

**Man killed in IED blast**  
**F.P. Report**  
QUETTA: One person was killed and another injured in improvised explosive device (IED) blast near a vehicle in the provincial capital on Saturday. According to details, an IED went off in Akhtarabad near Western Bypass in Quetta. A vehicle was damaged in the explosion resulting in death of one person and leaving another serious injured.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing officers during his visit to headquarters of Federal Board of Revenue.

## Imran, Bushra Bibi acquitted in Iddat case

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad district and sessions court on Saturday accepted the appeals filed by former prime minister Imran Khan and his spouse

Bushra Bibi against their conviction in the Iddat case. Additional district and sessions judge (ADSI) Afzal Majoka announced the judgment a little after 3pm after reserving the verdict earlier in the day. After accepting their appeals, the judge said: "If they are not wanted in any other case, then PTI founder Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi should be released [from jail] immediately." The couple was convicted on February 3 days before the general elections on a complaint filed by Bushra Bibi's ex-husband, Khawar Fareed Maneka, who alleged that they contracted marriage during the former first lady's Iddat period.

Senior civil judge Qudratullah had sentenced the ex-premier and his spouse to seven years in jail and imposed Rs500,000 fine each a decision that was widely criticised by civil society, women activists and lawyers. The verdict had coincided with the Toshakhana and cipher case sentences. With the Toshakhana case sentences suspended and acquittal in cipher case, Imran now remains incarcerated at the Adiala Jail in the Iddat case only.

Previously, District and Sessions Judge Shahrukh Arjumand was hearing the case and had reserved the verdict in May. However, on the day of its expected announcement, he sought a transfer of the case, citing Maneka's request for recusal from hearing the

## NAB arrested ex-PM, wife in fresh Toshakhana case

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The relief for PTI founder Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi was short-lived as both were arrested in another case. The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) arrested the former prime minister and his wife Bushra Bibi in fresh Toshakhana case. Earlier, Additional District and Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka has acquitted Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in the nikkah during iddat (illegal marriage) case. The court annulled the indictment of the couple in the case. The court also issued the release orders of Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi by accepting their pleas and said they could walk free immediately.

appeals. Subsequently, the case was transferred to the court of ADSI Majoka.

At the outset of the hearing, Maneka's lawyer Advocate Zahid Asif said Imran's legal team had mentioned bringing witnesses to the court during the previous proceedings. "If they want to bring witnesses they can, we don't have any objections," he stated, adding that the court could accept evidence at any point during the case.

Referring to yesterday's hearing, during which the judge had observed that Maneka being the follower of the Hanafi sect had lost the right to conciliation with Bushra Bibi, Asif pointed out that nowhere was the Hanafi sect mentioned neither had Mufti Saeed said anything regarding it. He claimed that Imran was putting the entire responsibility of the case on "Bushra Bibi's shoulders". "The husband is sidelining his wife's sacrifices and saying that he is innocent," the lawyer alleged, adding that such behaviour was not expected from a leader. Here, ADSI Majoka remarked: "This is not possible ... the marriage took place, both [of

## Acquittal in Iddat case clears way for PTI: Gohar

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Responding to the recent verdict of PTI founder's acquittal in the Iddat case, the party chairman Barrister Gohar expressed hope that Imran Khan should be released now.

"Alhamdulillah, today justice has prevailed and we thank the judiciary for this decision for standing with the constitution," he said. He said like other cases against, the Iddat case did not have any foundation and soon the PTI founder would be a free man.

The decision of the trial court had been declared null and void after the acquittal of Imran Khan. Earlier, Additional District and Sessions Judge Afzal Majoka acquitted Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi in the nikkah during iddat (illegal marriage) case. The court annulled the indictment of the couple in the case. The court also issued the release orders of Imran Khan and his spouse Bushra Bibi by accepting their pleas and said they could walk free immediately.

## PTI to stage power show on Aug 14

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has decided to stage a power show at Minar-e-Pakistan Lahore on August 14.

As per details, the party's senior vice president Akmal Baari has submitted an application to the deputy commissioner, promising to fully comply with the rules and regulations during the rally. Last week, PTI postponed the party's Islamabad power show after the federal capital administration cancelled the No. Objection Certificate (NOC). Islamabad Chief Commissioner suspended the NOC issued to PTI for public gathering just a day before the scheduled meeting.

Speaking to media, PTI chairