahman Khattak,

Provincial President of the People's Lawyers Forum, and Lajbar Khan Khaleel, Provincial General Secretary, Advocate.

Kundi assured that he would contact the Chairman of the State Life Insurance Corporation regarding benefits for lawyers. He also proposed that land be identified for a lawyers' colony in Dera Ismail Khan. In addition, he suggested that a judicial complex be established in the Tank area, discussing the matter with the Federal Minister for Law.

The Governor proposed allocating a quota for young lawyers in the Judicial Academy that would address the issue of starting LL.M. classes at Gomal University. He also mentioned plans to discuss with relevant authorities regarding the establishment of a Narcotics Court in Dera Ismail Khan.