

**Heat wave to persist**  
LAHORE (APP): Heat wave continued to prevail in the city here on Sunday while met office predicted similar weather conditions during Eid holidays. Met officials said the continental air was prevailing over most parts of the country while a shallow westerly wave was likely to approach northern parts from Monday. They predicted that on Monday mainly hot and dry weather was expected in most parts of the country.

# Israel pauses military activity along Gaza road to facilitate aid

JERUSALEM (Reuters): The Israeli military said on Sunday it would hold daily tactical pauses in military activity along a main road in southern Gaza to allow more aid to flow into the enclave, where international aid organisations have warned of a growing humanitarian crisis.

Fighting in the city of Rafah, where Israel is targeting the remaining brigades of the militant Islamist Hamas movement, would continue, the military said.

It said military activity would be paused from 0500 GMT until 1600 GMT daily until further notice along the road that leads from the Kerem

Shalom Crossing to the Salah al-Din Road and then northwards.

Despite growing international pressure for a ceasefire, an agreement to halt the fighting still appears distant, more than eight months since the start of the war in the Palestinian enclave.

Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon opened a second front against Israel shortly after Hamas' Oct. 7 assault sparked the war in Gaza. Fighting across the Israel-Lebanon border is now threatening to spiral into a wider conflict. Tens of thousands of people have been displaced on both sides of the border.

In a further sign that fighting in Gaza could drag on, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government said on Sunday it was extending until Aug. 15 the period it would fund hotels and guest houses for residents evacuated from southern Israeli border towns.

Hamas led a rampage in southern Israel on Oct. 7 in which 1,200 people were killed and more than 250 taken hostage, according to Israeli tallies.

At least 37,296 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's military campaign, according to the Gaza health ministry.



GAZA STRIP: Palestinians hold Eid Al-Adha prayers by the ruins of Al-Al Rahma mosque destroyed by Israeli air strikes in Khan Younis, southern Gaza Strip on Sunday.

## Naqvi assures fool proof security to Chinese citizens

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi assured foolproof security of Chinese citizens in Pakistan during his meeting with the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong on Sunday.

The minister called arrived at the Chinese Embassy to call on Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong who warmly welcomed Mohsin Naqvi. Both sides discussed the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehabaz Sharif to China in a meeting.

A detailed discussion was also held on the promotion of Pakistan-China relations and measures taken for the security of Chinese citizens in Pakistan. The recent visit of the prime minister has

strengthened the friendship with China said Mohsin Naqvi adding that the president of China, the prime minister and senior leadership of China have always supported Pakistan.

He informed the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong about the measures to protect Chinese citizens across the country including Islamabad.

Mohsin Naqvi also briefed him on the security plan of Chinese engineers and staff working on CPEC and other projects.

He said that comprehensive and effective SOPs have been made for the security of Chinese citizens and a separate force "SPU" is being created in Islamabad for foreign nationals. The protection of the Chinese brothers who

are working for the construction and development of Pakistan is the first priority of the government of Pakistan, said Mohsin Naqvi.

He said that no one can create a rift in the eternal friendship between Pakistan and China and such a conspiracy will never be allowed to succeed. He said that Pakistan and China are friends and iron brothers said Chinese ambassador adding that China attaches great importance to relations with Pakistan.

The Chinese ambassador expressed satisfaction with the security arrangements made for the protection of Chinese citizens. Interior Secretary Khurram Ali Agha and senior officials of the Chinese Embassy were also present in the meeting.

## Shehbaz makes telephone call to Erdogan

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Türkiye held a warm and cordial telephone conversation today, exchanging greetings and best wishes on the occasion of Eid ul Adha.

The two leaders celebrated the strong bonds of friendship and brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye that were rooted in shared values, history, and cultural affinities.

They reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in various fields, including trade, investment, defense, and tourism. The Prime Minister and the President also discussed ways to promote peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

They expressed serious concern about the current situation in Palestine while urging the international community to redouble peace efforts to end the misery and suffering of the innocent Palestinians.

The two leaders agreed to continue working together to address common challenges and to support each other's core national interests.

The warm conversation between the two leaders was a testament to the strong and enduring relationship between Pakistan and Türkiye, and their commitment to continuing their close cooperation in the days ahead.

To this end, the Prime Minister reiterated his cordial invitation to President Erdogan to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience so as to convene the 7th session of the High Level Strategic Consultative Council (HLSCC).

## Afghan Taliban says to attend next round of UN talks in Doha

KABUL (AFP): Taliban authorities will attend the third round of United Nations-hosted talks on Afghanistan in the Qatari capital, a government spokesman said on Sunday, after snubbing an invitation to the previous round. The Taliban government's participation in the conference of foreign special envoys to Afghanistan had been in doubt after it was not included in the first round and then refused an invitation to the second round in February.

"A delegation of the Islamic Emirate will participate in the coming Doha conference. They will represent Afghanistan there and express Afghanistan's position," Zabihullah Mujahid told AFP.

The talks in Doha are scheduled to be held on June 30 and July 1.

Mujahid told Afghan media on Sunday that a delegation — yet to be announced — would attend because the agenda of the talks appeared "beneficial to Afghanistan".

The agenda includes "topics such as aid for Afghanistan and creating opportunities for investors in Afghanistan, which are important", he said. Civil society groups that included women were invited to the

February talks but the Taliban government refused to participate unless its members could be the sole representatives of Afghanistan.

It also requested to meet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. Guterres said in a statement after the February talks the set of conditions to participate "were not acceptable", but that delegates hoped for Taliban officials to attend future meetings.

Diplomatic sources told AFP there were plans to consult with civil society groups before and after the third round.

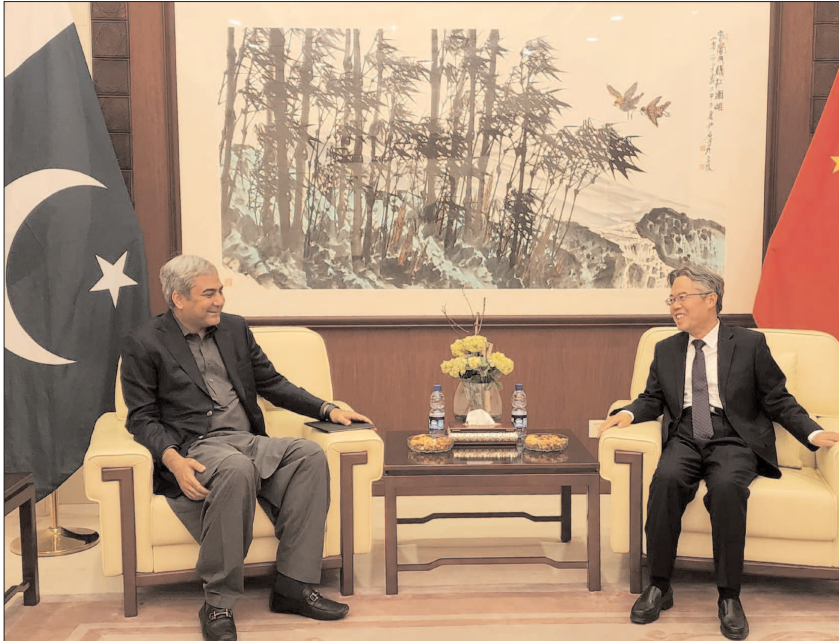
The sources said the talks were due to cover

finance and economic issues, as well as counter-narcotics efforts.

Several civil society groups have also urged the UN to prioritise issues involving women's rights at the meeting.

The international community has wrestled with its approach to Afghanistan's new government, which has not been recognised by any other state, in the aftermath of the Taliban's return to power in 2021.

The Taliban government has imposed a strict interpretation of Islam, with women subjected to laws characterised by the UN as "gender apartheid".



ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi talking to Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zedong on Sunday.

## President extends Eid greetings to nation, Ummah

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari has extended his warm felicitations to the nation and the Muslim Ummah on the blessed occasion of Eid ul-Azha.

In a message, he prayed to Allah Almighty to grant His blessings and happiness to the Muslim world and Pakistan on this auspicious day.

The president highlighted the significance of Eid ul-Azha, which commemorates the willingness of two chosen Prophets of Allah-Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Ismail (AS) to sacrifice their dearest possessions for the pleasure of Allah.

When Allah Almighty put these great personalities through trials, both of them bowed their heads to obtain the pleasure of Allah, he said adding that this act of sacrifice became so popular in the presence of Allah Almighty that He made this worship of sacrifice obligatory on the Ummah of Muhammad (PBUH).

"It is a lesson for us that the key to success is to remain firm in the situation of trials and tests and to obey Allah Almighty."

President Zardari urged the nation to reaffirm their commitment to the values of brotherhood, sacrifice, and selflessness on this occasion.

He encouraged everyone to share the joy of Eid with those around them, especially those who are unable to celebrate due to financial constraints.

"I prayed to Allah Almighty to shower His blessings and mercy upon the entire Muslim ummah, particularly Pakistan", he added.

## Cutting camel's leg Five remanded to police custody in Sanghar

SANGHAR (PPI): A local court on Sunday remanded five accused to police custody for cutting camel's leg in Sanghar.

According to the SSP Sanghar, two out of five suspects namely Abdul Shakoor Shar and Abid Shar have confessed to their crime in the probe. The camel has been shifted to Karachi for treatment.

A landlord in Sindh's

Sanghar district allegedly chopped off a camel's leg as punishment for scavenging into his field for fodder.

According to police, the incident occurred in Mund Jamrao village in Sanghar district on Friday. Soomer Khan, owner of the camel, narrated the incident along with his camel at Sanghar Press Club. "I have no enmity with anyone. I don't know why this was done to

my camel," he said.

Sanghar SSP took notice of the incident after the video of camel with chopped leg went viral on social media. Police officials said the peasant had refused to identify the culprit and press charges against him, hence police lodged an FIR on behalf of the state against unknown persons under sections 429 and 34 PPC.

## PM, King of Bahrain admire strong ties

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on Sunday held a cordial telephone conversation to exchange warm greetings on the occasion of Eid ul Adha and expressed their mutual respect and admiration for the strong historical ties between Pakistan and Bahrain, built on shared values and cultural affinities.

The prime minister acknowledged and appreciated Bahrain's support and cooperation in various fields over the years. In particular, he thanked King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa for his respect and affection towards Pakistan, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

**Notice**  
The offices of The Frontier Post will remain closed on Monday and Tuesday (17th and 18th June, 2024) on account of Eidul Azha.

## Fourteen Jordanians die during Hajj, some succumb to heat



CAIRO (Reuters): Fourteen Jordanians have been reported dead during the annual Muslim haj pilgrimage in Saudi Arabia, some of them due to heat stroke, while 17 others were reported missing, the Jordanian foreign ministry said in a statement on Sunday.

At least six of the fatalities were heat related, the ministry said on Saturday, with temperatures predicted to reach 47 degrees Celsius (116 Fahrenheit) in Mecca on Monday.

It didn't specify on Sunday whether the higher death toll was also due to the heat.

The haj, which will end on Wednesday, is one of the largest mass gatherings in the world, with more than 1.8 million pilgrims expected to take part this year, according to the Saudi General Authority for Statistics.

Stampedes, tent fires, heat and other factors have caused hundreds of deaths at the event over the past 30 years.

The Saudi health ministry issued an advisory on Thursday warning of soaring temperatures and advising pilgrims to stay hydrated and avoid being outdoors during the hottest hours of the day between 11 a.m. (0800 GMT) and 3 p.m.

The Jordanian foreign ministry was coordinating with Saudi authorities on procedures to bury or transport the bodies of the deceased according to their family's wishes, it said on Sunday.

In 2015, a deadly crush at the haj near Mecca killed at least 2,070 people, according to a Reuters tally at the time.

## Over 68% of Pakistan's land area classified as arid or semi-arid

ISLAMABAD (APP): research and technology and fostering international cooperation, Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to combating desertification and achieving land degradation neutrality," Romina Khurshid said.

She highlighted that Pakistan is a signatory to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) and is closely working with international partners to address desertification. Various projects and initiatives are supported by international organizations to enhance Pakistan's capacity to combat this issue.

Spelling out factors behind the issues of expanding desertification and land degradation, the PM's aide said that warming temperatures, shifting or declining rainfall patterns, recurring droughts, loss of vegetation and tree covers, unsustainable agricultural, irrigation practices, overgrazing, urbanisation, ranching, mining and clearing of land and heat-trapping carbon emissions from industrial, transport and fossil fuel-run energy sectors and deforestation are major causes.

Over 68% of Pakistan's land area is classified as arid or semi-arid, making it vulnerable to desertification, she underlined and added that soaring desertification levels in recent years have resulted in loss of fertile topsoil, soil erosion, water scarcity, lower agricultural, loss of agriculture-based livelihoods, increase in rural poverty, hunger and malnutrition, rural-to-urban migration, habitat loss, degradation of natural ecosystems.

Sharing a global picture of the desertification challenge, the PM's coordinator said that like elsewhere in Africa, Europe and Asia, desertification has emerged as a serious environmental issue in Pakistan, adversely

impacting large areas of the country and posing a serious threat to agriculture, water resources and livelihoods.

Of all global regions, Africa and Asia are the worst-hit regions, bearing the brunt of desertification. According to an estimate, a little less than 2 billion people in Asia live in conditions or areas characterised as desertification or drought-hit parts and the number of the people affected by desertification or drought will soar to 2.5 billion by 2050, she explained.

The PM's aide emphasized that the global observance of the world desertification day on June 17 this year, however must serve as a stark reminder of the growing environmental challenges faced by not only the global regions but also Pakistan, underscoring the urgent need for concerted global efforts to combat desertification.





LAHORE: A deserted view of GPO Chowk, Mall Road due to Eid-ul-Adha holidays. —APP Photo

## PTI quit anti-state smear campaign, to hold dialogue with govt: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Spokesperson of the Federal Government on Legal Affairs, Barrister Aqeel Malik on Sunday said the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) must quit its anti-state activities and propaganda, and hold dialogue with the government on political issues to mull over solutions instead of damaging the nation's interest at global forums.

The Spokesperson on Legal Affairs was holding a press conference to brief the media on the political party's anti-state activities abroad. Barrister Malik said that there was no precedent to PTI's country enmity as it was perpetrating anti-Pakistan legislation in foreign countries.

"Pakistan is an independent country and does not take dictation from any nation. We want friendly relations with all nations. However, a concentrated smear cam-

paign against Pakistan in foreign countries that started after the 2022 vote of no confidence which mounted the anti-Pakistan propaganda," he said and added that the PTI had hired lobbyists and PR firms to promote anti-Pakistan campaign abroad.

Resolution number 901 tabled in November 2023 in US Congress by Congressmen McCormick had all its links to PTI, he alleged while adding, "all anti-Pakistan legislation is done on the behest of PTI and overseas Pakistani diaspora who have strong affiliation with this party are being misused for this clandestine motive of PTI."

He warned that the government and state of Pakistan would clamp down against overseas Pakistanis if the anti-state agenda was promoted. "In May 2023, 65 congressmen wrote a letter to the US Secretary of Defence to prioritise the promotion of

protection of human rights and democracy in Pakistan. 11 congressmen wrote a letter to US Secretary of State in November 2023 to suspend US assistance to Pakistan. 31 congressmen wrote to the US Secretary of State and President to not recognise the government of Pakistan formed after February 2024," the Spokesperson noted.

He underscored that all these tactics were done by PTI and it was hiring lobbying and PR firms to strongly promote anti-Pakistan propaganda. "PTI is running a malicious concentrated campaign against Pakistan. The amendments being moved by the PTI-influenced House of Representatives are all linked to anti-state and country enemy elements as India also has a major role in it and they are joining PTI to work on anti Pakistan narrative," Barrister Aqeel alleged. He reiterated that the state and

government of Pakistan were fully aware of the campaign and its perpetrators.

"You (PTI) cannot do opposition against the state as by doing so you are undermining it and there is no acceptability and tolerance for it. No political party is above Pakistan, let's make it crystal clear and no anti-state agenda and narrative will be allowed by the state," he added.

He urged the PTI to think about the country and motherland as it had joined hands with country enemies and set out on an anti-country agenda for its political motives. "PTI is becoming a source of humiliation for the country at international forums. You are Pakistani and we all are Pakistanis. We have to work for the country. Nobody is stopping you from the politics but this negative and inimical political would not be allowed," he added.

## CM orders ensuring best arrangements on Eid

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, chairing a meeting here on Sunday, reviewed administrative and security arrangements made for Eid-ul-Azha.

She directed the authorities concerned to activate provincial, divisional, district and tehsil-level control rooms. "Impose Section 144 to enforce a ban on throwing animal waste in canals and drains, besides a ban on illegal business of roasting 'Siri Paey' on Eid-ul-Azha" she ordered.

The CM was briefed that in Lahore, staff would go from door to door and pick up animal waste packed in biodegradable bags. She was apprised that the city streets would be washed, limed and sprayed after performing the religious ritual of slaughtering sacrificial animals.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif was also briefed that animal sale points had been established at 294 places in Punjab. Drains and manholes would be protected against littering

throughout Punjab. She was also presented with a report on security arrangements at 2,600 mosques and 900 'Eidgahs' in the province. She ordered to ensure implementation of security standard operating procedures (SOPs), and said wherever there was fear, increase security to ensure protection of people's lives and property.

The chief minister also ordered to install mist fans and fans in Eidgahs to beat the heat. She said install cameras for surveillance and walk-through gates for checking. She ordered for inspecting swings and slides for children in parks. The CM resolved, "We will never allow anyone to take the law into his hands." Illegal use of loudspeakers and display of weapons should be banned, she announced.

Maryam Nawaz said foolproof arrangements should be made for security of cattle markets, bazaars and markets, adding that cattle markets should be cleaned and sprayed; sheds and clean drinking water facilities should be provided there.

Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Law Minister Soheb Ahmed Bharat, Special Assistants Rashid MNASrullah, Zeeshan Malik and MPA Sania Ashiq attended the meeting. Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman, Inspector General Police Dr. Usman Anwar, secretaries and other authorities concerned were also present. All commissioners and deputy commissioners attended the meeting via video link.

**CM grieved at 4 people's death:** Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed a deep sense of sorrow and grief over the death of four people by drowning in a sewer in a village near Vehari. She offered condolences and expressed her heartfelt sympathies with the bereaved family. In response to the incident, CM Maryam Nawaz also sought a detailed report from the commissioner Multan in the matter.

## Governor announces free solar panels

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Governor Kamran Tessori on Sunday announced free solar panels for low-income families in effort to provide relief from load shedding. Speaking to journalists here, Tessori said households consuming up to 300 units of electricity, with a rent agreement and children under 10 years old, will be provided with free solar panels.

The Sindh governor said this initiative would free citizens from the "misery of load shedding" and was made possible through the generosity of overseas Pakistanis. He assured that the solar panels would be provided free of cost, and households could use up to 300 units of electricity without any charges. "No charges will be taken for installing solar," he added.

Moreover, Kamran Tessori announced that ration bags would be distributed from the Governor's House on Eid day, and 20,000 families were set to benefit. He also announced the launch of a free medical treatment and medicine programme after Eid.

Highlighting his initiatives for the Karachi citizens, he said that thousands of people have benefited from IT courses, and motorbikes were being distributed to those whose bikes were stolen. Nearly, 8,000 students have received Laptops, and assistance has been provided to women and children, he added. The governor expressed his commitment to providing job opportunities for youth and announced the establishment of a Governor's Job Portal.



## DISPOSE OF OFFAL AND TRASH PROPERLY THIS EID TO PREVENT BIRD ACTIVITY NEAR AIRPORTS AND MAINTAIN SAFE AIR TRAVEL ATTENTION PLEASE!

During Eidul Azha, it's important to maintain cleanliness around the airport to ensure the safety of flight operations. Leaving offal and trash outside can attract birds, increasing the risk of bird strikes and jeopardizing flight safety. Please dispose of animal remains properly in designated bins or bury them. Let's work together to keep our surroundings clean, protect our environment and make air travel even more safer.



Director General,  
Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority  
www.caapakistan.com.pk

PID-K-3547/23

## Govt urged to take stern action against timber mafia

PESHAWAR (APP): Cleaning perspiration with handkerchief in his wood stall, Haji Amanullah Khan, a 72-year-old wood seller was busy like a honey bee in cutting of large slab of shisham, beer, amaltas and other canopy trees with big saw to fulfill the placed orders of customers for Eidul Azha.

As the sun rays bath his house, the wood seller starts motorcycle and come to his wood stall with breakfast for laborers before cutting large timber slabs. The wood stall was established on main GT Road at Pabbi tehsil in Nowshera district where his business started roaring in the wake of increasing demands of wood for Eid and marriage season.

Cutting timber of native and indigenous species with a big electric saw in his 'wood taal' with the support of five laborers, the wood seller was working against the time to complete orders placed by the households, hotels and marriage halls.

Aman's sons were seen helping his father in preparing bundles of endangered Shisham, Phulai, Ber, Kikar, Poplar, Neem, Amaltas, Saru and Jaman in his wood taal scattered on nearly two acres with trees' trunks spread everywhere on his business place.

"The demands of wood have increased manifold due to the arrival of Eidul

Azha's celebrations and preparation of furniture for marriage season in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," he said.

As a result, the price of one mound (50kg) of firewood has soared to Rs1,000 depending on the timber's quality," said Haji Amanullah, adding wood demand also increases manifolds due to shortage of natural gas, coal and high prices of LPG cylinders. "We prefer customers from hotels, and marriage halls due to high purchase and profit margin," he said, adding these timbers were being transported from far-flung areas of Nowshera, Charsadda, Peshawar, and Mardan districts after its purchase from farmers on relatively less price than the government's timber markets rates.

The visitors may be disappointed to see a large number of cut timbers and even uprooted trunks of trees at wood taals while moving on the main GT Road between Tarnab Peshawar to Azakhel Nowshera depicting high rate of deforestation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. National Forest Policy 2015 has revealed that Pakistan's total forest-covered area was five percent and the country was losing about 27,000 hectares of forests per year, mainly occurring in private and community-

owned natural forests.

The policy disclosed that forest resources in all provinces, especially in KP and Gilgit Baltistan were under tremendous pressure from timber mafia, particularly in the communal lands, shamalats, guzara, and privately owned forests. Adversely impacted agriculture yield and quantity of water at outlets due to fast melting of glaciers due to rising temperature, the policy said that deforestation in watershed areas can trigger land degradation, loss of biodiversity and marine life besides making negative effects on wildlife and aquatic resources.

Niaz Ali Khan, former Chief Conservator of Forests KP while comparing defor-

estation rate of Pakistan with the world said that every year around 10 million hectares of forest were deforested – equal to the area of Portugal in world.

He said around half of this high deforestation was counterbalanced by regrowing of forests, which means that an overall around five million hectares of the green gold was lost per year worldwide. Declaring overpopulation, poverty, and unnecessary trees logging are one of the major causes of deforestation in developing countries including Pakistan, he said that Pakistan's population was only 37 million in 1947 that soared to a record 223 million in 2022, 241 million in 2023.



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PESHAWAR: Participants of the seminar on protection of journalists organized by Pakistan Press Foundation, posing for photographers at the end of the seminar.

## Seminar discusses protection of journalists in Pakistan

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A seminar was organized in Peshawar under the auspices of the Pakistan Press Foundation to emphasize federal-style legislation and effective implementation of laws for the protection of journalists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Senior leaders from various political parties and stakeholders participated in the seminar, highlighting the crucial role of journalists in upholding human rights and the rule of law. Former Senior Vice President of the PPP Syed Ayub Shah, ex-MPA

Shagufta Malik of ANP, President of the Peshawar High Court Bar Association Advocate Fida Gul, spokesperson of the National Party Shakeel Wahidullah, JUI-F's Jalil Jan, Senior Vice Chairman of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan Dr. Sarfaraz Khan, advocate of the Women Empowerment Commission Lubna, SP Waqas Rafique, President of Khyber Union of Journalists Nasir Hussain, and officials from the Peshawar Press Club attended the event. Participants stressed the

urgent need for effective legislation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to ensure the safety of journalists, noting their frontline role in the past two decades and the challenges they face in fulfilling their duties. They emphasized that journalists play an extremely important role as the fourth pillar of the state in safeguarding human rights and upholding constitutional supremacy. They also underscored the invaluable contribution of journalists in raising awareness among the public and ensuring accountability.

Concerns were raised over the increasing number of unemployed journalists and their precarious economic conditions. Participants called upon media owners to improve working conditions for journalists and take measures to protect their jobs. The seminar participants expressed their commitment to collaborate on legislative efforts aimed at protecting journalists, ensuring every possible support in this regard. Earlier, Lala Hassan Pathan briefed workshop participants on laws related to the protection of journalists.

## Eidul Azha reminds supreme sacrifice of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS): KP Governor

PESHAWAR (APP): The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi here Sunday congratulated the entire nation especially the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the merged tribal districts on the holy occasion of Eidul Azha which would be celebrated on Monday with great religious enthusiasm. The Governor said that Eidul Azha was celebrated every year in line with the matless example of an unwavering faith, steadfastness, and obedience demonstrated by Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Ismail (AS) for the submission and willingness of Allah Almighty, which was a beacon of light for the entire mankind. In a message on the occasion of Eidul Azha here, the Governor said that

the virtues of exemplary devotion, reliance and submission to Allah as shown by these Holy Prophets had demonstrated that we should not hesitate to sacrifice our loved ones for the willingness of Allah Almighty and for achievement of a sacred objective. "The basic philosophy of Eidul Azha is to show an unwavering faith, compassion, obedience and sacrifice of the most loved ones in the way of Allah Almighty" he said. The Governor said on this joyous blessed day we as a nation is to look above of personal likes and dislikes and end prejudices by working for progress and welfare of humanity and supremacy of Islam by keeping the spirit of sacrifice and unwavering faith on the Allah Almighty alive.

In the present era, he said that we need to sacrifice our personal wishes for the sake of bringing happiness, and easiness in the lives of others. He said Eidul Azha was a day of making strong commitment to work tirelessly for the progress and prosperity of people of the country for being a civilized nation. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi appealed the Muslims Ummah especially the residents of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to include poor and underprivileged in the celebrations of Eidul Azha with dignity and respect. "The spirit of sacrifice takes an individual, society and nation to a high degree of morality that leads to social prosperity" Governor said. He said it is the spirit of

sacrifice that prepare Muslims Ummah to serve humanity and help others. In the prevailing situation in the country especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he said that it was the spirit of age to keep unity in our ranks by working untiringly for progress, development and prosperity of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Through the spirit of sacrifice and high level of devotion, he said that it was a time to make this province a cradle of peace, love and collective happiness. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor on this holy blessed day has prayed for unlimited blessings and acceptance of our worshipers and sacrifices besides granting strength to work for welfare of humanity and progress and development of Pakistan.

## Awareness campaign on aircraft safety and bird strike mitigation launched

### F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Information and Public Relations Department of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Sunday initiated a comprehensive awareness campaign aimed at enhancing aircraft safety and mitigating the risks associated with bird strikes. The primary objective of the campaign is to educate the public on the importance of maintaining cleanliness in areas surrounding airport

jurisdictions. Community members have been urged to adhere to the guidelines to ensure the safety of air travel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Residents are advised to refrain from disposing of waste near airport areas, as garbage attracts birds, which significantly increases the risk of bird strikes. The presence of domesticated birds, particularly pigeons, poses an extreme danger to the safety of all flights, including takeoff and landing. Citizens are there-

fore urged to avoid bird keeping and pigeon flying near airport premises. Additionally, kite flying near airports has been identified as a serious threat to aircraft operations. The public, particularly the youth, is requested to avoid this activity within airport vicinities. Another serious challenge to aircraft safety is aerial firing, a dangerous practice that can interfere with aircraft operations. The public is strongly discouraged from engaging in this activity.

The use of laser beam lights near airports is also strictly prohibited, as they can distract and temporarily blind pilots during critical phases of flight. The Information and Public Relations Department emphasizes that community cooperation is vital for the success of this campaign. By following these guidelines, residents can contribute to safer skies and prevent potential aviation hazards.

## Camels attract faithful for slaughtering on Eidul Azha

PESHAWAR (APP): Known as ships of the deserts, camels have started attracting faithful in substantial numbers at cattle markets to commemorate the supreme sacrifices of Hazrat Ibrahim (AS) and Hazrat Ismail (AS). Mostly brought from Balochistan, Punjab and Sindh provinces, camels-- known for their steadfastness in hot weather and for going without food and water for longer period of time while transporting people and supplies over extensive distances in deserts, draws people's attention in cattle markets established in different locations of Peshawar for Eidul Azha to be celebrated on June 17 across the country including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The cattle markets at Lala Kala, Ring Road, Hayatabad, Warsak Road, Pabbi and Amangarh Nowshera were flooded with camels brought from Jacobabad, Tharparkar, Cholistan, Quetta and other cities of the above provinces by interprovincial cattle dealers in a

bid to earn maximum profits at the lucrative market of Peshawar during Eidul Azha. "The people's response in camels as sacrificial animals is very positive this year owing to its affordable prices compare to other large sacrificial animals including cow, oxen and buffaloes on Eidul Azha," said Ibrahim Khan, an inter provincial cattle dealer of Nowshera at Lala Kala cattle market while talking to APP. "I have transported 20 camels from Quetta for Eid and sold 12 of them so far," he said, adding prices of the friends of the deserts were largely dependent upon their overall health, age and height. "The residents of interior Peshawar take more interest in camel sacrifices than other people of the city as one camel was available from Rs 5 lakh to Rs 7 lakh as special Eid offer." The traders have beautifully decorated their camels with colourful designs made by expert barbers to attract buyers. "We engage barbers to make

them attractive as just the chains, bells and beads were not enough to grab visitors' attention," said another cattle dealer, Mosa Khan. "I came from Hayatabad Peshawar to buy camels for the performance of collective Qurbani on this Eid," said Muhammad Arif, a buyer at Ring Road cattle market. "Personally, I like camel meat due to its unique tastes like lamb meat that double my Eid joy," he said and added it also does not have that peculiar smell mostly associated with lamb meat and it is the best kind of meat to use during Eid days with families. "I like young camels aged up to six years as its meat is full of energy and cooks easily," he said, adding his father late Abdul Akbar Khan had also slaughtered camels during Eidul Azha. "When I was young, I went with my father to a cattle market, who purchased a camel after examining his teeth," he said, adding he had bought Tharparkar's camel on this Eid for the first time in his life.

As the trend of slaughtering of camels rises in KP, the camel dealers of other provinces have brought stocks to Peshawar for better wages during Eidul Azha. Hidayat Khan, a buyer at Lala Kala cattle market said that he was slaughtering camels on Eidul Azha for last five years and his family likes their meats due to high protein and energy perspective. However, he said the camel slaughter is still new for most of the citizens in his village and attracts crowds, mostly kids, to watch an out-of-routine activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Hidayat said that he always hired professional butchers and pay Rs 10,000 to him for slaughtering a camel during Eid. Likewise, a good number of relatives and friends used to approach him for seeking the camel meat besides exchanging ox and buffalo meat. "Like any other child, my kids also enjoy camel rides that double their joy on Eidul Azha. Dr Aftab Ahmed, Director Livestock and Dairy

## PTI-P MPA booked for assaulting ANP leader

PESHAWAR (INP): Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P) MPA Iqbal Wazir has been booked for allegedly assaulting ANP leader Alif Khan in Peshawar. An FIR has been registered against PTI-P MPA Iqbal Wazir for allegedly assaulting ANP leader Alif Khan in Peshawar. The case was filed at

the Sharqi Police Station. According to the FIR, the MPA and his accomplices hit Alif Khan's vehicle, injuring him and two passersby. The attackers also damaged Alif Khan's vehicle. An Awami National Party (ANP) leader, Alif Khan, was attacked and injured near the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly in Peshawar

on Saturday night. The incident occurred late Saturday night, allegedly involving a member of the provincial assembly (MPA) from the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf-Parliamentarians (PTI-P). ANP leader Alif Khan was allegedly assaulted by PTI-P's MPA Iqbal Wazir and his companions. Peshawar Police

have registered a case against Iqbal Wazir following the incident. As per the report, ANP's provincial leader Alif Khan sustained minor injuries and was promptly taken to the hospital for medical treatment. The case was registered against the PTI-P MPA Iqbal Wazir in Police Station Sharqi (East) in Peshawar city.

## Afghan refugees in KP celebrate Eid-ul-Adha in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): The Afghan refugees living in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa celebrated Eid-ul-Azha on Sunday as usual with Eid in Saudi Arabia. For almost four decades now, Afghan refugees living in Pakistan have been celebrating the Eids along with their countrymen and women in Afghanistan. The Afghans normally follow Saudi Arabia and the Arab world while starting the month of Ramzan and celebrating Eid-ul-Azha. In Peshawar, Afghans

living in various refugee camps located on the outskirts of the city and those staying outside the camps and in urban and rural areas celebrated Eid-ul-Azha on Sunday. Afghan refugees living in the tribal districts of KP also celebrated Eid along with the rest of the Afghans. The Eid prayers were offered at the Shamshatoo refugee camp located in Peshawar district and in parts of newly merged Mohmand tribal district. The prayers were followed by slaughtering of sacrificial animals as

observance of Sunnat-e-Ibrahimi. The Eid prayers were also offered in other refugee camps and in certain other localities. Afghan refugees from different areas flocked to the venue of the Eid prayers in large numbers. Afghans are celebrating Eid-ul-Adha on Sunday and likewise Eid prayers were offered in Tajabad area of Peshawar, Education Board Area, Board Bazzars, Kurasan camp, Charsadda road, Afghan Colony and most of the areas where the

Afghans are still residing. A large number of Afghans participate in Eid prayers in different localities wherein the Policemen were there ensuring proper security. Soon after the Eid prayers, greetings were exchanged to each other. Afghans celebrate Eid al-Adha with Saudi Arabia every year. Afghan refugees are also sacrificing animals. Eid al-Adha is also being celebrated Sunday in Bara Tehsil, Bar Qamber Khel area and Kohat Jangal Khel of Khyber district.

## Unannounced power outages disrupt daily life in Peshawar

PESHAWAR (APP): Locals of Peshawar staged a protest against the unannounced power outage all across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa including the provincial capital Peshawar on Sunday. In the demonstration led by the Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Fazal Elahi, protesters blocked the ring road from one side. A large number of police personnel are present during the protest. Addressing the protestors Fazal Elahi will the menace of load shedding swept across the province including Peshawar, leaving homes and businesses in the dark in the heat wave. Since June 1, the duration of load shedding has gone up to 16 hours in

different localities of Peshawar including Shahi Bagh Grid Stadium, Charsadda Road, Lala Zar Colony where the bill collections are 100 per cent, a consumer Paras Ahmad told APP. Another citizen from Khazana Sugar Mill reported that they are facing 16 to 18 hours long load shedding daily. No one concerned is

available on the given phone numbers, he added. A tailor, Aziz Ahmed said that the people regularly pay electricity bills but they do not get electricity as per their requirement. "We failed to give stitched suits to the customers on time. The frequent power cuts made it difficult to do work," he said.



PESHAWAR: Residents of PK-84 staging a protest in front of Rahman Baba Grid Station on Ring Road, where they have been facing load shedding for over 18 hours.

be regulated. He underscored the need for a tripartite-export agreement between Pakistan, India and Afghanistan to help meet people's requirements of beef, milk and sacrificial animals. Dr Aftab said that fumigation spray at cattle markets are being conducted to counter animal diseases in the province and teams including DVM doctors were deployed at different cattle markets for monitoring of animals and for spraying of insecticides. He urged the cattle owners to ensure cleanliness and use mosquito repellent besides cold shelters as a safety measure for protection of animals from diseases and heat strokes. In case of illness of any animal, he urged people to isolate it and inform Livestock officials forthwith for its treatment. Dr Aftab said the DVM doctors were assigned tasks to visit cattle markets and ensure that animals with symptoms of lumpy skin and mouth and foot diseases may be quickly isolated and treated on the spot. According to Pakistan





## In brief

### One died in Kaghan

KAGHAN (APP): At least one person on Sunday died and another sustained critical injury when a loaded Shahzor vehicle plunged into a ravine at Babusar Top. According to police sources, two real brothers were on board when a vehicle fell into a ravine where Zahid 26 years old died on the spot while Shiraz 36 years old sustained. Police and locals recovered the dead body and the injured from the hundred-foot-deep gorge and shifted them to Kaghan Rural Health Center for treatment.

### Chashma Lift Canal a gift

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faissal Karim Kundi on Sunday said that the Chashma Lift Canal project was a gift of the federal government for not only the people of Dera Ismail Khan but also the whole province. He stated this while talking to people of his area here at Kundi Model Farm, who came to meet him in large numbers. The Governor said the Chashma Lift Canal was a long standing demand of this area and now the coalition government of Pakistan Peoples' Party (PPP) and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has allocated Rs 19 billion for the project in the recent budget 2024-45. He hoped that the foundation stone of the project would be laid soon. He said that PPP always raised the people's demand of Chashma Lift Canal at every forum. He mentioned that the Chashma Right Bank Canal (CRBC) was a gift of PPP founder leader Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to the people of Dera Ismail Khan and now the project of Chashma Lift Canal was also being launched on the demand of PPP. To make the project more useful for local people, he said a number of suggestions were given to Federal Minister for Water Resources Musadik Masood Malik and WAPDA Chairman Lt. Gen. Sajjad Ghani. The local people paid tribute to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faissal Karim Kundi for presenting the case of Dera Ismail Khan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in a best way.

### WSSC makes 7 zones for Eid Jamal Qamar

BANNU: WSSC Bannu has divided Bannu into seven zones on the occasion of Eid al-adha. Points were established in the inner city and adjacent areas, wherever there is negligence in cleanliness, the in-charge of the respective zone will be responsible. On this occasion, Manager Engr Jawadullah Kundi, Deputy Manager Engr Shazeb Khan, Assistant Manager Sanitation Engr Bakht Niaz Khan and other officers told the meeting that under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Bannu, WSSC officers and personnel during Eid in Bannu district will perform successful operation. Holidays will be cancelled and irrespective of the three days of Eid Al-Adha, the operation will continue in different zones of the city. He said that Bannu city has been divided into 7 zones and separate in-charges and staff have been appointed for each zone, however, in any zone where there is negligence, action will be taken against the concerned in-charge while WSSC Bannu will be present at the point. The officers himself will monitor and review the operation on a daily basis, meanwhile the District administration will also visit the city and inspect the cleaning operation in the respective zones.

# Dir residents protest aainst power outages

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Power consumers at Baroon, Rani, Koto Hajiabad and Gosum areas in the Lower dir district staged different protest rallies against the prolonged and unscheduled power outage.

The protesters blocked the Timergara Chitral road at Rani for about three hours and chanted slogans against the PESCO high ups. The protesters also blocked the road for some time in front of the deputy commissioner office at Balambat. They were complaining about unscheduled and prolonged power outages in their areas.

The road blockade caused difficulties to motorists and passengers who were stranded for hours on the roads.

Addressing the rallies the speakers demanded the federal government to privatize all the power companies as they had failed to provide smooth electricity to its consumers.

The consumers said they would not tolerate any power outage during Eid days and would come onto the roads if the government failed to provide them with uninterrupted electricity.

They said that employees of the power companies used free of cost electricity while consumers were subjected to pay exorbitant bills despite hours' long power outage.

They threatened to take to the streets again if PESCO failed to decrease the duration of power outages in their areas.

Later some of the pro-

testers also staged a demonstration outside the Timergara press club against the administration and police for mishandling the protesters at Hajiabad. They alleged that they were peacefully protesting against the PESCO authorities but local police misbehaved with them and intimidated the protesting consumers.

The PTI village council chairman Abdur Rauf, Jehangir Khan, Tariq Mayar and others demanded an immediate replacement of the Balambat SHO Mahboob Shah.

They complained that the SHO not only abused the peaceful protesters but also threatened their leaders of dire consequences. They warned to bring people again on the road if the SHO was not replaced.

## Animals for aid Opening new vistas for empowerment

MULTAN (APP): After decades long spell of poverty, poor widow Lateefan Begum's economic well-being began with the acquisition of a buffalo through Punjab government's support initiative—a turnaround resulting in Master degree for her son and a respectable job for him.

A resident of Mouza Kotla Chakar, Lateefan Begum was handed over this buffalo in 2017 under the support initiative for poor widows when her son was a student of intermediate. Through her hard work, she reared the animal properly, sold its calves to pay fee of her son who after completing masters' degree is now serving as a lecturer. "This initiative had brought in a ray of hope for my family. Provision of an animal opened a door to prosperity and we as a family fully benefitted from it," Lateefan Begum said. "This venture of the government made my son to complete his education and got a job. Now we are living a happy life."

It was in 2017, when the Punjab government had given animals to poor widows whose children were studying at educational institutes with a vision to support these families in running their kitchen smoothly and help manage educational expenses of their kids.

Lateefan Begum was not alone to benefit from this scheme as number of other families also made way for their better survival and wellbeing.

Another woman, Rubab was supported with two sheep that, in few years multiplied into a dozen after her immense focus on rearing these animals.

"A few years back, I was provided two sheep and today I have a dozen," Rubab informed appreciating this small scale empowerment initiative. "During

these years, I sold out ten sheep generating vital income to meet my house and children's education expenses."

"For me, these sheep were not just livestock but the lifeline that helped me sustain in the face of financial uncertainty," she remarked.

Firdos Bibi, the wife of Abdul Rasheed in Moza Motha Shumali also told the same story of embarking on a journey of empowerment with expanding the number to six from two goats she was provided under this scheme. It is not the saga of only three women as there are many more managing to stand on their feet through this scheme of the then Punjab government.

This initiative also reminds us of Prof. Muhammad Younas of Bangladesh who started an action research pilot project in 1976 that was transformed into Grameen Bank in 1983. After disbursing billions of dollars to poor and downtrodden Bangladeshi families without any collateral, his initiative was rewarded with a Nobel Peace Prize in 2006.

We also had in our country initiatives like Small and Medium Entrepreneur, SME bank, revival of cottage industry, youth and small farmers' loans. But, most of them met their ultimate fate and vanished. Now once again we have the opportunity to promote the livestock sector to alleviate poverty and ameliorate the lot of people. "Disbursing cattle to empower poor families is a good initiative as it helped empower scores of poor families in the past. It is not merely the cattle rearing but an opportunity for economic independence and self-sufficiency of poor families," stated Deputy Director Livestock Dr Jamshaid Akhtar.

"As 70 percent of rural population in South Punjab

is directly linked to livestock sector, it becomes a valuable asset for them to run their kitchen and meet other daily needs," he said. "Presence of animals in a household is akin to holding a blank cheque to be cashed at any moment of need. Animals also serve as a safety net for farmers, providing them a tangible source of cash flow in hard times."

Livestock plays vital role in Pakistan's economy by contributing over 14% to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) also having immense potential to uplift rural communities. As Pakistan is ranked as fifth-largest milk-producing country globally, livestock sector can bring about pleasant changes in lives rural poor.

For this purpose, Jamshaid emphasized to focus on enhancing animal genetics to unlock its full potential for meeting milk and meat needs and fighting out impending food security challenges.

According to Animal Census and Economic Survey reports of last years, around eight million people are rearing around 53.4 million big and 80.3 million small animals in the country. According to Livestock Department, the Multan District alone owns 3,611,964 big animals (Buffalo, Cow), 2,292,687 small animals (goats and sheep) and 714 camels.

Dr Jamshaid Akhtar observed that livestock can perform far better than its present capacity in poverty alleviation and milk and meat production. "The Punjab Livestock department has launched different programs like calf fattening, save buffalo calf, advisory service and provision of free of cost animals. We should also promote use of Silage, Rhodes grass and new animal breeds to further enhance milk and meat production."



QUETTA: A view of massive traffic jam at Bacha Khan Chowk in provincial capital. — INP photo

## Police gun down proclaimed offender F.P. Report

Mardan: A proclaimed offender was gunned down by police in a retaliatory firing when he opened firing over police in a bid to run away from the spot and protect himself from police arrest.

The relevant officials told that the incident took place within the remits of Sheikh Maltoon Town Police Station here on Sunday. They told that the slain pro-claimed offender identified as Irshad alias Shad Ali resident of Bajaur Koroon was wanted to police in several cases of robberies, thefts and other illegal serious cases.

On the incident day, they said that police on a tip-off about his presence in the area, took action to arrest him. They, however, that the pro-claimed offender opened firing over police team when he saw them, with the purpose to make his escape good from the scene.

They claimed that the police personnel were narrowly escape the firing. They said that they took their positions and started retaliatory firing and resolutely killed the pro-claimed offender on the spot.

The DSP Sheikh Khan who was leading the police team, told that they tried their best to arrest the slain pro-claimed offender alive but he was equipped that modern arms and was not ready to lay down the arms and give safe arrest to police. He told that they were compelled to carry out retaliatory firing when he started firing over the police team. He told that they shifted the dead body to hospital and had taken his arms and cartridges into their control. Besides, he told that they had also began further investigations in to the case so that to ascertain that who was backing him or providing assistance.

## SBBWUP's GYM Club visits Swat

SWAT (APP): The GYM Club of Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWUP), in collaboration with the Forest Department, Archaeology and Museum Department, and District Administration Swat on Saturday organized a two-day visit to promote environmental awareness and preserve cultural heritage in Swat Valley.

The initiative featured a series of activities including a cleanliness drive, plantation campaign, and guided tours of historical and archaeological sites such as Barikot, Shingardar Stupa, and Swat Museum. Participants gained insights into the impact of climate change on cultural heritage and the significance of adopting eco-

friendly tourism practices. The event aimed to instill environmental consciousness and stewardship among students and local communities, advocating for a sustainable future for the region.

Led by Vice Chancellor Dr. Safia Ahmad (T.I) and her team, the event received commendation

from the District Government and collaborating departments. The chief organizer and focal person of the GYM Club, Dr. Faiza Tawab, along with organizers Dr. Naila Inayat, Dr. Hamida Bibi, Tasheen Zia, and Saira Khan, played pivotal roles in ensuring the success of the initiative.



## Minister for early dispose of animal waste

SWABI (APP): Provincial Minister for Local Government and Rural Development Arshad Ayub has directed the concerned authorities to ensure the effective implementation of the pre-arranged plan for the immediate disposal of the carcasses of the sacrificial animals on the occasion of Eid-ul-Azha and to ensure the provision of drinking water and sheds in the cattle markets.

He was addressing a meeting held at the office of Tehsil Municipal Administration Swabi after inspecting cattle markets in Tehsil Swabi and Topi. Tehsil Chairman Attaullah Khan, Regional Municipal Officer Zeeshan Khan, Assistant Commissioner Swabi Allah Nawaz Khan, TMO Jahangir Khan and other concerned officials participated in the meeting.

TMO Jahangir Khan, while briefing the provincial minister on the arrangements made for Eid-ul-Azha, said that the supply of clean drinking water for the buyers and cattle in the cattle markets is going on regularly while shades and canopies have also been installed there.

He said arrangements have been made for disposal of sacrificial animal waste and more than 10,000 biodegradable bags have been distributed in various union councils through the elected chairmen. Provincial Local Government Minister Arshad Ayub Khan urged to further improve the arrangements in cattle markets and to keep all the staff on duty during Eid days.

He also directed to increase the number of toilets in the cattle markets

and to provide permanent water sources there. Arshad Ayub Khan urged the municipal officers to work on better business models by better managing their properties to increase the revenue of TMAs.

He said that work is in progress on the lease policy at the provincial level, while the provincial cabinet has formed a committee to establish the Assets Management Company to ensure better management of government properties, which will provide guidance to all departments regarding the better use of government properties.

The Provincial Local Government Minister said that the cabinet committee is already working for fair distribution of the assets of the erstwhile district councils to the TMAs and the issue will be resolved very soon.

# Deosai Plain – A heaven on Earth

GILGIT-BALTISTAN (APP): Embracing exceptional beauty and mesmerizing views lies down a vast patch of land amidst tall peaks and lush green valleys of Northern Areas offering ample soothing and entertainment facilities to tourists and nature lovers.

Known for its enchanting beauty and rich ecology, it enjoys a glaring contrast of landscape and narrow valleys between steep mountains for being in the western massif of the Himalayas, east of Nanga Parbat and in close proximity to Central Karakoram Range.

Yes, it is Deosai Plain, a jewel in the crown of Gilgit-Baltistan – situated at an altitude of 3500 to 5200 meters with an area of 358,400 hectare of flat but undulating plains broken by gently rolling hills, it is surrounded by valleys of Skardu, Kharmang, Astore and Gultari and sky high mountains.

With extreme cold weather and low atmospheric pressure, this plateau receives annual precipitation from 350 to 550 mm as it also boasts of having high

altitude wetlands characterized by Sheosar Lake at 4,250 meters and fed by snow melt from surrounding snow-clad peaks.

The name 'Deosai'; itself tells a fascinating story being a combination of 'Deo' (meaning giant) and 'Sai' (meaning shadow). For being translated as 'the Shadow of a Giant' or 'the Land of Giants,' this place had been fearful for people with many attributing to it mysterious and supernatural tales.

Another fitting name for this region can be 'Roof of the Earth' as it stands as the world's second-highest plateau, towering at approximately 4,114 meters (13,497 ft) above sea level. Eight months it remains covered with snow as remaining four months grace this plateau with pleasant weather and a vibrant array of flowers in multiple colors.

"Nobody can deny its beauty. It is a source of inspiration for local and foreign tourists and nature lovers," remarked a local tourist guide, Aaliya. "People in any region within the country and abroad,



are equally mesmerized by grandeur and unmatched beauty of Deosai."

Deeply attached to its beauty, Aaliya remarked, "It is not just simply a place to visit but an experience leaving ineffaceable imprints on visitors' minds. I take pride in showing them the wonders of Deosai."

Equally conscious for protection its ecosystem, Aaliya says, "any time I take them along and brief about incredible landscapes and unique flora and fauna of Deosai, I also urge them

to protect and preserve its delicate and valuable ecosystem."

Dotted with several other lakes of crystal-clear waters and picturesque surroundings, other than the Sheosar lake, one can imagine the plausible feelings of nature lovers to sojourn at a breathtaking landscape in the lap of towering peaks with clouds so close to be easily touched with their hands.

Large tracts of alpine meadow along with dry stony areas and patches of

"The moment I set foot on the plateau, I was awestruck by feelings of being on top of the world," she added. "The summer wildflowers painted the plateau in a riot of colors and the clarity of Sheosar Lake was unbelievable."

Those who have visited this place take indelible imprints on their minds and those who did not, have an earnest desire to land here in their first moment of leisure.

"Nature and adventure are my passion. The tales I have heard would definitely make me embark on a long journey to Deosai," remarked Rashid Mahmood, an Islamabad based tourist. "I visited many places in Sindh, KPK and Azad Kashmir. But, despite their beauty, none of them could satisfy my desire for mesmerizing Deosai."

Pakistan Government declared Deosai as National Park in 1993, primarily to protect endangered Himalayan Brown Bear although it is also home to Himalayan Ibex, Snow Cock, Snow Leopard, Ladakh Urial, Kashmir

Musk Deer, Himalayan Wolf, Himalayan Marmot, vultures and over 124 resident and migratory bird species.

"The park offers a rare opportunity to connect with wildlife in a pristine setting," remarked a wildlife photographer. "The chance to capture the elusive Himalayan Brown Bear and other unique species in their natural habitat is unparalleled. I spend weeks here to observe wildlife behavior and take a perfect shot. This unique experience leaves cherished memories in my mind."

Deosai is accessible during June to September and from Skardu city, it takes one to two hour to Deosai National Park via Sadpara. Visitors can travel via Car, Jeep and other vehicles but mostly jeeps and four-wheelers are recommended for travelling.

Just to say, Deosai plateau is a gem of Pakistan's tourism landscape. With its unparalleled beauty and ecological significance, the Land of Giant is always there to sway the nature loving people with its enchanting beauty.





## Shooting at splash pad in Detroit suburb injures 9, including 2 children

ROCHESTER HILLS, Mich. (AP): Nine people were injured, including two young children and their mother, after a shooter opened fire at a splash pad in a Detroit suburb where families gathered to escape the summer heat. Law enforcement tracked a suspect to a home, where the man died by a self-inflicted gunshot wound, authorities said.

An 8-year-old boy was shot in the head and in critical condition Saturday night, Oakland County Sheriff Mike Bouchard said during a news conference. The boy's mother also was in critical condition after being wounded in the abdomen and leg, and his 4-year-old brother was in stable condition with a leg wound.

Authorities initially said they believed as many as 10 people had gunshot wounds from the shooting in Rochester Hills, but that number was revised after they checked with area hospitals.

The other six victims, all 30 or older, were in stable condition, Bouchard said. They included a husband-and-wife couple and a 78-year-old man.

The shooting happened just after 5 p.m. at a city park featuring a recreation area with a nonslip surface where people can turn on sprays and fountains of water to play in. Bouchard said the attack appeared to be random, with the shooter driving up to the park, walking to the splash pad and firing as many as 28 times, stopping multiple times to reload.

At least one witness reported that the shooter appeared to use two hand guns during the attack, but that has not yet been confirmed, the sheriff said.

In the chaos, "People were falling, getting hit, trying to run," Bouchard said. "Terrible things that unfortunately all of us in our law enforcement business have seen way too much."

The gunman was "apparently in no rush. Just calmly walked back to his car," the sheriff said.

Police heard the 911 call reporting the shooting as it came in, Bouchard said, because the agency uses a service that simultaneously sends emergency calls to first responders. An officer was at the scene within two minutes, he said.

Bouchard said the first deputies who arrived immediately began providing first aid including tourniquets. Officers also were able to quickly come up with a likely address, and a car matching the suspect's vehicle was at the residence.

Deputies surrounded the home and tried to make contact with the suspect inside, to no avail, Bouchard said. They sent a drone inside the home and then entered to find the suspect was dead.

Another weapon was found inside. The quick containment of the suspect may have prevented a "second chapter" to the shooting, the sheriff said, displaying a photo of a semiautomatic rifle on a table inside the home.

The suspect did not live in Rochester Hills and investigators do not yet know why he went to the splash pad, according to Bouchard.

Officials did not release the man's name. Bouchard described him as a 42-year-old white man and said officials believe he lived with his mother. The man's mother was notified, Bouchard said.

"In terms of the 'why,' I don't know," Bouchard said of the gunman's motive.

At the splash pad, authorities found a handgun, three empty magazines and 28 spent shell casings. At the home, they recovered a semiautomatic rifle and another handgun believed to have been used by the suspect to take his life, Bouchard said.

Police cordoned off the area with

tape and dozens of yellow evidence markers lay on on the ground among colorful folding chairs.

"When I got on scene I started to cry because I know what a splash pad is supposed to be," a place where people gather and have fun, Rochester Hills Mayor Bryan Barnett said.

The shooting was a reminder "that we live in a fragile place," Barnett said.

Rochester Hills is about 15 miles (24 kilometers) south of Oxford, where in 2021 a 15-year-old fatally shot four high school students.

Counseling would be made available at a local public service office on Sunday to anyone in need, Bouchard said. The Oxford Resiliency Center, established to help those impacted by the 2021 shooting at Oxford High School, remains in operation and can assist community members, he said.

"Our most fervent hope, at least at his point, is that all of the injured victims have speedy recoveries," Bouchard said. "None of us ... anticipated going into Father's Day weekend with this kind of tragedy that families will be deeply affected by forever."

Saturday's shooting came at the end of the first full week of summer vacation for students attending Rochester Community schools.

Bouchard called it "a gut punch" for the county.

"We've gone through so many tragedies," the sheriff said. "You know, we're not even fully comprehending what happened at Oxford. And, you know, now we have another complete tragedy that we're dealing with."

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer said on the social platform X that she was heartbroken to learn of the shooting and was in touch with local officials.



ANKARA, TURIYE: Ambassador of Pakistan to Türkiye, Dr Yousaf Junaid in a group photo with Pakistani students at an Eid Milan reception hosted at Pakistan House Ankara.

## Singapore rushes to clean-up oil slick after boat hits ship

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP): An oil spill caused by a dredger boat hitting a stationary cargo tanker has blackened part of Singapore's southern coastline, including the popular resort island of Sentosa, and sparked concerns it may threaten marine wildlife as a clean-up operation was underway Sunday.

The Netherlands-flagged dredger Vox Maxima struck the Singaporean fuel supply ship Marine Honor on Friday. It damaged the cargo tank on Marine Honor, which leaked oil into the sea.

Singapore's Maritime and Port Authority said in a statement late Saturday the oil leak from the vessel had been contained, and that the oil that escaped from the damaged tanker had been treated with dispersants.

But due to the tidal current, it said the treated oil had landed along shorelines including at Sentosa and other southern islands, a nature reserve and a public beach park. Sentosa, which attracts millions of visitors annually, houses one of Singapore's two



casinos, golf courses and Southeast Asia's only Universal Studios theme park.

Part of the beachfront at the public park and at the nature reserve have been closed to facilitate clean-up efforts, it said. The Sentosa beach will remain open to the public but sea activities and swimming are prohibited. On Sunday, workers in orange suits were seen scooping up sand in a clean-up operation at an empty beach in Sentosa. Black water washed up on

the oil-stained shore.

Authorities have deployed 18 crafts for the clean-up efforts and laid close to 1,500 meters of container booms, temporary floating barriers to trap the oil spill.

"More will be laid over the next few days to prevent further spread of oil onto the shore, and facilitate the recovery of the trapped oil off the affected shorelines and lagoons to prevent them from going back to sea," the statement said.

Conservationists and biologists are monitoring the full extent of the damage on marine and wildlife.

Local conservation group Marine Stewards reportedly said there were photos of dead fish, otters and kingfishers covered in oil slick.

Group founder Sue Ye told Singapore Straits Times that oil spills smother and suffocate fish, birds and marine animals that have to go to the surface for air, such as turtles and dolphins.

## Key takeaways from a new poll of Black voters

WASHINGTON (USA Today): President Biden's sagging support among Black voters has set off alarm bells among Democrats and raised hopes among Republicans that Donald Trump could score historic gains with a key part of their opposition's base.

But exclusive USA TODAY/Suffolk University polls of Black voters in Michigan and Pennsylvania, two crucial swing states, show a more complicated dynamic within a demographic group that is unexpectedly in play in November's election.

The surveys of 500 Black voters in each state, taken by landline and cell phone from June 9 to 13, have margins of error of plus or minus 4.4 percentage points.

Here are seven takeaways.

### 1. Yes, Biden has a problem.

The president has suffered significant losses among Black voters who supported him in 2020.

Seventy-six percent of those surveyed in each state said they voted for Biden four years ago. Now, his support has fallen 20 percentage points in Pennsylvania (to 56%) and 22 points in Michigan (to 54%).

Exit polls in 2020 showed Biden received 92% of the Black vote in each state, making his decline now even more precipitous.

The top reason volunteered by respondents in the survey was discontent with the job he's done in the White House, followed by worries about his age and mental acuity. Third was concern about wars, including his support for Israel in the conflict in Gaza.

Biden was viewed favorably by 61% to 31% in Michigan and 59% to 33% in Pennsylvania. While a net positive, it's an anemic showing for a candidate among a part of the electorate that for decades has overwhelmingly supported his party.

To compare, former president Barack Obama, the nation's only Black president, had favorable ratings of 88% to 9% in Michigan and 84% to 11% in Pennsylvania.

### 2. But Black voters aren't sold on Trump, not yet.

Biden's big losses have resulted in small gains for Trump.

In the poll, the presump-



tive Republican nominee was backed by 15% of Black voters in Michigan, compared with 9% who said they voted for him in 2020, and by 11% in Pennsylvania, compared with 8% in 2020.

Exit polls in the last election showed Trump received 7% of the Black vote in each state.

Even limited shifts in support could make a difference in a very close contest, of course.

By more than 2 to 1, Trump drew more support from Black men than Black women - by 22% to 9% in Michigan, and 16% to 6% in Pennsylvania.

Overall, he was viewed much more negatively than Biden. In Michigan, Trump was seen unfavorably by more than 3 to 1, 72% to 23%. His unfavorable rating was even higher in Pennsylvania, at more than 5 to 1, 79% to 15%.

### 3. Kamala Harris is less popular than Biden

Kamala Harris made history in 2020 when she was the first woman, the first Black person, and the first Asian-American to be elected vice president.

Despite that groundbreaking status, she is viewed a tick less favorably than Biden among Black voters in these two states, although her unfavorable rating is also a bit lower: 60% to 24% in Michigan and 55% to 30% in Pennsylvania.

If for some reason Biden wasn't running for president, Harris was preferred for the nomination over several other big-name Democrats, including 2016 nominee Hillary

Clinton, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Georgia Sen. Raphael Warnock.

Harris was the second choice in Pennsylvania and the third in Michigan, where home-state governor Gretchen Whitmer was second.

Rated first in both states: former first lady Michelle Obama, who by the way has made it clear she has no interest in running for office or moving back into the White House.

### 4. For Trump, choosing a Black running mate could backfire.

A majority of Black voters, with percentages ranging from 55% to 59%, said they would be less likely to vote for Trump if he chose any of three Black men frequently mentioned as potential vice-presidential candidates: former Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson, South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott and Florida Rep. Byron Donalds.

That negative reaction swamped the number who said those potential running mates would make them more likely to support the GOP ticket - 17% for Carson, 10% for Scott and 7% for Donalds.

### 5. Trump as a fellow victim of injustice? Not so much.

Trump has speculated that his legal troubles, including his conviction on 34 felony counts in New York and three other pending criminal indictments, have increased his support among Black Americans because they see him as a fellow victim of an unfair

justice system.

That argument didn't ring true in this poll. By a 5 to 1 margin, 79% to 15%, Black voters in Michigan disagreed.

In Pennsylvania, they disagreed by a margin of 7 to 1, 84% to 12%.

What's more, 55% of those in Michigan and 64% in Pennsylvania said they personally found Trump's comments offensive.

That's not to say those surveyed believed the criminal justice system was fair. More than 7 in 10 in each state called it unfair, and majorities said they personally knew of someone who had been wrongly convicted.

### 6. The verdict: Lock him up.

Almost two-thirds of Black voters in each state - 64% in Michigan and 65% in Pennsylvania - said Trump's conviction in New York on charges of falsifying business records in a hush-money scheme made them less likely to vote for him.

If they were the judge in the case, 51% in Michigan and 61% in Pennsylvania said they would impose the harshest possible penalty: jail time.

### 7. For the disaffected, third parties have new appeal.

In 2020, just 1% of those surveyed said they voted for a third-party candidate. Now the drift from Biden has swelled that number to 15% in Michigan and 16% in Pennsylvania.

In Michigan, independent candidate Robert F. Kennedy Jr. was backed by 8% and Cornel West by 6%. In Pennsylvania, West was supported by 8% and Kennedy Jr. by 7%. Green Party candidate Jill Stein was supported by 1% in each state.

A fair share of third-party supporters identified their second choice as some other independent candidate. Backers of West in both states were most likely to choose RFK Jr., for instance.

But the findings underscored Biden's opportunity to claim, or reclaim, the loyalty of Black voters who have defected to third parties. In both states and with every independent candidate, supporters were more likely to pick Biden than Trump as their second choice. Kennedy's supporters in Pennsylvania picked Biden over Trump by 27% to 11%, for instance. In Michigan, the margin was 48% to 13%.

PARIS (AP): Anti-racism groups joined French unions and a brand-new left-wing coalition in protests in Paris and across France on Saturday against the surging nationalist far right as frenzied campaigning is underway ahead of snap parliamentary elections.

The French Interior Ministry said 250,000 people turned out to protest, 75,000 of them in Paris. Despite rainy and windy weather, those who fear that the elections will produce France's first far-right government since World War II gathered at Place de la Republique before marching through eastern Paris. Up to 21,000 police and gendarmes were deployed.

The protesters held placards reading "Liberty for all, Equality for all and Fraternity with all" — a reference to France's national motto — and "Let's break frontiers, documents for all, no to the immigration bill." Some chanted "Free Palestine, viva Palestine," and wore keffiyeh scarves.

Among them was Nour Cekar, a 16-year-old high school student from the Paris region, who has French and Algerian parents and wears the hijab.

"To me, the extreme

right is a danger because it supports an ideology based on the fear of the other, whereas we are all French citizens despite our differences," she told The Associated Press.

Cekar said she will vote for the left-wing coalition because "it is the only political party that addresses racism and Islamophobia."

"I fear the rise of the National Rally because I am afraid that they will ban the hijab in name of women's liberty. I am a woman and I should be able to decide what I want to wear. I am a free woman," she said, adding that she is insulted on social media and in the streets on a daily basis because of her headscarf.

Against the backdrop of music of French-Malian singer Aya Nakamura, the crowd chanted "Everyone hates racism."

"France is made up of people of different origins. It is its strength. The National Rally wants to break that," 68-year-old Mohamed Benammar, a French doctor with Tunisian roots who works in a Paris public hospital, told AP.

"We provide medical care to everyone, without worrying about their nationality, the color of

their skin or their religion, unlike the fascists (extreme-right leaders) that single out Black, Arabs or Muslim people," he said.

Although his son told him that it was useless to protest, Bannamar said he's convinced that it is important to make his voice heard. "I am here to send a strong signal to politicians. We won't stay silent in the face of the far right," he said.

Police in Paris reported "numerous attempts at damage" by protesters. They said that nine protesters were arrested and three officers were injured. An AP journalist said police used tear gas against demonstrators who tried to vandalize a bus stop and advertising boards.

In the French Riviera city of Nice, protesters marched down Jean Médecin Avenue, the city's main shopping street, chanting against the National Rally, its leader Jordan Bardella as well as against President Emmanuel Macron. Local police said 2,500 people took part.

Nice is traditionally a conservative stronghold, but has over the past decade turned firmly in favor of Marine Le Pen's National Rally and her far-

right rival Eric Zemmour.

Crowds have been gathering daily ever since the anti-immigration National Rally made historic gains in the European Parliament elections on Sunday, crushing Macron's pro-business moderates and prompting him to dissolve the National Assembly.

New elections for the lower house of parliament were set in two rounds, for June 30 and July 7. Macron remains president until 2027 and in charge of foreign policy and defense, but his presidency would be weakened if the National Rally wins and takes power of the government and domestic policy.

"We need a democratic and social upsurge — if not the extreme right will take power," French unions said in a statement Friday. "Our Republic and our democracy are in danger."

To prevent the National Rally party from winning the upcoming elections, left-wing parties finally agreed Friday to set aside differences over the wars in Gaza and Ukraine and form a coalition. They urged French citizens to defeat the far right.

French opinion polls suggest the National Rally — whose founder has been repeatedly convicted of racism and antisemitism — is expected to be ahead in the first round of the parliamentary elections. The party came out on top in the European elections, garnering more than 30% of the vote cast in France, almost twice as many votes as Macron's party Renaissance.

Macron's term is still on for three more years, and he would retain control over foreign affairs and defense regardless of the result of the French parliamentary elections.

But his presidency would be weakened if the National Rally wins, which could put its 28-year-old party leader Bardella on track to become the next prime minister, with authority over domestic and economic affairs.





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## Anti-Chinese Covid vaccine campaign

THE United States military intelligence is known to stoop to hit the enemy. The critics would say that is the job of the military intelligence, and it is something that every country does. The ironical part is that the US as a democracy leaves enough cracks open to let out the secret story. The international news agency, Reuters, in its special investigation reveals that the US military intelligence at the Pentagon, the defence headquarters, has carried a propaganda war against the Chinese vaccine, Sinovac, in the Philippines, and in central and the Middle East. This is seen as a revenge act for China blaming the US for the spread of the Covid. The US was blaming China and the World Health Organisation (WHO) not taking immediate action when the pandemic broke out in Wuhan in November-December of 2019. The WHO did not declare it as an international emergency till the end of January 2020.

The hunt for the vaccine began in early 2020 itself, but no vaccine was ready till late 2020. According to Reuters investigation, the Pentagon started the anti-Chinese vaccine propaganda quite early in 2020. This would mean that even as the coronavirus broke out, the vaccines were rolled out. If that has been the case, then the Covid story becomes more diabolical than ever. It means that on the one hand, the virus spread like wildfire across geographies, and simultaneously, the anti-Covid vaccine became available too. Russia was ready with its Sputnik vaccine as early as June 2020. India was eager to be ready with the vaccine by August of that year. It is indeed the case that the Chinese vaccine human trials were going in many countries, even as the Sputnik human trials were on in Türkiye. But the worldwide vaccine counter happened only at the end of 2020. For a year after the outbreak of the pandemic, people and the doctors across the world were helpless.

The chronology does not take away from the pernicious propaganda style of the Pentagon. Whatever may be the lines of enmity, if the Sinovac vaccine was effective, it was not morally right to tell people that it is not safe and endanger the lives of millions. There is indirect confirmation from unnamed sources in the Pentagon and elsewhere that the anti-Chinese vaccine propaganda was a fact. The question that it spanned the last year of the presidency of Donald Trump, or that it was in use into the first few months of Joe Biden's term in 2021 makes the two administrations culpable. But the revenge factor seems less convincing. The more probable reason could be that that the American pharma companies like Pfizer and Moderna were releasing their respective anti-Covid vaccines in the second half of 2020, and the Pentagon's anti-Chinese Covid vaccine propaganda could be seen as helping the American commercial interests.

The Covid story worldwide remains unclear and incomplete in all its phases. There has been too much of an emphasis on tracing the origins of Covid, especially to China, with an intention to hold China responsible. Scientific investigation teams from the WHO had visited China but it was acknowledged that the coronavirus has muted so much that it would be impossible to nail the origins. But the more important factor is that the research on the corona viruses going on in the Chinese laboratories with American collaboration. And that story has not been fully revealed. If the Pentagon got into the act of launching a propaganda offensive against the Chinese anti-Covid vaccine, it would mean that there are many secrets lurking in the dark. There is need for an international investigation about the Covid pandemic. The WHO has lost its credibility of being an impartial body for many reasons. So, it is left to the newshounds to tell it all.

## Canberra taking steps in right direction

PREMIER Li Qiang's ongoing visit to Australia, which started on Saturday following his successful visit to New Zealand, looks set to further strengthen Beijing and the Anthony Albanese government's consensus that maintaining the healthy development of bilateral ties serves the two countries' common interests.

In 2014, the two countries established a comprehensive strategic partnership, and mutually beneficial and win-win cooperation became the general theme of bilateral relations after that until the previous Scott Morrison government, under the sway of Washington, took a confrontational approach to relations. Australian Prime Minister Albanese's successful visit to China last year helped return bilateral ties to the right track, and practical cooperation is again the focus of China-Australia relations.

The face-to-face exchanges between Li, who is making the first visit by a Chinese premier to Australia since 2017, and Australian political and business leaders and representatives from different sectors of the Australian society over issues of common concern provide a good opportunity for the two sides to deepen their mutual understanding and explore ways to tap the full potential of their economic and trade cooperation.

The fast recovering curve of Sino-Australian ties over the past two years should prompt both Beijing and Canberra to foster a more mature, stable and fruitful partnership that is resistant to outside interference. Canberra has already demonstrated that it is not willing to unreservedly follow Washington's lead having expressed critical views on the US' tariff attack on Chinese goods and export restrictions targeting Chinese technology development.

If Canberra and Beijing can build greater mutual trust and treat each other's concerns with respect, there is no reason why they can't overcome misconceptions and misperceptions about each other's actions and intentions.

The op-ed by Albanese, "Working productively with China will benefit everyone in the region", published by The Australian three days prior to Li's visit, shows clearly Canberra's willingness to meet Beijing halfway in that direction. In the article, the Australian leader said Li's visit represents "another step forward in the patient, calibrated and deliberate efforts of our Government to rebuild dialogue with China and stabilise the relationship between our nations".

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## Clock is ticking for Netanyahu's non-unity government

Yossi Mekelberg

For war Cabinet ministers Benny Gantz and Gadi Eisenkot it was a matter of when, not if, they would quit Israel's so-called unity government, and in doing so withdraw the support of 12 National Party members of the Knesset for the ruling coalition. There must be questions asked about the logic of their participation in the government in the first place, and certainly about their decision not to leave months ago when it became clear that Israel was sinking deeper into the quagmire of Gaza, failing to give the release of the hostages top priority, and becoming increasingly internationally isolated, while around the corner a full-scale war with Hezbollah was looming. Gantz and Eisenkot might have believed that they were acting as a counterbalance to the extreme right wing in government, but in fact, as time passed, all that they were doing was propping up the most disastrous leadership in Israel's history.

Gantz's "dramatic" announcement was delayed by 24 hours as a result of the operation last Saturday to release four Israeli hostages, but this did not dissuade him from the view that his eight-month partnership with Benjamin Netanyahu had run its course. Since Gantz sent his ultimatum to Netanyahu, it was obvious from the outset that his five demands would not be met, and the clock for the end of this partnership was ticking loudly. In truth, Gantz and his political colleagues were always looking to the exit door, and rightly so, but it does not lessen the deep concern that Israel is once again, as it was until last October, governed by the most far-right, incompetent, and irresponsible government since its founding, while it faces the most profound domestic and international crisis in its

history. The question on everyone's lips is whether the departure of the National Unity party will bring the country one step closer to the end of the Netanyahu government and lead to a general election resulting in the long overdue end of the Netanyahu era. On the one hand the coalition must now rely on a much narrower support base of 64 members of the Knesset, a majority of only four, but they are in this sinking ship together, fully aware that they are highly unlikely to hold the reins of power after the next election, and that at the same time many of them will also lose their seats in the Israeli parliament. This might encourage them to prolong the life of this government for a little bit longer.

By all accounts, Sunday's resignation was very much a delayed response and should have occurred earlier in the year, when Israel's military had lost its momentum and most of the reserve units were discharged, which in turn hardened Hamas' position on releasing the hostages, and led them to demand a full and permanent ceasefire, which has its own logic. At that stage Netanyahu was acting as if he were ready to agree to a truce, but he stepped back from this fear of losing the support of the far-right elements in his coalition, and in the knowledge that ending the war would be followed by an investigation into the colossal security failure of Oct. 7 for which most would hold him personally responsible. So he began stalling the negotiations, but the longer this continued, Hamas, in this case the Gaza branch led by Yahya Sinwar, increasingly felt itself, rightly or wrongly, in the ascendancy and

engage in a full-scale war with Hezbollah — supported a bill that continued the unfair and immoral arrangement that ultra-Orthodox youth are not obliged to serve in the military. There is hardly anything that irks those who serve in the security forces more than the fact that parliamentarians who are asking them to risk their lives on the battlefield are happy to do so when it is someone else's daughter or son and not their own.

A bigger test for this government will come when supporting a ceasefire deal with Hamas becomes a genuine option. The leaders of the far right are behaving in an increasingly vile manner toward families of the hostages for demanding a deal that would see their loved ones returned, and are threatening to leave the coalition if such an agreement is reached. But, then, such a deal is likely to be supported by several opposition parties even without the Ben Gvirs and Smotritches of this coalition, who are strong in neither the empathy or strategy departments, and will then have to decide whether to stay in government. Gantz's resignation has not instantly brought the government down, but has sown the seeds for its fall. Netanyahu's coalition is on life support, and ordinary Israelis are continuing to demonstrate their lack of confidence in it, whether in opinion polls or on the streets. At some point it is either bottom-up pressure from the people that will bring the government down, or pressure from the international community that will do the same — but it is more likely to be a combination of the two. However, when the era of far-right extremists comes to a close, it will be a case of good riddance.

The cynical nature of the slimmed-down coalition was revealed less than 24 hours after the National Unity party departed during a vote on drafting ultra-Orthodox yeshiva students for military service. Shamelessly, the very coalition government that is pushing an agenda of never-ending wars — and some of whose members would like to reoccupy Gaza and build settlements there, not to mention

## Eidul Azha: A festival of faith, community and compassion

The day of Eid al-Adha is a significant religious observance in Islam. It reminds us of the sacrifices and hardships faced by the Prophet Ibrahim (may peace be upon him) and his son, the Prophet Ismail (may peace be upon him). The day serves as a historical recollection and a profound spiritual exercise that revitalises believers' dedication to leading a virtuous life. This annual observance underscores the enduring power of faith and emphasises that the quintessence of sacrifice is found in submission to a higher, transcendent purpose.

This Eid encourages believers to surrender their worldly desires and ambitions to serve a higher purpose, echoing the teachings found in the Quran and Hadith. This concept of surrender nurtures a sense of inner peace and tranquillity. It reassures believers of a divine plan, fostering trust and solace in the guidance and protection offered by a higher power. According to tradition,

the path on which God ordained Prophet Ibrahim and his family was full of trials and tribulations. Still, they never complained, even in the most challenging moments. The journey of Hajj and the day of Eid al-Adha reminds every believer to tread the path of faith that Prophet Ibrahim and his family followed.

The spirit of Eid emphasises the importance of gratitude for the blessings one has received, which include the ability to share wealth, time, and resources with those less fortunate. This act of giving is not confined to material possessions but extends to acts of forgiveness and compassion. Believers are encouraged to heal broken relationships, reconcile with estranged family members or friends, and cultivate an environment of love and harmony, embodying the prophetic teachings of mercy and unity.

Moreover, the socio-economic aspect of Eid al-Adha is significant. By giving the sacrificed animal's meat to the economically weaker section of society, the festival addresses issues of poverty and hunger, promoting social equity. This practice reinforces the concept that wealth is a trust from God to be used for the benefit of all humanity, thus fostering a sense of community and solidarity among believers.

In conclusion, Eid al-Adha transcends mere ritualistic practice, offering a reminder of higher purpose and calling. By embracing the festival's teachings, the faithful are encouraged to renew their commitment to lives imbued with meaning, purpose, and spiritual growth.

As a powerful agent of transformation, Eid al-Adha inspires individuals to embody the values of faith, sacrifice, and generosity throughout the year, thereby contributing to a more compassionate and harmonious world. This holistic approach to understanding and practising Eid al-Adha ensures that its spiritual, ethical, and social dimensions are fully integrated into the daily lives of believers.

— Gulf News

## Europe decided, what next for North Africa?

Hafed Al-Ghwel

The recent European parliamentary elections have set the stage for interesting shifts in the bloc's policies toward North Africa, a region that is increasingly pivotal, and not only for its proximity to Europe. In recent years, North Africa has risen sharply in Western policy priorities owing to rapidly increasing roles in managing migration, bolstering European energy security, counterterrorism cooperation, regional stabilization, and climate change mitigation. Given the outcomes of these elections, it is critical to explore how EU-North Africa relations might evolve or prefer continuity in Europe's approach toward its closest southern neighbors.

On migration, the changes in the European Parliament's composition signal potential continuity of favoring stringent immigration controls, and increased reliance on externalization policies that empower North African countries to stem migration flows before they reach European shores. The policy aligns with existing practices, where the EU has sought to reinforce its borders indirectly through collaboration with third countries, coupled with financial incentives to bolster their capacity to deter migrations.

The sustainability of these policies, however, has come under intense scrutiny. Externalization has proven effective in reducing numbers, but it does not deal with the underlying causes of migration, such as instability, economic hardship, and climate change impacts that prevail both in origin countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa, and transit countries, mainly in North Africa. The resulting policy framework thus risks perpetuating a cycle where short-term containment overshadows long-term solutions.

North African governments appear to have embraced their sharply expanding roles as gatekeepers of "Fortress Europe." After all, the threat of a repeat of the 2015 crisis has and will continue to provide significant leverage in negotiations with Brussels. The jury is still out on whether a continuation of the dynamic will eventually shift discussions toward more comprehensive partnerships that include investments in key sectors, infrastructure development, and climate resilience. However, with the current makeup of this next parliament, the EU will likely resist adopting more nuanced strategies beyond the current "contain first, answer later" approach, even when faced with continued migration pressures and heightened criticism from human rights groups.

On climate policy, the proposed outcomes and sentiments expressed in continental frameworks such as the European Green Deal make it clear that energy security and sustainability are taking on a new-found primacy in European policy circles. These are not just shaping the internal dynamics within the European bloc but also recalibrating extrinsic partnerships, particularly with its resource-endowed southern neighbor North Africa.

In turn, North African countries are keenly aware of the evolving energy narrative within the EU for various reasons. Aside from Algeria's meteoric rise as an alternate supplier for disrupted Russian gas, there is also the region's unmatched potential in solar and wind energy that makes it a pivotal player in the EU's "greenification," and mitigating the dependence on non-renewables. Such a trajectory holds great promise for North African countries willing to harness this potential. A concerted move to establish clearer policy directives and bolster infrastructure can channel substantial EU investment into renewable projects — investment that can be a catalyst for broader economic revitalization and diversification within the region.

However, while the EU's policy shift toward the green transition and the enshrined goals such as

net-zero emissions by 2050 stand as a testament to its commitment to addressing climate change, this shift is not without its complexities. The impetus toward a green transition, while supported by some European political factions, faces resistance from others, particularly from sectors with entrenched interests in traditional energy sources or those that perceive environmental regulations as threatening to economic competitiveness. Such actions have a direct bearing on the magnitude and pace of green investment flows, and by extension, the benefits to North Africa.

Moreover, the greening of European economies is likely to prompt a systemic shift in global energy markets. North African countries, therefore, perceive the existential necessity not only to align with this transition but also to integrate into the emerging green value chains — motivated by opportunities to create new industries, jobs, and economic diversification. Simultaneously, North African states are disproportionately affected by climate impacts, such as water scarcity and agricultural disruptions, which worsen existing vulnerabilities. Arguably, a deeper collaboration with the EU on climate finance and technology transfers presents not just a route to economic development but also a way to bolster climate resilience — a synergy that dovetails with both EU's foreign policy aspects of the Green Deal and North Africa's overall development in future.

In light of security recalibrations in the Sahel, notably the termination of the EU Training Mission in Mali and other missions in Niger, the bloc insists that it will remain a steadfast security partner to Africa. Despite withdrawals from specific operations in the Sahel due to the region's political instability and the arrival of competing security entities such as Russian mercenaries, the EU's resolve to engage with African nations on security matters, notably through new civilian-military missions, signals a flexible approach to tackling transnational threats.

North African policymakers are also cognizant of these shifts. Approaches that combine direct military training with broader, capacity-building missions align with both current and future efforts to bolster regional stability and counter threats that could spill over from the Sahel. This operational reshaping indicates European readiness to adapt its security strategies to political changes within its territories and external geopolitical fluctuations, shoring up its role as a critical security partner for a region that sits right next to a volatile Sahel and Horn of Africa.

Lastly, on democratization, the EU's stance has evolved toward democracy support — a noticeable pivot from an assertive democratization agenda — to safeguard democratic spaces in restrictive contexts. The recalibrated strategy is less about exporting a specific democratic model and more focused on preserving the civic freedoms necessary for democracy to breathe.

The change signifies a recognition of the complexities inherent in supporting democracy in environments where political repression and challenges to civic freedoms are prevalent. Thus, the EU will likely increasingly favor initiatives that strengthen the resilience of civil society, rather than pushing for immediate political transformations.

In sum, the trajectory of EU-North Africa relations in the wake of European parliamentary elections presents a complex interplay of continuity and potential shifts. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for navigating existing challenges and leveraging opportunities to redefine the region's engagement with Europe. Future strategies should remain nuanced, aiming to balance national interests with collaboration in areas of shared threats, from energy security to climate action, while pursuing a migration agenda that respects dignity and promotes development.



# G7 steps up as geopolitics defines Italy’s summit

The G7 was created amid the instability of the 1970s to monitor developments in the world economy. Yet, its role as a geopolitical lynchpin has long been key to a function that has been highlighted at the Italian leadership summit this week.

Top of the agenda was Ukraine, where the situation has “deteriorated dramatically,” according to Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who traveled to Italy for the summit, implored the West for urgent, increased support.

A number of security deals were made with Kyiv, the standout of which is a 10-year bilateral agreement with the US — seen in the West as a potential transition point for Ukraine on the road to joining NATO. This includes commitments for prolonged aid encompassing areas such as military training, the sharing of intelligence, and economic assistance.

The deal builds from the unexpected decision by US President Biden in recent days to bend to international pressure to allow Ukraine to use US-made weapons to hit Russian territory for the first time. This after other Western allies, including Germany and France, eased their own rules following NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg’s assertion that the “time has come” for change.

To be sure, the long-term US policy of stopping Kyiv deploying long-range missiles to strike targets inside Russia — across the board — has not been altered. Instead, the change, for now, is limited to Ukraine using US weapons for counterattack purposes in Kharkiv. Nonetheless, the shift could be significant, and a

potential sign of things to come, especially if Russia makes much more ground in coming weeks.

The G7 also agreed this week to a \$50 billion loan to Ukraine. This uses profits from \$300 billion in frozen Russian assets in the West to boost funding for Kyiv, a move that Moscow has condemned.

There were also broader efforts at the summit to woo the Global South on Ukraine. Italian Prime Minister Georgia Meloni invited a range of key emerging market leaders,

Andrew Hammond

release of all hostages, plus a significant and sustained increase in humanitarian assistance for distribution throughout the enclave.

China was also on the agenda, with the US pushing, in the words of US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen, for a “strategic and united” response to China’s overinvestment in electric vehicles, solar products, semiconductors, steel, and other key sectors in order to keep Western

international skeptics of this week’s G7 meeting producing any meaningful outcomes, the agreements reached, including on Ukraine, may prove significant. This should not be too surprising, as the Western club has previously been at its best in times of crisis, tackling the big issues of the day.

It was founded in 1975 in the aftermath of geopolitical and economic shocks when Washington pulled out of the gold standard. This underlines that it is fit for turbulent times

proven record of delivering, and can potentially play a significant role again now. This is especially urgent given the paralysis of the G20, with splits between the West and Russia, China plus its allies.

The Italian summit may also be noteworthy as it is potentially the last of Biden’s presidency. At the back of the mind of the leaders has been the possibility that next year’s event could see the return of former US President Donald Trump.

From 2017 to 2021, Trump’s presence prompted the worst divisions ever within the G7. This reached its nadir in 2018 at the Canadian summit, which saw an unprecedented failure to agree an end-of-summit communique and remarkable unidiomatic language, including Trump’s characterization of Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau as “so indignant,” while the latter called the US leader’s trade tariffs “laughable.”

The personal animosity on display between Trump and other leaders provided political atmospherics for wider policy splits. The US leader, for instance, called on the first day of the summit for Russia to be allowed to rejoin the group (as the G8), as was the case from 1997 to 2013. Yet other G7 leaders dismissed this, and instead called for a “rapid and unified” response to Moscow’s malign international interference.

Taken together, the Italian summit has provided a key moment for Western leaders to double down on the big strategic questions facing the world. At a time when the G20 has become less effective, the G7 has assumed new relevance and has greater potential to set the global agenda again.

# Is Europe sliding toward a new dark age?

Jonathan Gornall

Over the past week, the continent of Europe has undergone a seismic shift to the right.

Elections to the European Parliament have seen significant gains by far-right nationalist parties in countries including Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and Hungary.

Much of the attention since the June 6-9 poll has been focused on the decision by French President Emmanuel Macron to call a snap parliamentary election, prompted by the defeat of his centrist Renaissance party and its pro-European coalition Besoin d’Europe by Marine Le Pen’s far-right National Rally.

This has raised the distinct possibility that, for the first time since Marshal Philippe Petain sided with the Nazis in 1940 to create the collaborationist Vichy regime, France could be under the control of an extremist right-wing government.

This would be catastrophic for the great European project, paving the way for a Frexit referendum, despite the evidence of how badly Brexit has played out for the UK.

But it is developments in Germany that, with historical hindsight, are the most sinister, and ironic.

The alliance of the conservative Christian Democratic Union and the Christian Social Union may have come first in the European elections in Germany, but the real shock is the surge into second place, with 16 percent of the vote, of the new populist party, Alternative für Deutschland.

Rewind exactly 100 years to 1924, the year in which a new populist National Socialist Freedom Party contested its first elections in Germany. The NSFP was a front for the recently banned National Socialist German Workers’ Party, better known as the Nazis, whose leader Adolf Hitler had just been jailed in the wake of the failed Munich “Beer Hall” coup.

The NSFP did poorly in the 1924 election, winning just 3 percent of the vote. But within nine years Hitler was head of a coalition government as chancellor and, in August the following year, 1934, declared himself Fuhrer, transforming Germany into a totalitarian dictatorship.

The rest is tragic, bloody history — and a history that, a century on, is showing disturbing signs of repeating itself. Perhaps “irony” is an inadequate word for the events of the past week or so.

On June 6, European leaders, US President Joe Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau gathered solemnly in Normandy to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the Allied landings in France that freed Europe from the tyrannical grip of the Nazis.

Yet, within days, voters had handed far-right parties across the continent their best-ever results in European Parliament elections. It is, of course, utterly forbidden in European media or politics to compare the policies of any modern democratic political party with those of the Nazis. But the grim reality is that the specter of the hijacking of Germany’s democratic system by the Nazis a century ago has returned to haunt the continent. Every one of Europe’s newly resurgent right-wing parties has one thing in common with the Nazis, which resonates with citizens tired of incompetent governments and economic hardship: the infectious lie that all their problems, from long hospital waiting lists and a lack of housing to runaway crime and overcrowding in schools and prisons, can be blamed on immigrants.

head of UKIP successor party Reform UK, which is rising in the polls and hoping to take advantage of the predicted imminent collapse of the Conservative Party in the general election on July 4.

Reform is fielding more than 600 candidates, including Farage, who is running in the overwhelmingly white, deprived, working-class constituency of Clacton, on England’s east coast. Migrants are the main target of his election rhetoric.

Farage stands a good chance of winning the seat. If he does, there is even talk among Tory MPs — scared, once again, of being swept away by the rising tide of the right — that he should be invited to join the Conservative party and supplant Rishi Sunak

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particular route to this tipping point.

Britain, for example, stepped onto the slippery slope in 2006, when the right-wing, Euroskeptic UK Independence Party, seen by many at the time as an unpleasant joke, was taken over by Nigel Farage, a wealthy former commodities trader.

Farage focused the party’s campaigning on immigration and its supposed negative impact on white working-class Britons, and it worked. In 2014, UKIP shocked mainstream parties by winning the majority of Britain’s seats in the European Parliament.

In 2015, to appease right-wing members of the ruling Conservative party who feared that UKIP candidates would take their seats in the upcoming UK general election, Conservative Prime Minister David Cameron agreed to hold a national referendum on the country’s continuing membership of the EU.

In the event, UKIP won only a single seat in the general election, but the damage was done. On June 23, 2016, Britons voted narrowly to leave the EU.

Now Farage is back, as

as leader.

The British political experience, which in various forms is being repeated all over Europe, demonstrates that within just a few short years the politically unthinkable can become the inevitable.

These are dangerous times.

A fractious Europe, divided by competing nationalist agendas, has twice dragged the entire world into tragic conflict, which in both cases ended with disastrous and ongoing consequences for the peoples of the Middle East.

The EU, founded in the wake of the Second World War to guard against such a thing happening again, is now under siege by nationalist extremists looking to gain power by wrapping themselves in a flag and appealing to the very worst in people.

European history teaches us that political and moral compromise, when exercised for no better reason than a visceral, self-serving desire to hang on to power at any cost, can have terrible consequences. An anxious world must now wait to discover whether that is a lesson Europeans have learnt, or forgotten.

# Book review: A novel that redefines what a whodunit can be

Stuart Turton, celebrated for his innovative storytelling in The 7 1/2 Deaths of Evelyn Hardcastle and The Devil and the Dark Water, presents another compelling narrative in The Last Murder at the End of the World.

This novel is a brilliant fusion of post-apocalyptic science fiction and intricate murder mystery, offering a fresh take on both genres.

In Turton’s latest work, the world beyond the island has succumbed to a lethal fog that annihilates all life it touches. The island remains a safe haven for 122 villagers and three scientists. These islanders lead idyllic lives, dedicated to fishing, farming, and adhering to a strict curfew, under the guidance of the scientists who ensure their safety.

The peace is abruptly shattered when one of the scientists is found brutally murdered. This horrific act triggers a catastrophic chain of events: the island’s security system, which keeps the deadly fog at bay, begins to fail. The villagers are given a grim deadline — solve the murder within 107 hours, or face total annihilation as the fog envelops their sanctuary.

Uncovering the truth

Adding to the tension, the island’s security system has erased everyone’s

Ahmad Nazir

memories of the night of the murder. This twist not only complicates the investigation but also means the murderer could be any one of them, oblivious to their own guilt. The islanders must navigate their fractured memories to uncover the truth.

Turton skilfully merges post-apocalyptic elements with a classic murder mystery, creating a narrative where both genres enhance each other. The dystopian setting is integral to the story, amplifying the stakes and urgency of the mystery. The integration of these elements showcases Turton’s ability to innovate

within genre conventions.

The novel’s science fiction aspects are particularly thought-provoking. Turton introduces advanced technologies such as AI integrated into human consciousness and memory-storing games.

These concepts are not merely decorative but play a crucial role in the plot, adding layers of complexity and engaging the reader’s imagination.

A sophisticated whodunit

At its core, The Last Murder at the End of the World is a sophisticated whodunit. The memory loss mechanism presents a unique challenge, both for the characters and the reader.

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ers, who must piece together the fragmented clues. The 107-hour deadline injects relentless suspense, making every twist and turn more impactful.

Stuart Turton has once again demonstrated his prowess in crafting an intellectually stimulating and deeply engaging narrative.

The Last Murder at the End of the World is not just a novel but an experience, blending high-concept science fiction with the intrigue of a murder mystery.

This book is a must-read for fans of either genre, promising a story that is as thought-provoking as it is thrilling.

# From deserts to destinations: Saudia’s tourism transformation

In the last few years, there has been tremendous tourism focus and development in Saudi Arabia. With a population exceeding 30 million, the country’s leaders wisely decided to capture some of those tourist dollars spent elsewhere and help boost their economy.

While a few entertainment venues have been completed, there are many more in the building stages and others whose blueprints are being drawn. All are intending to cater not only to foreign tourists but to millions here who travel out annually.

One of the unique aspects of the GCC is that summers are scorching and school holidays extend beyond two months making it an annual chore for the head of the household to make plans for a brief respite somewhere preferably cooler.

And as summer holidays for schoolchildren officially begin this week, hundreds of thousands of families are busily preparing for a holiday somewhere or the other.

Summer heat and exotic attractions

To understand the nature of tourism in this country, one must come to grips with what is it that still drives most families to for-

eign destinations. In the past, it used to be the lure of shopping, cinemas and the like. But all that has been resolved. So what is it? Is it the summer heat, the exotic attractions, the force of

Tariq A. Al Maeena

right, and many outlets of entertainment for his growing children.

Burhan, a municipal worker, is off to Egypt. “I

Rana, a housewife from Taif had this to say. “During my childhood, I remember my father packing off the whole family to the hilly resorts of Abha and Sawdah. Even during

love the water, the beaches, the crashing of the waves. Cape Town has it all including good cool weather, fair prices, and a lot of attractions to keep my children amused. And the people are genuinely friendly to tourists. What more could I want?”

“Yes, we do have hundreds of miles of coastline both in the east and west of this country” he continued. “But are they open to the public”.

Leila, a university student in Jeddah, had this to say. “I am off to Paris with my family. Why? Because I love art, and Paris is a city of the arts. And I enjoy the variety of people from everywhere, all minding their own business as they meander through the city. And the cuisine ... Par excellence.”

While the Supreme Commission for Tourism is actively engaged in promoting tourism within Saudi Arabia, perhaps they may take note of some of the views expressed by those who choose to spend their vacation money abroad. Friendliness, facilities, places of historical and general interest, and prices seem to be the overriding factors.

Give people what they want here, and watch them flock the places.

To understand the nature of tourism in this country, one must come to grips with what is it that still drives most families to foreign destinations. In the past, it used to be the lure of shopping, cinemas and the like. But all that has been resolved. So what is it? Is it the summer heat, the exotic attractions, the force of habit, or just what? I caught up with a few individuals who have booked plans for a vacation abroad. Qais, a professor at a local university is flying off to Malaysia with his family. This is not the first time for him and his family to the same destination. He finds the country people friendly, the prices just right, and many outlets of entertainment for his growing children.

habit, or just what?

I caught up with a few individuals who have booked plans for a vacation abroad. Qais, a professor at a local university is flying off to Malaysia with his family. This is not the first time for him and his family to the same destination. He finds the country people friendly, the prices just

like Egypt for its variety and friendliness. Tell me where you can find such places close by? Syria, which used to be our first choice is no longer an option. My children are interested in history, and Egypt’s ancient civilisation and historical artefacts offers them a chance to witness them first-hand.

the hottest period of the year, we would enjoy the cool morning mist as we camped on the hillside. But go to them today. There is hardly any area that is not walled by private owners.”

“What more could I want?”

Sameer, an architect is off to Cape Town in South Africa with his family. “We

# Even Mother Earth’s fury failed to awaken us

Hassan bin Youssef Yassin

Mother Earth has been the archetype of generosity and graciousness for as long as our planet has existed. Like every mother, though, there is a point where we push her too far and she loses her patience.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, Mother Earth had already been giving us polite warnings that we were pushing her and our planet too far. Since then, she has started to show her frustration more frequently.

And yet we have continued to ignore the rapidly deteriorating state of our environment to the point where it is starting to threaten our very existence.

The weapons used in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, and elsewhere to destroy families and territories are not unlike the tools we humans have turned on Mother

Earth, cutting down and torching her forests, parching her of freshwater, poisoning her soil, and overexploiting her resources.

We are right to be concerned about the harm humans are inflicting upon other humans, but we should be far more concerned by the existential threat posed to humanity by our wretched destruction of the environment that sustains us.

As we look around us, we see lakes and arable land disappear, pollinating insects dwindle, fish vanish from our oceans, and weather phenomena become ever more extreme.

The year 2023 was not only the hottest on record; it was an outlier in the trend of global warming, a slowly rising line suddenly turning exponential.

Livelihoods around the world are being decimated

by the greed of our fishing fleets, intensive agriculture, and our collective inability to acknowledge the harm, waste, and pollution that our daily lives inflict on the planet.

Despite our highly advanced information and communication technologies, empathy and understanding are losing ground, creating division at the very moment that we most need cooperation to stave off this common threat.

The hurt and delusion, the staggering self-interest of the media, corporations, and politicians, and the tragic blindness and complacency of humanity are all leading us toward the precipice.

Even the rage of Mother Earth has failed to awaken us. Must it take an even greater natural disaster to jolt us into action before it is too late?





# ‘Pakistan can become regional trade hub’

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan stands at a crucial juncture exploiting trade potential in Asia and fostering strong economic ties with neighboring states can significantly speedup its economic growth.

SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry's former President Iftikhar Ali Malik expressed these views while talking to a trade delegation, led by Muslim Khan Bunerhi here Sunday. He added that geographically, Pakistan is positioned to serve as a trade conduit between Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, making it an ideal hub for

regional commerce.

In order to harness this potential, he said, Pakistan must actively engage with countries like China, Iran, and Afghanistan. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is a flagship initiative that demonstrates the benefits of such cooperation, promising infrastructural development and increased trade flow. Similarly, enhancing trade relations with neighbors could unlock immense economic benefits, despite the political challenges. A focus on trade normalization and tariff reduction can help the region tap into a market of over a billion people.

He said Iran, with its rich energy resources, presents another promising trade partner. Strengthening trade ties with Iran could ensure energy security for Pakistan while providing Iran with much-needed economic diversification.

Additionally, a stable Afghanistan opens up avenues for trade and transit routes to Central Asia, facilitating greater regional connectivity.

The European Union and the United States remain significant trade partners, especially for Pakistan's textile and agricultural exports. Maintaining compliance with international

trade regulations, ensuring quality standards, and fostering a stable business environment are crucial for sustaining these relationships.

Malik said that Pakistan's strategy should therefore be multifaceted: deepen regional trade ties while upholding Western trade partnerships. This dual approach will require diplomatic finesse, robust economic policies, and a commitment to regional stability. By doing so, Pakistan can position itself as a pivotal player in regional trade, driving economic growth and fostering prosperity both at home and across Asia, he concluded.

## PFC and ChenOne to collaborate for Paris Expo

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) and ChenOne will collaborate in showcasing high-quality Pakistani products of innovative designs at the three-day Texworld Paris expo, starting from July 1, 2024.

Talking to a delegation of importers and exporters, led by Muhammad Araib here on Sunday, PFC Chief Executive Officer Mian Kashif Ashfaq said, "Participation in the expo underscores our commitment to expanding our

global footprint and promoting Pakistani craftsmanship on an international stage."

He said that Paris expo is a key event in the textile and apparel industry, attracting exhibitors and visitors from around the world.

He remarked that ChenOne's participation, supported by the PFC, aims to highlight the unique blend of traditional and contemporary designs that Pakistani furniture and home decor offer.

The CEO said that global market leaders will see a diverse array of products including elegant furniture, luxurious home textiles, and stylish accessories, all reflecting the rich cultural heritage and modern sensibilities of Pakistan.

He said, PFC is focused on forging new business relationships, explore market trends, and gain valuable insights into global buyers preferences. This strategic move not only enhances the visibility of Pakistani products but also

reinforces ChenOne's position as a leading player in the international home furnishings market.

The delegation head, Muhammad Araib, and deputy leader Mian Faryad Ahmad Raza appreciating the sincere efforts of the council and said that participation will create space for Pakistan in global markets and will definitely attract foreign buyers and investors on account of excellent qualities of products at par with international standards.

## FEISCA emphasises more steps for solarisation

LAHORE (APP): The Federation of Engineering Institutions of South and Central Asia (FEISCA) has appreciated various measures for solarisation in the country and called upon the government to provide soft loans for promoting renewable energy to meet ever-increasing demand of uninterrupted cheap electricity and mitigate emerging threat of climate change across the country.

FEISCA Secretary General Engineer Mian Sultan Mahmood Arain said this while talking to Managing Director Creative Group Ms. Fatima, here on Sunday. He said that like in rest of the world, Pakistan is also

faced with significant challenges from climate change. Industries and households are major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions, which exacerbate these challenges. "However, we have a tremendous opportunity to mitigate these threats and transition towards a greener, more economically viable energy source of solar power," he added.

The FEISCA secretary suggested the government to launch a comprehensive soft loans scheme for both industrial and domestic sectors for solarisation and providing financial support to businesses and households looking to invest in solar energy systems. "This

would help us achieve several critical objectives," he added.

Solar power is increasingly becoming a cost-effective source of energy and by facilitating its adoption through loans, we can reduce energy costs for both industries and households, thereby improving the economic well-being of our people.

Sultan Arain said that relying on solar energy will reduce dependence on fossil fuels and imported energy sources, besides enhancing our energy security and reduce vulnerability to global energy price fluctuations.

He said solar energy is clean and renewable, emit-

ting no greenhouse gases during its operation and encouraging its adoption will significantly reduce our carbon footprint and contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts.

On this occasion, Ms Fatima disclosed that Creative Group in Lahore is the first one in the country that's operating successfully its plants absolutely 100 percent on solar and biogas with zero bills of LESCO and SNGPL. She also stressed the needs for fully exploiting our abundant natural resources to meet our demands conveniently and government must focus on it to achieve the desired results of economic development and prosperity.

## Technology shapes future of hospitality with enhanced guest experiences

RIYADH (Arab News): The global hospitality industry is increasingly investing in technology to improve the guest experience, with artificial intelligence playing a key role in automating tasks like booking, check-ins, and housekeeping management.

In a recent report, The Bench, a publication by the Future Hospitality Summit, noted that implementing advanced technologies also enables 24/7 traveler support through AI chatbots and virtual assistants.

"The hospitality industry has continually been reputed to adapt slowly to technological advancements. Hospitality asset owners and investors are keen on ramping up technology investment," said the report.

Citing a 2023 PwC

analysis, the report noted that over 70 percent of hotel executives are prioritizing investments in technologies that streamline operations and elevate customer experiences.

"This growing focus is evident in the adoption of Customer Relationship Management systems and data-driven marketing strategies aimed at customer retention," added The Bench.

According to the report, CRM systems are becoming a cornerstone in hotel operations, helping hoteliers manage and analyze guest interactions and data throughout the customer lifecycle.

FHS added that leveraging CRM systems could also help hotels improve customer service relationships, assist in guest retention, and drive sales growth.

It cited a Salesforce study, noting that CRM technology could increase sales by up to 29 percent and improve forecast accuracy by 32 percent.

"Data-driven marketing strategies supported by robust CRM systems enable hotels to tailor their marketing efforts to individual guest preferences, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat business," said the report.

According to the analysis, Property Management Systems like innRoad, Oracle, and Hotelogix are essential for maximizing revenues, increasing efficiencies, and enhancing guest understanding.

"These systems serve as the backbone of hotel operations, offering comprehensive functionalities that streamline various processes. From managing reservations and check-ins to overseeing housekeeping and billing, PMS solutions integrate all these functions into a single cohesive platform, making operations smoother and more efficient," the report added.

The FHS publication also noted that technologies like TakeUp.ai leverage AI to analyze past guest behavior and competitors' pricing, thereby optimizing revenues without reliance on guesswork.

"This approach provides hoteliers with a strategic advantage in a competitive market. AI-driven revenue management systems can predict demand with higher accuracy, allowing hotels to



MULTAN: A vendor displaying and selling wooden pieces to be used for cutting meat of sacrificial animals during Eid-ul-Adha.

## Ambassador visits Trade Expo

BEIJING (APP): Pakistan Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi visited ongoing Cross Border E-commerce Trade Expo in Shenzhen, China. During his visit, the ambassador interacted with several Chinese and international companies at the expo.

He remarked that there are great opportunities for Pakistan e-commerce enterprises especially small and medium to participate, network and partner.

Ambassador Hashmi highlighted Pakistan's potential in e-commerce, boosted by our young, tech/savvy population and geographical location.

Complementing China, the present government aims to expand exports and foster global collaboration through e-commerce platforms, he said.

"Interacted with several Chinese and international companies at the ongoing Cross Border E-commerce Trade Expo in #Shenzhen; Great opportunities for Pakistan e-commerce enterprises especially small & medium to participate, network and partner; Highlighted Pakistan's potential in e-commerce, boosted by our young, tech-savvy population and geographical location and complementing China, we aim to expand exports and foster global collaboration through e-commerce platforms," the ambassador posted on social media platform X formerly known Twitter.

## Telecom sector raises concerns over taxes

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan's Telecom Operators Association has expressed concerns over the heavy taxes slapped in budget 2024.

In a letter written to the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance, Salim Mandviwalla, the Telecom Operators expressed concerns over the heavy taxes introduced in the budget.

The telecom sector has warned that foreign investment might withdraw from Pakistan if tax issues are not resolved. According to the telecom operators, unresolved tax issues could lead to legal complications for the government.

The letter highlights that

two major market players have already decided to leave Pakistan. The telecom sector contributed PKR 340 billion in tax revenue last year, and has attracted direct investment of USD 15 billion to date, the letter stated.

The implementation of budget proposals will severely impact the dream of a Digital Pakistan, the letter's content reveals. The letter further mentions that collecting 75% advance tax from non-filer telecom users is impractical.

The letter outlines that this decision will result in revenue loss for both the telecom sector and the government. Additionally, tele-

com companies have expressed concerns over the Income Tax General Order.

Regarding the issue of blocking SIM cards of non-filers, the telecom sector is being considered for penalties. The telecom sector is not a party to the tax issue concerning non-filers, according to the letter.

Increasing the sales tax rate on mobile phone sets valued up to USD 500 will negatively impact the inclusion of the low-income group, the letter mentions.

Telecom operators have requested a time for meeting with Committee Chairman Saleem Mandviwalla to present their concerns.

## RDA inflows rise to \$8.055 billion in May 24

ISLAMABAD (INP): The inflow of remittances under Roshan Digital Account (RDA) has risen to US \$8.055 billion by the end of May 2024 as compared to US \$7.831 billion by April (2024) end, according to the latest data released by the State Bank of Pakistan.

According to media reports, data showed that the inflows of remittances during April were recorded at US\$ 224 million as compared to US\$ 171 million in

March and US\$ 182 million in February 2024.

These accounts provide innovative banking solutions to millions of Non-Resident Pakistanis (NRPs), including Non-Resident Pakistan Origin Card (POC) holders, seeking to undertake banking, payment, and investment activities in Pakistan.

The number of accounts registered under the programme also rose by 12,960 to 702,610 in May

2024 from 689,650 accounts in April 2024. By the end of May, overseas Pakistanis have invested US \$338 million in Naya Pakistan Certificates, US \$582 in Naya Pakistan Islamic Certificates, and US \$37 million in Roshan Equity Investment.

The Roshan Digital Account was introduced by the State Bank to facilitate overseas Pakistanis in sending remittances and investing in Pakistan.

## FPCCI condemns proposed tax changes

KARACHI (INP): The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) has vehemently opposed the federal budget's proposal to replace the fixed income tax regime for exporters with a 29% tax on profits.

The move, deemed catastrophic by industry leaders, has sparked widespread outcry among Pakistan's export sectors.

Senior Vice President of FPCCI, Saqib Fayyaz Magu, along with representatives from the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce, Sialkot Chamber of Commerce, and various industry associations including Textile, Pharmaceutical, Rice, Fruit, Vegetable, Leather Products, and Tanners, voiced their concerns at a press conference.

Magu warned that the proposed budget measures would escalate harassment and corruption by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), driving investors out of the country.

He emphasized that businessmen should not be subjected to non-bailable arrests, labeling the proposed law as draconian and calling for its immediate withdrawal. Failure to reverse the decision would prompt a nationwide consultation with export industries to determine their response.

Chairman of the Rice Exporters Association, Chela Ram Kiwalani, and Chaudhry Muhammad Israr Sharif criticized the timing of the proposal, noting its potential to severely damage exports during an

already challenging economic period.

Abdul Rahim Janu highlighted that exporters are already burdened with taxes amounting to 30-35% of their profits. Under the new National Tax Regime, a 29% tax on exports combined with a 10% super tax would bring the total to a staggering 39%, paving the way for increased harassment and corruption.

Janu warned that the abolishment of the fixed tax regime could lead to a \$6 billion reduction in exports, referencing the failure of a similar system 15 years ago due to rampant corruption and misuse.

The business community remains united in its opposition, warning of dire consequences if the proposed tax changes are implemented.

## Saudi Arabia's inflation holds steady at 1.6% in May: GASTAT

RIYADH (Arab News): Saudi Arabia's inflation rate rose marginally by 0.2 percent in May compared to the previous month, driven by changes in housing prices, official data showed.

According to the report by the General Authority for Statistics, expenses for housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels increased by 0.4 percent month-on-month in May.

The monthly inflation index was also impacted by expenses for food and beverages, which went up by 0.7 percent in May compared to April.

Additionally, expenses for restaurants and hotels edged up by 0.2 percent, while costs for personal goods and services increased by 0.1 percent month-on-month in May.

On the other hand, prices

for clothing and footwear dipped by 0.6 percent in May compared to the previous month, while costs for transportation edged down by 0.4 percent.

The report further pointed out that prices of education, furnishing and home equipment, and tobacco products did not show any significant change in May compared to April.

Annual inflation rises

On a yearly basis, Saudi Arabia's Consumer Price Index increased by 1.6 percent in May compared to the same period last year.

GASTAT attributed this rise to a 10.5 percent increase in actual housing rents, influenced by a 14.3 percent increase in apartment rents.

"This increase had a significant impact on maintaining the annual inflation

rate for May 2024, due to the substantial weight of this category at 21 percent," said the authority in the report.

Similarly, costs of food and beverages increased by 1.4 percent, driven by a 6.9 percent rise in vegetable prices.

On the other hand, prices of furnishing and home equipment decreased by 3.8 percent.

Similarly, expenses for clothing and footwear decreased by 4 percent year-on-year in May, while transport costs also decreased by 2.4 percent during the same period.

In May, a report released by Riyad Capital revealed that Saudi Arabia's inflation rate is expected to average around 2 percent in 2024, with a moderate acceleration to 2.4 percent

in 2025.

The Riyad Capital analysis also added that the Kingdom's non-oil sector is projected to grow at a rate of 4.8 percent in 2024, driven by growth-oriented fiscal policy.

The report further noted that non-oil activities in Saudi Arabia will accelerate further in 2025, with a projected expansion rate of 5.2 percent.

Last year, the International Monetary Fund noted that the likelihood of a rise in headline and core inflation in oil-exporting countries like Saudi Arabia is low.

"Headline and core inflation in many oil-exporting countries like Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia remain relatively lower than elsewhere," said

the IMF.

Wholesale price index increases

In another report, GASTAT revealed that Saudi Arabia's Wholesale Price Index increased by 3.2 percent in May compared to the same month of the previous year.

This increase is mainly driven by a 14.5 percent rise in prices of basic chemicals and a 12 percent increase in the costs of refined petroleum products, the authority added.

Similarly, prices of food products, beverages, tobacco, and textiles rose by 1.8 percent year-on-year in May, due to a 7.4 percent increase in the prices of leather, leather products, and footwear.

On the other hand, the costs of ores and minerals decreased by 2.8 percent,

mainly due to a 2.8 percent decrease in stone and sand prices.

Additionally, agricultural and fishery product expenses experienced a 1.3 percent year-on-year decrease in May, driven by a 2.8 percent decrease in fish and other fishing product prices and a 2.7 percent decline in live animals and animal product prices.

Furthermore, the prices of metal products, machinery, and equipment decreased by 0.4 percent in May compared to the same month of the previous year, attributed to a 6.6 percent decline in the prices of radio, television, and communication equipment and apparatus.

Compared to April, the Kingdom's WPI decreased by 0.1 percent in May, driven by a 0.3 percent drop in

the prices of food products, beverages, tobacco, and textiles.

This decline resulted from a 1.7 percent decrease in the prices of meat, fish, fruit, vegetables, oils, and fats, and a 0.4 percent decline in the prices of leather, leather products, and footwear.

Similarly, the costs of agriculture and fishery products also decreased by 0.2 percent month-on-month, driven by a 1.6 percent fall in the prices of live animals and animal products. Compared to April, the prices of other transportable goods declined by 0.1 percent in May, driven by a 0.7 percent decrease in the costs of basic chemicals.

In contrast, the costs of metal products, machinery, and equipment rose by 0.1

percent, as a result of a 1.1 percent increase in the prices of electrical machinery and apparatus.

Meanwhile, in another report, GASTAT revealed that the prices of Abu Sorra Egyptian oranges increased by 22.70 percent in May compared to the previous month.

Similarly, the prices of local tomatoes and Turkish plums rose by 12.80 percent and 10.33 percent, respectively, in May from April.

Additionally, Indian pomegranates and Pakistani mandarins also experienced notable increases, rising by 10.15 percent and 9.71 percent, respectively.

On the other hand, hotel accommodation prices in Saudi Arabia witnessed a 13.94 percent month-on-month decline.





In brief

Pliskova reaches final

PARIS (Agencies): Karolina Pliskova booked her place in the Nottingham Open final as she came from behind to defeat France's Diane Parry. The Czech Republic player lost the opening set in a tie-break but showed character to battle back for a 6-7 (9-11) 6-1 6-4 victory. The sixth seed, 32, will face either Emma Raducanu or Katie Boulter in the final. "I'm super happy to be through, especially after losing the first set," Pliskova said. "It's not usual to play three matches in one-and-a-half days but they have to play next, which is good for me, so I'll eat, rest and get ready." This week's schedule has been significantly hit by inclement weather, with rain stopping play on multiple occasions, including on Saturday when British players Raducanu and Boulter had to stop their match after just one set. The pair will complete their semi-final on Sunday afternoon with the winner then swiftly returning to court to face Pliskova. Pliskova, who beat top seed Ons Jabeur in the quarter-finals, is looking to lift the Nottingham Open title for the second time after her 2016 triumph.

Turkey aim to bounce back

DORTMUND (Reuters): Turkey begin their Euro 2024 campaign against newcomers Georgia on Tuesday knowing a winning start in one of the tournament's weaker groups would give them a great chance of making the knockout stages after disappointing last time around. Tipped as dark horses going into Euro 2020, Turkey crashed out having lost all three group-stage games but they impressed in qualifying for Germany as they topped a group including 2022 World Cup finalists Croatia. Their more recent form has been mixed: since beating Germany 3-2 in Berlin in November, Turkey have not won in five games and were hammered 6-1 by Austria in a friendly in March before holding reigning champions Italy to a draw this month. Turkey's ambitions of progressing from a group also containing Euro 2016 winners Portugal and Czech Republic rest in large part on captain and midfielder Hakan Calhanoglu, a key part of Inter Milan's Serie A-winning side. Hopes are also high for attacking midfielder Arda Guler after the 19-year-old came back from injury to score five goals in five games at the end of Real Madrid's victorious La Liga campaign. Georgia, meanwhile, are playing in their first ever major tournament and are the clear underdogs in Group F. Their slim prospects of qualifying for the last 16 will rest largely on the shoulders of talisman Khvicha Kvaratskhelia. With Valencia goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili reportedly a target for several top European clubs and forward Georges Mikautadze impressing on loan at Metz last season, Georgia have talent at both ends of the pitch. But Napoli's Kvaratskhelia -- dubbed "Kvaradona" in a nod to Diego Maradona, perhaps the greatest compliment Napoli fans can give -- must be at his best if Georgia are to spring a surprise and try to help unite a fractured nation, recently wracked by huge protests against a controversial "foreign agent" law. "It was the greatest dream of every Georgian to become a part of such an important tournament, and it was the happiest day for all of us when we achieved it," Kvaratskhelia told UEFA.com.

## Australia sink brave Scots at T20 WC, England advance

GROS-ISLET (AFP): Australia saw off a determined challenge from Scotland to claim a five-wicket victory in a decisive final Group B match of the T20 World Cup for both teams at the Daren Sammy Stadium in St Lucia on Saturday. Replying to the Scots' 180 for five, their highest total in a T20 World Cup match, half-centuries from Travis Head (68 off 49 balls, five fours, four sixes) and Marcus Stoinis (59 off 29 balls, nine fours, two sixes) paced them to the target and a 100 percent winning record in the group with two balls to spare. Tim David's unbeaten 24 off 14 balls finished the job to lift Australia to 186 for five. But he required a generous slice of luck when dropped at deep midwicket before finishing off the match with a huge six in the same direction off the next ball from seamer Brad Wheal. That result also eliminated Scotland and allowed title-holders England, winners earlier in the day over Namibia in a rain-affected match in Antigua, to qualify for the Super Eights phase of the competition alongside their arch-rivals by virtue of a better net run-

rate than the Scots.

"The plan was the usual: get yourself in, play shots along the ground and then take it from there," said 'Man of the Match' Stoinis in explaining the strategy through his innings and the 80-run fourth-wicket partnership with Head. "I was just trying to keep him there, keep him batting and it turned the game, even though he got out in the end."

'Staying consistent' Earlier, Brandon McMullen led the Scottish effort with a top-score of 60 off 34 balls (two fours, six sixes) after they were put in.

His ultra-aggression, and support from opener George Munsey (35) in an 89-run second-wicket partnership, pushed the scoring rate up to ten runs per over. However Australia were able to regain a measure of containment when McMullen fell to leg-spinner Adam Zampa in the 12th over.

Despite a battling unbeaten 42 from skipper Richie Berrington, only 69 runs came off the last 52 balls of the innings when Scotland would have been looking to put up a total in excess of 200.

"Unfortunately in the back overs we didn't quite

manage to capitalise on the good start we got with the bat," said a disappointed Berrington. "In defending that total towards the end we just didn't execute effectively enough. We also know they have some really good ball-strikers down the order and two big overs really cost us."

Glenn Maxwell's off-spin earned him the best figures of two for 44 although Zampa was the most economical, conceding 30 runs off his four overs.

A team that prides itself on impeccable fielding and catching, Australia fell away from that high standard with six chances, of varying degrees of difficulty, being put down in the field. It raised speculation that the 2021 champions' apparent lack of intensity might have been influenced by the prospect of contributing to England's elimination.

"I think that was more of a discussion externally than internally," was Australian captain Mitchell Marsh's summation of that prospect. "We spoke pre-game about sticking to our plans and doing what we usually do to win games of cricket. It was about staying consistent with the way we play and if we fail, fail our way."



GROS-ISLET: Marcus Stoinis and Travis Head added 80 off just 44 balls.

## Raducanu rejects Olympic wildcard but Murray in squad

PARIS (Agencies): Emma Raducanu has turned down the chance to play for Great Britain at this summer's Olympics - but two-time gold medallist Andy Murray is set to compete in Paris. Raducanu, 21, is ranked too low to qualify as she continues to come back from surgery on her wrists and ankle last year. The 2021 US Open champion was offered one of two places by the International Tennis Federation (ITF) that are reserved for former Grand Slam champions.

Raducanu missed the French Open - played on the same clay courts of Roland Garros that will stage the Olympic tennis - to ensure she is fit for the British grass-court swing. "I have had various conversations with Emma over the last couple of weeks and a slightly longer period

where it's very clear how much being part of a British team at an Olympics would mean to her," said Iain Bates, head of GB's Olympic tennis team.

"I think she feels this isn't going to be the right timing for her for this summer. 'She's hopefully got many Olympics ahead of her. I'm very comfortable with the decision that she's made."

Great Britain's nominations were announced at Queen's Club on Sunday.

The ITF will announce the full entry list for Paris 2024 on 4 July.

Murray, who won gold at London 2012 and Rio 2016, has been given an ITF place for what could be the final tournament of the 37-year-old's career.

Murray said earlier this year he did not expect to "play much past this summer". Cameron Norrie,

Jack Draper and Dan Evans are set to join Murray in the men's singles. Katie Boulter is the only British woman to have qualified by ranking for the Games. Murray and Dan Evans have also been nominated for the men's doubles.

Joe Salisbury and Neal Skupski will play in the men's doubles by virtue of their world ranking.

Boulter and Heather Watson have been nominated for the women's doubles, as have Harriet Dart and Maia Lumsden. The Olympic tennis tournament will run from 27 July to 4 August at Roland Garros, which annually hosts the French Open.

Players will compete across five medal events: women's singles, men's singles, women's doubles, men's doubles and mixed doubles.



LAUDERHILL: Pakistan player arrive at the stadium ahead of the ICC Men's T20 Cricket World Cup West Indies & USA 2024 match between Pakistan and Ireland.

## England have 'great opportunity' to win Euros - Kane

LONDON (Agencies): Captain Harry Kane says England have a "great opportunity" to win major silverware at Euro 2024.

England begin their European Championship campaign on Sunday against Serbia at 20:00 BST, live on BBC One. They also play Denmark and Slovenia in Group C.

Kane says England, who were defeated on penalties by Italy in the final of the last Euros, have "probably not" had a better opportunity to win a trophy than at this summer's tournament in Germany.

"We all want to be remembered to have won a major tournament with England - not just to have had good campaigns - so we know it is something to respect and be proud of, and to keep pushing ourselves," Kane told BBC Sport.

England were knocked out of the 2022 World Cup by France in the quarter-finals after losing the Euros final the year before.

Kane said that this time, nothing less than lifting the trophy can be regarded as good enough. "If we don't win, we're going to be disappointed," he said.

"As much as you can be unlucky and go out on penalties, we really want to win and start winning as a national team because we have been taking steps towards this moment. It is going to be tough, we know that, but we're ready for the challenge." If Kane starts against Serbia, as is expected, he will make his 23rd major tournament appearance and play his 12th game at the Euros, both new Three Lions records.

The team's 63-goal record scorer will also become the first player to captain England's men at four major tournaments.

Kane said playing at such a level is "the pinnacle" of any English footballer's career. The former Tottenham Hotspur striker, now at Bayern Munich, also said he is "extremely proud" of his record for his country. He said: "It's not easy to play for England, first and foremost - even harder to get into the major tournaments. "It's a proud achievement because I think it shows consistency, good work ethic, professionalism, and to be able to make yourself available for all the tournaments is not always easy."

## Paris Olympics set to provide excitement

Syed Ali Nawaz Gilani.

WHAT is most awaited about the Paris Olympics draws near from 26th July to 11th August is not only the return of twenty-eight familiar disciplines or rather but also the unveiling of four new entries. The upcoming games which will be held after the Tokyo Summer Olympics that were postponed to 2021 due to the worldwide pandemic caused by the coronavirus will offer a chance to sports climbing, skateboarding, surfing, and breaking. There are thus some examples illustrating this aspect as modern sports have been embraced while tradition has been respected by adding some events in Olympic competitions for example; breaking as a form of dance. Breaking, especially, makes its first appearance creating an exciting new dimension at the world's greatest sporting festival. As Paris readies itself to welcome athletes and fans from around the world, it's time to celebrate athleticism, innovation, and competitive zeal. Thereby, they are anticipated with great excitement as this event is expected to produce moments of ecstasy beyond the playing field.

Preparing to host the upcoming Olympic Games with a focus that extends beyond traditional logistical concerns, French organizers are ambitiously aiming to embed and sustain a profound cultural transformation within the nation. This initiative not only emphasizes aspects such as security, hospitality, crowd control, and infrastructure but also holds potential lessons for businesses looking to achieve lasting organizational change.

While the Paris 2024 Games are contributing to peace, at the heart of this, they are changing cultural views. Everyone knows France for its great food, great art, and great fashion - but not great sports really - at least, not traditionally. In recent years, the French people have worked very hard to adapt their culture and way of life to be more conducive to a sports-friendly society. French teams and athletes have no shortage of global success, winning the prestigious FIFA World Cup in 1998 and 2018, women's Eurobasket in 2001 and 2009, and gold medals in handball at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics This shows the year 2023 France has finished second in the Greatest Sporting Nation rankings for the year.

The change was not immediate. A complete shocker took place after an Olympic crisis of unprecedented proportions in 1960, when the entire of France-whose feeble Roma-Olympiad debut, broadcast directly on television screens, garnered the not-so-stunning sum of five medals, none of them gold. It was a national humiliation and so incensed President Charles de Gaulle that he viewed it as an insult and a slight on the prestige of a now diminished France on the world stage.

France itself was struggling then to emerge from the Cold War, decolonize, and meet the challenge of a youth bulge and waves of an immigrant population Sport was considered something that might help lift national morale and bring these new inhabitants into the fold. The government realized that showing the competitive comebacks of the French could be of incredible assistance to reintroducing this nation.

To boost this vision, considerable legislative measures were introduced. INSEP, the National Sports Institute was established in 1975 by the monumental Mazeaud Law for the elite athletes to combine their education with training here. This law marked sports' growth as an indispensable aspect of French culture and a responsibility of the state on a national level. It became even more evident with the 1984 Avice Law, which pronounced physical activity along with sport to be integral components needed by every citizen to ensure personal welfare.

One of the biggest reforms was investment in youth sports development. In the mid-1970s, the French Football Federation (FFF) and professional clubs established a national program to identify and train promising young players. This program has enabled talented youngsters to play at a high level while continuing their education. This approach began to pay off in the 1980s, leading to great success in football, culminating in winning the 1998 World Cup on home soil. Other sports, such as basketball, which found international success in the late 1990s and early 2000s shaped this youth development program. Since then, the "formation à la française" has made the "Made in France" brand synonymous with high performance in global sport, influencing practices around the world, including the NBA's youth academy network.

As the 2024 Olympics approach, there is hope that this event will cement sports as a key aspect of French cultural identity. The ongoing efforts to build a sporting culture reflect the broader challenge of cultural integration, illustrating that substantial change requires both institutional support and grassroots enthusiasm.

French organizers believe that the lessons learned from their journey-such as the importance of legislative support, investment in youth, and the need for a holistic approach-can provide valuable insights for leaders and managers in other fields looking to implement and sustain cultural change. As any leader knows, significant organizational change is difficult and slow, but France's experience shows it is possible with determination and strategic effort.

The anticipation surrounding the upcoming Paris Olympics in 2024 extends far beyond the international sports competition. This prestigious global event not only promises to showcase the highest level of sporting excellence but also sets a standard for sustainable practices, technology integration, diversity, and what is added, as well as long-term community benefits. As Pakistan deals with its own set of challenges including environmental issues, lack of participation in sports, and the need for improved athlete development programs, the Paris Olympics presents a unique opportunity for the country to gather valuable insights and emulate best practices.

As Pakistan deals with its own set of challenges including environmental issues, lack of participation in sports, and the need for improved athlete development programs, the Paris Olympics presents a unique opportunity for the country to gather valuable insights and emulate best practices. One of the most distinctive features of the Paris Olympics is its relentless focus on sustainability. The organizers have prioritized the integration of sustainable infrastructure, waste management, and renewable energy to make it the most environmentally conscious Games to date Pakistan can draw inspiration from these efforts as it faces major environmental problems and find innovative solutions to meet its environmental challenges.

In the age of technology, the Paris Olympic Games are set to embrace groundbreaking developments to enhance the event experience. From streamlined ticketing systems to sophisticated player performance analytics tools, technology is poised to play a vital role in improving overall match efficiency and participant experience. By looking at how technology is seamlessly integrated into sports, Pakistan can learn valuable lessons in implementing digital solutions to improve its sporting environment. Furthermore, the Paris Olympics are not only about sporting skills but also about supporting diversity and participation in sports. With a strong emphasis on gender equality and diverse representation, the event is a beacon of inclusion. Pakistan can take cues from these initiatives to reshape its sports ecosystem, provide equal opportunities for all athletes, and foster a more inclusive sports culture. Post-Olympics, the planners have delineated strategies to repurpose venues and infrastructure for community advantage, thereby establishing a paradigm for the evolution of sustainable sports infrastructure. Pakistan could investigate analogous methodologies to ensure that its investments in sports infrastructure render long-term positive dividends for the nation and its populace. Additionally, the Paris Olympics furnishes an exceptional venue to advance the notion of healthy lifestyles and physical activity. By accentuating the significance of maintaining activity and adopting a healthy lifestyle, the event can catalyze nations like Pakistan to prioritize sports participation and wellness initiatives, particularly among the younger demographic. Capitalizing on the momentum engendered by the games, Pakistan can endeavor to embed a culture of physical fitness and well-being across its citizenry. Finally, with premier athletes from around the globe congregating in Paris for competition at the zenith of performance, Pakistan encounters an extraordinary circumstance to scrutinize efficacious sporting programs and training methodologies. By meticulously analyzing the output of top-tier athletes and discerning best practices, Pakistan can refine its athlete development programs and cultivate future sports luminaries equipped with the requisite skills and support to thrive on the global stage. The Paris Olympics in 2024 presents substantial potential to assimilate insights from global sports management practices, sustainable event design frameworks, and holistic approaches to sports engagement.

The Paris 2024 Games encompass a significance surpassing merely that of a worldwide athletic event; they serve as an embodiment of a nation's capacity to emerge from adversity, undergo a process of self-reinvention, and endeavor to establish a persistent legacy intended for succeeding generations.

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## Lee Zii Jia crowned Australian Open badminton champion

SYDNEY (AFP): Malaysian Lee Zii Jia outlasted Japan's Kodai Naraoka in the men's singles final to be crowned Australian Open badminton champion Sunday, while Aya Otori of Japan clinched the women's title.

With many of the top-ranked players giving the tournament a miss, world number eight Lee took advantage to upset his sixth-ranked opponent 21-19, 11-21, 21-18 in Sydney.

It was his sixth career win on the BWF World Tour and came on the back of victory at the Thailand Open last month.

Otori triumphed with a



gutsy 17-21, 21-19, 21-16 come-from-behind beating of 35th-ranked Indonesian teenager Ester Nurumi Tri Wardoyo.

It was only her second title on tour, having won her first at the Thailand

Masters this year.

In the men's doubles final, China's He Ji Ting and Ren Xiang Yu swept past Indonesian pair Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan 21-11, 21-10

But another Indonesian duo, Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma and Amallia Cahaya Pratiwi, broke through to win the women's doubles, having lost previous finals at the Spain Masters and Thailand Open.

They recovered from a game down to oust Malaysia's Lai Pei Jing and Lim Chiew Sien 12-21, 21-7, 21-13.

Chinese top seeds Jiang Zhen Bang and Wei Ya Zin overcame countrymen Guo Xin Wa and Chen Fang Hui in the mixed doubles decider by two-games-to-one.

The circuit moves to Fort Worth in the United States next.





## In brief

### No one allowed to collect hides

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district administration would not allow anyone to collect the hides of sacrificial animals without permission. According to a district administration spokesman, the Punjab government had made prior approval for the collection of sacrificial animal's hides mandatory for the welfare organisations and others. He informed me that the district administration had been directed to strictly implement the plan regarding the collection of sacrificial animals' hides during Eid ul Azha. The administration warned that anyone found violating government orders would be dealt with in accordance with the law. The spokesman said that any organisation or person who would collect the sacrificial animal hides without prior approval would be treated as an offence and would be dealt with strictly in accordance with the law. It has been decided that no one will be allowed to collect hides without the permission of the administration. Likewise, monitoring of the banned organisations and their affiliated elements would be conducted, he informed.

### Safely dumping offal directed

ISLAMABAD (APP): Government On Sunday issued an awareness message on cellular phones requesting the masses to ensure safe disposal of offal and remains of sacrificial animals at designated places that would help in mitigating bird-aircraft collision risk and avoid any untoward situation in the residential areas in the vicinity of airports. According to the message, "The public is requested to avoid throwing offal in the areas around the airports because it leads to the gathering of scavengers and birds preying on the animal's left-over that may collide with the airplane and lead to a serious tragedy." It urged the nation to celebrate Eid-ul-Azha amid cleanliness and responsibility through proper disposal of sacrificial animals. "These birds can crash into planes and destroy planes, increasing the risk of irreparable damage to precious lives and property," it said. The message appealed to the public to dump the remains of the sacrificed animals in designated places or bury them in the ground and ensure the cleanliness of the environment around them. It added that the public should inform the base authorities and municipal administrations in case they find the corpse of any animal to timely manage it to avert any risk.

### IU invites applications

ISLAMABAD (APP): The International Islamic University (IU) has asked interested students to submit applications for admission to the summer Arabic language learning courses by June 28, 2024. According to an official, the 8-week course, with separate classes for male and female students, will begin on July 1, 2024. The university has offered courses in certificates, diplomas, and advanced diplomas in three categories, separately for male and female aspirants. The Certificate in Arabic Language is designed for students with no prior understanding of Arabic. The Diploma in Arabic Language is intended for those who have completed the Certificate program. At the same time, the Advanced Diploma course is available to students who have completed the Diploma program at IU or any other recognised institute.



RAWLPINDI: People touch a bull to show their love for the sacrificial animal in connection with Eidul Azha. —APP Photo

## Police finalize security plan for Eid-ul-Azha

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi district police have finalized a security plan for Eid ul Azha, and 3700 cops and traffic wardens will be deployed to provide security cover to the citizens.

According to a police spokesman, under a comprehensive plan devised on the special directives of City Police Officer Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Hamdani, tight security arrangements would be made for Eid-ul-Azha aimed at averting any untoward incident. Over 700 traffic wardens would be on duty to ease traffic flow on city roads, he added.

The security personnel would be deployed on 655 mosques and Imam Bargahs, Eid congregations, public places, and other important buildings to thwart any untoward incident, he said, adding that police officers had been directed to ensure patrolling in their respective areas. Walk-through gates and scanners would also be installed at the main Eid congregations for the safety of the citizens.

He said that more than 3000 police officials would be deployed to cover all important places,

adding that police would remain on high alert during Eid days.

Police in-charges of all circles would ensure proper security arrangements at the Eid congregations, he said. Special directives had also been passed on to all the relevant officers for effective security measures. Volunteers would also be deployed to Eid congregations.

Special pickets were set up at all the entry and exit points of the city, he said, adding that, on the directive of the CPO, a special security plan was also formulated for Murree, and the leaves of police personnel had been canceled.

City Traffic Police would also deploy maximum traffic wardens to regulate traffic in Murree during Eid ul Azha holidays, he added. Rawalpindi district police, as per the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab and Inspector General of Police Punjab, would make all-out efforts to facilitate tourists and provide and maintain a safe and secure environment, he added.

The CPO had directed the senior police officers to visit Murree and supervise the security arrange-

ments being finalized for Eid ul Azha, he said, adding that the CTO and SP Saddar would set up camp offices in Murree to monitor all arrangements.

Additionally, 21 special pickets were set up across the city to prevent one-wheeling, with more than 200 officers deployed for this task.

More than 130 officers would be deployed at parks and other public places, while over 260 officers would be on duty at cemeteries to ensure the safety of the visitors.

The security plan includes personnel from the police force, elite force, ladies police, dolphin force, and the security squad. The patrolling police would carry out security duty on Chand Raat and during Eid days, the spokesman added.

SSP Operations, Flight Lieutenant (ret'd) Hafiz Kamran Asghar, said that all necessary measures were being taken to ensure foolproof security. "The safety of the citizens is a top priority, and all available resources would be utilized for this purpose," City Police Officer (CPO) of Rawalpindi, Syed Khalid Mahmood Hamdani, emphasized.

### Suki Kinari Hydropower Station's first unit begins

ISLAMABAD (APP): The first unit (Unit 4) of the Pakistan Suki Kinari Hydropower Station, the largest hydropower station invested in and constructed by China Energy Construction Overseas Investment Co., Ltd., has successfully started up and formally entered the wet testing phase.

Personnel from China Energy Construction Overseas Investment Co., Ltd., SK Hydro Co., Ltd., and participating construction units jointly witnessed this milestone on site. Representatives from the resident military and the owner's engineering team also attended the startup ceremony.

Unit 4 of SK Hydropower Station successfully passed a series of tests after starting up, is in a smoothly running state, and meets the design requirements. Subsequently, Unit 4 will conduct dozens of tests, such as a temperature stability test and an overspeed test, to ensure that all technical indicators of the unit meet the design standards, which will lay a solid foundation for the unit to enter the trial operation stage.

Before the start-up of unit wet testing, the SK Hydro Co., Ltd., together with all participating construction units, meticulously prepared the water filling and discharging test protocol, monitored the progress in real time, and efficiently solved problems to ensure the water filling and discharging effect, thus creating an important guarantee for the success of unit wet testing.

Cheng Dan, the General Manager of China Energy Construction Overseas Investment Co., Ltd., stated, "At the start-up ceremony, SK Hydropower Station was the largest hydropower station invested and constructed by CEEC overseas." The start-up of wet testing for the first unit marks that the project construction has reached the final sprint stage, which is one step closer to achieving the goal of operation and power generation.

The SK hydropower station is located on the Kunha River in the Mansehra area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province in the northwestern part of Pakistan. It is a key project in the first batch of priority projects of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and is equipped with four impulse units with a total installed capacity of 884 MW.

## Preparations for Eid ul Azha in full swing

RAWALPINDI (APP): The preparations for celebrating Eid-ul-Azha are in full swing in Rawalpindi division and suburbs, where people are thronging cattle markets on Sunday to buy sacrificial animals.

People are visiting 11 cattle markets set up across the district and several local markets to purchase sacrificial animals.

Though there is a complete ban on the sale and purchase of sacrificial animals in the city areas, a huge rush of people is also being witnessed at unauthorized cattle markets that have been set up at Bagh Sardaran, Pirwadahi, Khaban-e-Sir Syed, Bostan Road, High Court Road, Dhoke Syedan, Misrayal Road, Range Road, Bakra Mandi Road, Chor, and other areas in the city and cantonment limits. People, especially children, are showing great interest in getting the animals of their choice.

The majority of cattle owners have come from interior Punjab, while animals have been brought from hilly areas including Sawat and Kaghan. The average price of a normal goat is between Rs 50,000 and Rs 80,000, while the price of a cow with a normal weight is between Rs 20,000 and Rs 300,000.

Talking to APP here, ani-

mal seller Asif, who came from Muzaffargarh, informed me that he spent a lot of money on animals and their transportation to the animal market. "The cost of fodder is also high, so it is not possible to sell animals without a profit," he said.

In view of high prices, people belonging to the middle class prefer to purchase cows on a sharing basis to fulfill their religious duty. However, the prices of sacrificial animals, including goats, cows, and camels, are much higher as compared to last year, according to a customer. He expected some reduction in the prices of animals on Sunday night.

Meanwhile, Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWM) has cancelled the holidays of around 3832 sanitary workers and officials to ensure cleanliness during Eid-ul-Azha.

The RWM has finalized a comprehensive plan for Eid-ul-Azha to remove the entrails of sacrificial animals on the directives of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

According to Chief Executive Officer RWM Rana Sajid Safdar, 485 vehicles, including dumpers, tractors, trolleys, pick-ups, and excavators, would be used to remove

the animal waste from all areas of the district.

He said, "About 18 permanent collection points and 43 mobile transfer stations would be set up in the city and tehsils for disposing of entrails and waste."

He further informed us that thousands of biodegradable bags and a large number of pamphlets were also distributed among the residents.

He said that the RWM workers would be present at collective slaughter points with hand carts for proper disposal of offals and other animal waste during Eid. Safdar further said that eight camps would be set up for the registration of complaints and distribution of biodegradable bags, while the company would remove over 9,000 tons of expected waste during the Eid days.

The CEO informed us that around 1,000 banners had also been displayed at the main points of the city to create awareness among the masses about the cleanliness drive.

He said, "After the completion of the task, the area would be cleaned properly and would be sprayed. Eid-ul-Azha is the busiest time of year for sanitary workers, as the city generates twice its average daily amount of waste on the day."

## Admin finalises arrangements to facilitate tourists

RAWALPINDI (APP): The administration, on the special instruction of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has finalised all the arrangements to facilitate the tourists in Murree during Eid ul Azha holidays.

According to a Commissioner's Office Spokesman, all-out efforts would be made to ensure the safety of the tourists and provide them with all possible facilities, particularly during Eid ul Azha holidays.

Earlier, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak had instructed the authorities concerned including the police to finalise all the arrangements to facilitate tourists in Murree.

The spokesperson said that Murree is a centre of tourism and tourists from all over Pakistan come to enjoy the beauty of the 'Queen of Hills', particularly during the summer season. All possible facilities would be provided to the tourists coming to Murree to enjoy pleasant weather during the summer season, he said.

Seven facilitation centres had been established for tourists in Murree while a control room had been set up for monitoring. For the convenience of tourists, pamphlets were also kept at the facilitation centres, which contained all the contact numbers required to deal with an emergency, and there was also a map to guide the tourists.

He said that representatives of all administrative institutions, including Murree administration, police, Rescue 1122, tourism department, health department, and civil defence, would remain present at the centres to provide awareness to the tourists. He said the medical staff would be present round the clock and these arrangements would continue in July and August as well.

The spokesman said that the Murree administration was fully active in guiding tourists and the traffic management plan would be fully implemented. He said facilitation centres had been established at GPO Chowk, Kashmir Point, Jhika Gali, Barian, Lower Topa, Guldna and Satra Mail.

He informed APP that special cleanliness arrangements would also be made to maintain the environment of Murree. Best security arrangements were made in Murree and additional personnel had been provided, he said adding that a formal security plan had been prepared for Eid.

It was the responsibility of the administration to provide facilities to the tourists, which would be carried out in an efficient manner and for this purpose, all administrative officers would be present in Murree, he continued.

He informed that over 264 traffic wardens and officers would perform duties in Murree to regulate traffic. Special check posts had been set up at the entry and exit points of Murree, he added.

The spokesman informed that over 700 cops to ensure security in Murree during Eid ul Azha holidays.

## Citizens advised to adopt precautionary measures

RAWALPINDI (APP): The citizens have been advised to adopt all possible precautionary measures to protect themselves from the Congo virus on Eid ul Azha.

The Livestock Department, on the directives of the Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak, is taking concrete steps to stop the spread of diseases.

The Commissioner had issued instructions for necessary measures to prevent the spread of diseases in view of the movement of animals on Eid-ul-Adha, the district administration spokesman informed.

He said that all possible steps were being taken to control the Congo virus and other diseases. Banners of free veterinary facilities were also displayed at selected sale points, he said. Mobile veterinary dispensaries of the Livestock Department were deployed to ensure the supply of free medicines.

On the instructions of Engineer Aamir Khattak, the loudspeakers were being used to spread animal welfare awareness messages.

The livestock department was ensuring the supply of anti-tick spray, antibiotics, and other necessary drugs, he informed. Solid steps were taken to ensure the establishment of inter-provincial check posts, he said, adding that inter-district check posts were also set up to complete the task of spraying animals to prevent the Congo virus and segregating sick animals.



RAWALPINDI: A view of myna bird with his open beak during hot weather in the city. —APP Photo

## Margalla Hills eateries closure wins social activists' support

ISLAMABAD (APP): In a watershed moment for environmental conservation, the Supreme Court's decision to close eateries in the vicinity of Margalla Hills National Park has been hailed by diverse segments of society. This move, aimed at safeguarding natural habitats and biodiversity, stands as a resolute step towards securing the future for generations to come.

Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General of WWF-Pakistan, hailed the Supreme Court's decision as a landmark step in conserving the fragile ecosystem of Margalla Hills National Park. Speaking to APP, he expressed profound appreciation for the judiciary's proactive stance in preserving the park's rich biodiversity and natural splendor, which he described as integral to the federal capital's beauty and identity.

"The honorable judges have demonstrated a commendable commitment to safeguarding our

natural heritage," remarked Khan, underlining the significance of this decision in advancing long-term conservation efforts across Pakistan.

Khan emphasized the strategic significance of the judicial directive, stating, "This landmark decision represents a decisive stride towards the sustainable management and protection of Pakistan's invaluable natural resources." The closure of commercial establishments within Margalla Hills National Park is viewed as pivotal in restoring ecological balance and promoting harmonious coexistence between human activities and environmental preservation.

WWF-Pakistan's advocacy spotlighted the ecological fragility of Margalla Hills National Park. Their dedication to sustainable conservation practices propelled this landmark decision, marking a new era of environmental stewardship in Pakistan, remarked Hammad

Naqi Khan.

Nousheen Izhar, a Nature and Environmental Rights Activist volunteering with Margalla Hills National Park (MHN), commenting on APP's question how do you see SC's decision? expressed concerns about irresponsible tourism and highlighted issues multiplied by restaurants like Monal, such as increased vehicular traffic, emissions, honking, and littering during weekends, Ramadan, Eid, and other festivities.

Nousheen highlighted that waste disposal from these eateries has polluted natural springs, prompting cleanup efforts by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board and volunteers. Expressing optimism about the Supreme Court's decision to close all restaurants within Margalla Hills National Park, she cautioned against potential large infrastructure projects such as plazas or housing societies. Nousheen emphasized the need

for a harmonious coexistence approach to preserve the park's pristine habitats and protect its native species.

Another activist and founder of Green Rescue Report, Rabbia Arshad Turkman talking to this agency said, "I commend the Supreme Court's recognition that human mobility cannot be outright banned. However, it is crucial to impose restrictions that safeguard natural habitats, similar to regulations observed in Western nations. These measures are essential to protect biodiversity and ensure sustainable coexistence with our environment."

CEO, Resilient Future International (RFI), Aftab Alam Khan said the Supreme Court judgment against illegal construction in Margalla Hills National Park can be a bulwark against Eco-unfriendly mindset.

"Environment Impact Assessments are an intrinsic part of any construction plan howev-

er, the society, in general, is habitual of circumventing environment related laws. Such loopholes must be plugged after this decision of the apex court. All segments must understand that harming environment means killing the future of our own generations," he said.

Despite being part of top climate afflicted countries, majority of the society was unwilling to come out of the illusionary comfort zone, Khan added.

Responding to an APP's question how we can sensitize our society on the importance of biodiversity? He remarked,

"Our education system from primary to PhD and from madrasa to government and private schools must teach the destruction of Eco-unfriendly actions. And all offices, government to private must organise training sessions on the same. We have to change the mindset from circumvention to respecting environment and the associated laws

and policies," the RFI CEO said.

"This decision underscores the importance of maintaining ecological balance and ensuring undisturbed natural spaces. It will safeguard the unique flora and fauna of Margalla Hills, promoting a healthier ecosystem and enhancing the park's value as a sanctuary for wildlife and a place of natural beauty for all to enjoy" noted Professor Dr. Muhammad Ismail Kumbhar, sustainable development expert at Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, when asked by APP to comment on this development.

In a groundbreaking decision, the Supreme Court has ordered the closure of all eateries, including the renowned Monal Restaurant, nestled within Margalla Hills National Park (MHN) in Islamabad within the next three months. Conservationists and nature lovers from across the country have hailed this verdict as essential for safeguarding our natural ecosystem.



### IEA to attend meeting

KABUL (Ariana News): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA) announced it will attend the upcoming United Nations-sponsored conference on Afghanistan in Doha. "A representative of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan will participate in the upcoming Doha meeting and will represent the people and the government of Afghanistan," said Zabihullah Mujahid, a spokesman of Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan (IEA).

## The Frontier Post

Zil-Hajj 10 1445 — Monday, June 17, 2024

### Ministry strengthens security

KABUL (BAN): In anticipation of the upcoming Eidul Azha festivities, the Ministry of Interior has announced the implementation of extensive security measures throughout the country. Police forces have been deployed at security checkpoints around the clock to actively maintain a secure environment. Their unwavering presence aims to deter and prevent any potential threats that may compromise the safety of the public.

## SC orders release of prisoners on Eid



KABUL (BNA): In a significant announcement, the Supreme Court of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has ordered the release and reduction of prison sentences for eligible prisoners across the country on the occasion of Eid ul-Adha.

This decision was made in accordance with the aus-

picious order No. (4414) dated 28/8/1445 AH by the leadership of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, led by the Supreme leader.

Following thorough evaluation, a total of (349) prisoners were deemed eligible for amnesty and subsequently released from various prisons across the country.

Additionally, (270) other prisoners were identified as eligible for a reduction in their prison terms, thereby allowing them to serve a shorter duration.

The decision to release and reduce the sentences of these prisoners serves as a compassionate gesture on the joyous occasion of Eid, fostering an atmosphere of goodwill and forgiveness. The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan stands committed to upholding justice and ensuring the welfare of its citizens.

The release and reduction of prison sentences have brought a sense of relief to the prisoners and their families, who can now celebrate Eid with renewed hope and optimism for the future.

## Chihil Sutun Palace: A 200-year legacy in Kabul

KABUL (TOLONews): Chihil Sutun Palace, with over 200 years of history in Kabul in Afghanistan, was once a place frequented by kings and served as a state guest house.

This palace was founded in 1796 during the reign of King Shah Zaman Sadozai, and people have always visited this palace as a historic site.

This palace, located at the foot of a hill, was previously known as Indaki and later changed to Chihil Sutun Palace.

"It is one of the ancient sites and one of the historical gardens located on the west side of Sher Darwaza mountain. Before the palace was created, the area known as Indikik was one of the Buddhist sites," Abdul Qadeer Temori, an employee of the Historic Monuments Directorate of the Ministry of Information and Culture, told TOLONews.

"Chihil Sutun Garden is one of the monuments from the Islamic period, built in four floors during the reign of Shah Zaman Sadozai but suffered significant damage in the 1990s," said Mohammad Anwar Faiz, a scientific member of the Archaeological Research Center of the Academy of Sciences.

The architecture of Chihil Sutun Palace mainly used marble, brick, cement, and iron.

"Today we came to Chihil Sutun Garden, which is a recreational place, with my friends. I ask friends to come to this garden and enjoy," said Soroush, a visitor.

But why is this garden and palace called Chihil Sutun?

"This building has several columns, which is why it is called Chihil Sutun. Previously, this area was known as Indaki," said Ketab Khan Faizi, head of the International Center for Kushan Studies.

Chihil Sutun Garden officials told TOLONews that in the past five months, more than 22,000 people have visited the garden and palace.

Sharafuddin Arash, the manager of Chihil Sutun Garden, said that many of the visitors to this palace are private school students, foreign tourists, and citizens of the country.

The manager of Chihil Sutun Garden said: "Foreigners come, children and adults visit this garden, and students from schools and universities visit the garden. More than 22,000 people have visited the garden."

Chihil Sutun Garden and Palace are connected from the north to Chihil Sutun main road, from the south to the 9 Burja area, from the east to Minar Mountain, and from the west to Darul Aman.

The Palace was founded in 1796 during the reign of King Shah Zaman Sadozai, and people have always visited this palace as a historic site.

## Thousand days without education: UN condemns Afghan girls' plight

KABUL (TOLONews): Sima Bahous, Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), has raised concerns over the ongoing restrictions faced by women and girls in Afghanistan. Speaking out more than a thousand days after girls above the sixth grade were barred from education, Bahous highlighted the continued deprivation of rights, freedom, and voices of Afghan women.

In a poignant message on X, Bahous emphasized that the struggle for women's rights in Afghanistan is a shared responsibility and urged global solidarity.

"A stark reminder that the assault on the rights, freedoms, and voices of Afghan women and girls continues. We cannot abandon Afghan women and girls in their fight for their right to live lives of their own choosing. Their struggle is our collective responsibility," she said.

Roya, a student, told TOLONews: "I studied for nine and a half years, worked hard, and dreamed about my goals, but all of it has been wasted. We have been at home for a thousand days."

Meanwhile, Amnesty International also called on the Islamic Emirate to reopen schools for girls in Afghanistan. According to Amnesty International,



Afghan girls have been deprived of the right to education due to "discriminatory and unjust policies."

Amnesty International added: "For 1000 days, Afghan girls have been deprived of their right to education, locked out of their schools due to the discriminatory and unjust Taliban policies violating international law. The Taliban must immediately re-open all secondary schools to girls."

Tafsir Siahposh, a women's rights activist, says: "The Islamic Emirate makes promises to us every day, and we are always waiting for their next decree; but unfortunately, they have never wanted to act according to their promises."

Although the Islamic

Emirate has not recently commented on the reopening or non-reopening of schools for girls above the sixth grade, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Higher Education, amid a wave of reactions, published an audio recording of Mawlana Abdul Ali Deobandi about the education of girls and women.

In part of this recording, Mawlana Abdul Ali Deobandi, a religious scholar, said: "Islamic countries have established schools for women where they learn writing and lessons. Islamic countries have remained Islamic in name only. Islamic countries are influenced by infidels and cannot establish Islamic governments and enforce Quranic rules because they

fear the infidels."

The reactions to the ban on women's and girls' education in the country have resumed while a large number of human rights activists, organizations, and prominent individuals, including Richard Bennett, the UN Human Rights Council's special rapporteur for Afghanistan, Gordon Brown, the UN's special for Global Education, Rina Amiri, the US special envoy for Afghanistan's women, girls and human rights, have joined the campaign to raise the voices of Afghan girls.

## Afghanistan needs urgent aid: USAID

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has reported that the expulsion of migrants from Pakistan and recent floods have increased the need for humanitarian aid in Afghanistan, with over 17 million people requiring immediate assistance.

USAID expressed hope that food security in Afghanistan might improve following the harvest in June.

According to USAID statistics, from September 15, 2023, to the present, 610,800 migrants have returned to Afghanistan from Pakistan "forcibly and voluntarily."

The agency stated that recent floods and droughts have also placed many families in difficult situations, with 23.7 million people in Afghanistan in need of humanitarian aid.

Various aid organizations have assisted 43,000 people in flood-affected areas and provided healthcare to over 56,000 individuals. USAID data indicates that 225 people have died due to recent floods in Afghanistan, and emergency aid to the affected continues.

The agency also noted that flood victims in Afghanistan require food, shelter, and water.

Previously, the World Food Programme had stated that \$650 million is needed to continue humanitarian aid in Afghanistan for the next six months.

## German police shoot Afghan man

BERLIN (Khaama Press): German police announced that they had shot and killed an Afghan citizen in western Berlin.

Police stated that this 27-year-old Afghan citizen first attacked his 23-year-old compatriot with a "knife-like object" on Friday afternoon in Wolmirstedt, a small town about 130 kilometers west of Berlin. The victim later succumbed to his injuries.

According to the police, the incident occurred at the opening match of the Euro 2024 football tournament in eastern Germany, injuring three people.

The attacker then targeted a group of people watch-

ing the Germany vs. Scotland football match in the yard of a private house, injuring three German men, two of whom are in critical condition, according to police.

The assailant, still armed with the knife-like object, also attacked the officers who were dispatched to the scene. He was shot by two police officers and died shortly after being transferred to the hospital.

Football matches are being held in cities across Germany and will continue until July 14.

In recent weeks, several reports have emerged regarding attacks by Afghan citizens residing in

Germany.

Last week, German police announced the arrest of a 19-year-old Afghan youth accused of stabbing a 41-year-old German woman in Frankfurt.

Additionally, on Sunday, June 2, Suleiman Atai, a 25-year-old Afghan, attacked an anti-Islam rally in Mannheim, killing a police officer and injuring five civilians.

These incidents highlight a growing concern about increased attacks by refugees in Germany recently.

Authorities are urging for increased vigilance and measures to prevent further violence in the country.

## Ghani wanrs: People's pateince is not unlimited



KABUL (Khaama Press): Former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani stated in his Eid message that the people of Afghanistan want a legitimate government and an acceptable government for all, "but they prefer this to be achieved peacefully."

However, Ghani warned that the patience of the Afghan people is not unlimited.

In his Eid message, Ghani wrote that people are currently "not in favor of war and bloodshed because there is a proverb that says 'a knot that can be untied with fingers does not need teeth and fists.'" Nevertheless, the for-

mer president warned that people might resort to violence to achieve their demands, which according to him "is a path to the country's destruction and ruin, experienced painfully many times in the past half-century."

He also mentioned in his message, referencing the saying "testing what has been tested is a mistake," that "creating and consolidating legitimacy should never mean the return of previously tested and despised individuals."

Former Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, who fled the country on August 15, 2021, leading to the Taliban's takeover

of Kabul, stated that "autocracy, the sword, the gun, and the explosion" cannot bring legitimacy. According to him, legitimacy lies in the hands of the people and comes from their "rule and participation."

In this message, he emphasized the establishment of a legitimate government and "transparency in the use of public funds."

Ashraf Ghani fled the country on 15 August 2021, which led to the takeover by the Taliban. Ghani took power in a controversial presidential election marred by accusations of fraud.

Many Afghan commentators considered him a weak leader, unable to effectively govern or address the country's numerous challenges.

His departure and the subsequent collapse of the Afghan government were seen by many as a reflection of his failed leadership and the systemic issues, including corruption, and the presence of preferred individuals within his administration.

## Noor Jahan: A mother of 5 left alone by children

KABUL (Pajhwok): Noor Jahan, a 72-year-old mother of five children, got married decades ago.

A resident of Kabul, she hoped her children would become her strength. However, they have left her high and dry.

Pajhwok Afghan News conducted interviews with a number of mothers in Kabul on this National Mother's Day.

Some of them commended their children's caring and supportive behaviour. However, others complained of violence and insensitivity from their offspring.

Noor Jahan: I got married in high hopes that children will support me in old age. However, today, I am left all alone.

Living in Wazir Mohammad Akbar Khan neighbourhood, she married 40-years ago and has three sons and two daughters.

She told Pajhwok her children left her alone without qualms after her husband's death in 2018.

"My daughters have got married and I visit their in-laws' homes. After my husband's passing, my sons went abroad."

Her spouse was a trader and she has no problems from the economic point of view. But what hurts her is why children have left her alone and migrated to London and New York.

The widow continually expects her sons will ask about her situation, but there is no news from them.

And when she calls them, her sons reply they are tired and will definitely ask about their mother on days off.

"When a couple gets married, they hope their children will take care of them when they become old. And in the event of death, they will be buried

with dignity."

She believed the children who did not discharge their responsibilities would realise their mistake and take care of their parents before they died.

Noor Jahan's son Ahmad Zubair, who is currently living abroad as a refugee, told Pajhwok he regularly spoke to his mother over the phone.

Without going into details, he said unemployment in the country had forced him to leave his mother alone.

**A mom beaten by son**

While travelling in public-transport vehicle, I saw an elderly woman with shaking hands. She got into the car and told the driver: "I have no money. Will you give me a lift to the police station?"

Her bandaged leg caught my attention. I asked her: "Mother what has happened to your leg? Where do you want to go?

Isn't there anyone to accompany you?"

Wiping her tears, she said: "I'm going to see Taliban and file a complaint against my son. I have no other option."

A resident of Haji Nabi Township, she married 17 years ago and has given birth to a solitary son. She took great pains looking after her son.

She added: "My husband died two year after our marriage, I worked for many years in houses of people to feed and raise my son. I got him enrolled in school."

After graduation, he completed his university education, I even arranged his marriage, but now I have no place in my home because of my son."

Writhing in pain, the anguished woman said: "I decided against marrying for a second time because of my son. I sacrificed my youth, thinking my son

will become my strength when I get old. But I had no idea he would jettison me after getting married."

Pajhwok tried to contact her son on why he was disrespecting his mother, but it did not succeed.

But we did succeed in speaking to another man who maltreated his mother but now regrets his action.

Abdul Waheed (not a real name), who is currently living abroad, said: "I got married 35 years ago. My wife did not respect my mother, who knew we were trying to go abroad. She took her money back from me and cursed me. Then we came to Holland."

He acknowledged: "On the way to another country, I paid for badly treating my mother. A car hit my only son and my wife separated from me. I regret what I did to my mother who is not alive

now."

He called on those whose parents are alive to treat them nicely.

**Happy with her children**  
Shahnaz, 75, said: "I thank Allah for blessing me the best of children. I'm leading an honourable and prosperous life with them."

Shahnaz said: "I married a man from a family of my relatives 55 years ago, Allah blessed us with four sons and five daughters. One of my sons has died while another has been martyred. Now I live with my only son and three single daughters. They treat me like a queen, Allah bless them all."

Shahnaz's daughter, Zakia Ibrahimi, commented: "My mother has done so much for me. If I serve her day and night and carry her on my shoulders, I still cannot return the services she has done me."

Ibrahimi said: "I am married and have children, but I still love my mother. I go to her house, visit her and kiss her hands."

Nargis from Kart-i-Naw area holds a similar view. She said: "I love my parents a lot. I respect them, never disrespect them at all."

Nargis (22), who works in a private office, believes prayers of her parents, especially mother, were always answered.

As she was getting ready for National Mother Day, she said: "Where ever we reached now is all because of the prayers of my mother, I never leave my house before my mother pray for me."

**Quran on caring for parents**

On the rights of mother, religious scholar Maulvi Hasan Haqyar said: "Parents are respected in all religions of the world. But Islam gives them the

highest respect. Mother's tights are greater than father's. Allah has underlined her rights repeatedly in the Quran."

Haqyar said: "Paradise lies beneath the mother's feet, which means no one can go to heaven against the wish of their mother. The Quran orders the believers not to say even ul to their parents, especially their mother."

According to the Quran and Sunnah, obedience and service to parents offers the greatest reward in the world. Harassing parents was one of the biggest sins, Haqyar said.

"In Islam, no one has the right to leave parents alone. Parents raise their children. When they get old and weak, it is the duty of children to look after them and meet their needs. Almighty Allah has promised hell for those who do not respect and serve their parents."



# IS hostage-takers killed as Russian prison siege ends

MOSCOW (AFP): Russian authorities said on Sunday they had brought a siege at a prison in the southern Rostov region to a swift end, killing the hostage-takers from the militant Islamic State (IS) group and freeing their two prison guard captives unharmed.

The prison service had earlier reported that the two guards had been taken hostage by an unspecified number of IS detainees and had entered negotiations for their release.

But a short time later it issued a statement saying the siege had ended: "During a special operation...the criminals were liquidated and the employees who were taken hostage were released and were not injured."

No further details were released in the immediate aftermath of the drama at Detention Centre 1 in the Rostov region.

A police source told state news agency TASS that IS members who were due to appear in court on terrorism charges were among the hostage-takers.

They were reported to be holed up in the prison courtyard, armed with a pocket-knife, a baton and an axe, the source said.

The Interfax news agency said there were six hostage-takers who demanded to be provided with a car and be allowed to leave the prison in exchange for the release of the hostages.

The incident comes nearly three months after gunmen killed at least 144 people when they opened fire inside a concert hall near Moscow in an attack claimed by the group.

Hundreds more were injured in the March 22 attack at the Crocus City Hall, the deadliest on Russian soil for two decades.

More than 20 people have since been arrested, including the four suspected gunmen, all from the former Soviet republic of Tajikistan, an impoverished country on Afghanistan's northern border.

Russia has been repeatedly targeted by attacks claimed by IS militants, though the jihadist group's influence in the country remains limited.

Russian media reports speculated that the attackers at the Rostov detention centre could be among those arrested in 2022 for allegedly planning an attack on the Supreme Court of Karachay-Cherkessia, a Muslim-majority Russian republic in the Caucasus.

Nearly 4,500 Russians, mainly from the Caucasus, travelled to Iraq and Syria to fight with IS, according to official figures.

In April, two armed men who authorities said were members of "an international terrorist organisation" were shot dead by Russian forces near Nalchik in the Caucasus.



MOSCOW: Russian police in Moscow stand guard after two inmates took guards hostage in a detention centre in Rostov on Sunday.

## Hajj pilgrims reach Jamarat Bridge

RIYADH (Arab News): Hajj pilgrims on Sunday reached Jamarat Bridge as they advanced through Mina for the final rite, the stoning of the devil, on the first day of Tashreeq.

It is here that Muslims believe the devil tried to talk the Prophet Ibrahim out of submitting to God's will. On the 10th day of Dul Hijjah, Hajj pilgrims collect small stones that they throw at three pillars in the Jamarat Al-Aqaba, representing the devil.

Huge crowds lined up to perform the rite, many holding umbrellas to shield themselves from the sun. The pilgrims say "Allah-u Akbar" ("God is the greatest") each time they cast a pebble.

Pilgrims can stone the pillars any time from midday to midnight on the day of the ritual.

After finishing the ritual, male pilgrims traditionally shave or cut their hair and change out of their ihram. Women cut a lock of their hair.

The ihram symbolizes equality, religious unity and the pursuit of spiritual renewal.

Security guards sprayed the pilgrims with water as they braved searing heat to reach the Jamarat complex. Temperatures as high as 45 degrees Celsius have been recorded at the Hajj this year.

The pilgrims will then return to Makkah to do Tawaf, the circumambulation of the Kaaba.

Junaid Nizami, a pilgrim from Pakistan, told Arab News that he was impressed by the arrangements in place to ensure the safety of pilgrims.

"My experience in Jamarat was good and they prepared very well for the pilgrims. Also, the system (is created) in a way where no one can clash with each other. There are police, medical staff and helpers who are supporting the people."

After dawn prayers, when pilgrims leave Muzdalifah and proceed to Jamarat to take part in the stoning rite, women and older pilgrims can delegate this responsibility to a male in their spiritual journey.

## World leaders meet in Switzerland to discuss a Ukraine peace roadmap

OBBERG, Switzerland (AP): Dozens of world leaders converged on a Swiss resort Saturday to discuss how to bring peace to war-ravaged Ukraine, though any hopes of a real breakthrough were muted by the absence of Russia.

About half of the roughly 100 delegations were led by heads of state and government. Analysts said turnout would be a key indicator about how much pull Ukraine and its staunch Western backers have with the broader international community.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday sought to cast a shadow over the Swiss-Ukrainian initiative for the conference. Some countries such as India, Turkey and Saudi Arabia that have retained ties, at times lucrative, with Moscow — unlike Western powers that have sanctioned Russia over the war — were also on hand.

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, told the conference that credible peace talks will need Russia's participation and require "difficult compromise."

Turkey's foreign minister, Hakan Fidan, acknowledged the mistrust between Russia and Ukraine, saying "each side regards the other party's steps (in floating proposals) as an extension of broader war effort."

"Excellencies, I must also note that this summit could have been more results-oriented if the other party to the conflict — Russia — was present in the room," he added.

Entering the venue, President Gitanas Nausėda of Lithuania, a NATO member country that has been one of the most stalwart supporters of fellow former Soviet republic Ukraine, said Russian troops must leave Ukraine, and that Moscow must be held accountable for crimes there and pay reparations for the war damage.

"Right now it seems unrealistic, but I think we have to stay united, and if international society will push the Russian Federation, everything is possible," he told The Associated Press. "I think the situation is very clear: Ukraine has to seek territorial integrity."

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris, representing the United States while President Joe Biden attended a fundraiser in California, reiterated America's full backing for Ukraine and announced \$1.5 billion in new U.S. assistance for an array of projects such as energy infrastructure and civilian security.

China, which backs Russia, joined scores of countries that sat out the event. Beijing has said any peace process would require the participation of Russia and Ukraine, and has floated its own ideas for peace. In a separate initiative last month, China and Brazil agreed to six "common understandings" toward a political settlement of the Ukraine crisis, asking other countries to play a role in promoting peace talks to be held "at a proper time" with both Russia and Ukraine involved.

The standoff over Ukraine is steeped in security for Europe — it is the continent's deadliest conflict since World War II — and big-power geopolitics.

U.S. intelligence officials say China has increased sales of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology to Russia that Moscow is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry to fuel its war effort.

"What is clear is that China is not here, and I presume they're not here because Putin asked them not to come and they obliged Putin," said Biden's top foreign policy advisor, Jake Sullivan. "And I think that says something about where China stands with respect to Russia's war in Ukraine. I think countries should take notice of that."

Harris and Sullivan both acknowledged that not all participants were on the same page about an eventual peace settlement.

Russian troops who control nearly a quarter of Ukraine have made territorial gains in recent months. When talk of the Swiss-hosted peace summit began last summer, Ukrainian forces had recently regained large tracts of territory, notably near the southern city of Kherson and the northern city of Kharkiv.

The conference centers on three agenda items — seen as the least controversial bits of a 10-point peace "formula" laid out by Zelenskyy: Nuclear safety, including at the Russian-occupied Zaporizhzhia power plant; possible prisoner of war exchanges; and global food security. The war has disrupted shipments of food and fertilizer through the Black Sea.

Zelenskyy's plan also called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from occupied Ukrainian territory, the cessation of hostilities and the restoration of Ukraine's original borders with Russia, including Russia's withdrawal from occupied Crimea. With Ukrainian mostly on the defensive these days, those appear to be increasingly distant hopes.

## Govt mandates drones' registration, places licence requirement for certain UAVs



KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): The federal government has imposed a mandatory requirement for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), commonly known as drones, to be registered under the new "Civil Unmanned Aircraft Rules, 2024".

As per the new rules issued on the Ministry of Aviation's website, all drones will have to be registered with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Individuals already possessing UAVs

will have to apply for registration of their drones within four months after the new rules come into effect. Whereas those who will acquire the drones after the new regulations are in place will get 15 days to apply for the registration of their property.

With registration applications required to mention the intended use, registered unmanned aircraft shall be given a unique number consisting of alphabets and numerals.

Also, a person will not

be allowed to register more than three unmanned aircraft of a category during one calendar year.

Furthermore, drones have been divided into four categories on the basis of their maximum take-off weight namely category-I (maximum take-off weight less than or equal to 250 grammes), category-II (more than 250g but less than or equal to 10 kilograms), category-III (more than 10kg but less than or equal to 25kg) and category-IV (more than 25kg but less than or equal to 100kg).

Once the new rules come into effect, people will need CAA's "Remote Pilot Licence" to operate drones which fall within categories II, III and IV.

The minimum requirement for the aforesaid licence is that the applicant needs to be at least

18 years of age, has a qualified secondary school certificate or equivalent examination, has received training from an approved organisation in relation to the type of licence applied and has passed a test prescribed by the authority to determine his knowledge and skills in the operation of an unmanned aircraft.

With regards to the import and export of UAVs, a person will be required to first get themselves registered. Also, those intending to import category-III and IV drones will need clearance from the Ministry of Defence. Moreover, violators of the new rules might face action, which also includes imposition of a fine up to Rs100,000 with the possibility of additional monetary penalty which may extend to Rs10,000 for every day during which such contravention continues.

## China views Taiwan's 'elimination' as national cause: President Lai

BEIJING (Reuters): China views the annexation and "elimination" of Taiwan as its great national cause, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said on Sunday, telling cadets at the military's premier academy they must know their enemy and not give in to defeatism.

Lai has faced sustained personal attacks from China, which views Taiwan as its own territory, since assuming office last month, with Beijing calling him a "separatist". China staged

war games around Taiwan shortly after Lai's inauguration.

Lai says only Taiwan's people can decide their future and has repeatedly offered talks with Beijing but has been rebuffed.

Speaking in Kaohsiung in the south of the island on the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Whampoa Military Academy, Lai said today's cadets must recognise the challenges of the "new era".

"The biggest challenge

is to face the powerful rise of China, [which is] destroying the status quo in the Taiwan Strait and regards Taiwan's annexation and the elimination of the Republic of China as the great rejuvenating cause of its people," he said, using Taiwan's formal name.

China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not answer calls on Sunday seeking comments about Lai's remarks.

Wang Huning, the fourth-ranked leader in China's ruling Communist

Party, told a Saturday forum in China about relations with Taiwan that "reunification is a historical necessity for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation", vowing to "smash any separatist plots".

Lai, at the event attended by senior military officials and also the top US diplomat in Kaohsiung Neil Gibson, said the cadets must defend Taiwan against being annexed by China and that the island's future can only be decided by its people.



KARACHI: A view of massive traffic jam at Sohrab Goth Road ahead of Eidul Azha. — INP photo

## A usually joyous Muslim holiday reminds families in Gaza of war's punishing toll

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP): Last summer, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip celebrated the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha the way it's supposed to be: with large family feasts, meat shared with those less fortunate, and new clothes and gifts for children.

But this year, after eight months of devastating war between Israel and Hamas, many families will eat canned food in stifling tents. There's hardly any meat or livestock at local markets, and no money for holiday treats or presents — only war, hunger and misery, with no end in sight.

"There is no Eid this year," said Nadia Hamouda, whose daughter was killed in the war and who fled from her home in northern Gaza months ago and is staying in a tent in the central town of Deir al-Balah. "When we hear the call to prayer, we cry over those we lost and the things we lost, and what has happened to us, and how we used to live before."

Muslims around the world will celebrate the four-day Eid al-Adha, the Feast of the Sacrifice, early in the week. It commemorates the Prophet

Ibrahim's willingness to sacrifice his son, Ismail, as recounted in the Quran. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, Abraham is called to sacrifice his other son, Isaac.

Gaza was impoverished and isolated even before the war, but people still managed to celebrate by hanging up colorful decorations, surprising children with treats and gifts, and purchasing meat or slaughtering livestock to share with those less fortunate.

"It was a real Eid," Hamouda said. "Everyone was happy, including the children."

Now much of Gaza is in

ruins and most of the population of 2.3 million Palestinians have fled their homes. After Hamas' surprise attack into Israel on Oct. 7, in which Palestinian militants killed some 1,200 people and took another 250 hostage, Israel launched a massive air and ground assault.

The war has killed over 37,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It has destroyed most of Gaza's agriculture and food production, leaving people reliant on humanitarian aid that has been held up by Israeli restrictions and the ongoing fighting.

United Nations agencies have warned that over a million people — nearly half the population — could experience the highest level of starvation in the coming weeks.

In early May, Egypt shut down its crossing into the southern Gaza city of Rafah after Israel captured the Palestinian side of it, sealing the only route for people to enter or leave the territory. That means virtually no Palestinians from Gaza will be able to make the annual Hajj pilgrimage that precedes the Eid.

Ashraf Sahwi, who was among hundreds of thousands of Palestinians who fled from Gaza City earlier in the war and is also living in a tent, has no idea when or if he'll be able to return.

"We don't even know what happened to our houses or whether we'll be able to live in them again, or if it's even possible to rebuild," he said.

Abdelsattar al-Batsh said he and his family of seven haven't eaten meat since the war began. A kilogram (2 pounds) of meat costs 200 shekels (around \$50). A live sheep, which could be bought for as little as \$200 before the war, now costs \$1,300 — if it's even available.

"Today, there is only war. No money. No work. Our houses have been destroyed. I have nothing," al-Batsh said.

Iyad al-Bayouk, who owns a now-shuttered cattle farm in southern Gaza, said severe shortages of both livestock and feed due to Israel's blockade have driven up prices. Some local farms have been turned into shelters.

Mohammed Abdel Rahim, who has been sheltering in a building in an empty cattle farm in central Gaza for months, said the farm-turned-shelter was particularly bad in the winter, when it smelled

like animals and was infested with bugs. As the heat set in, the ground dried out, making it more bearable, he said.

Abdelkarim Motawq, another displaced Palestinian from northern Gaza, used to work in the local meat industry, which did brisk business ahead of the holiday. This year, his family can only afford rice and beans. "I wish I could work again," he said. "It was a busy season for me, during which I would bring money home and buy food, clothing, nuts, and meat for my children. But today there's nothing left."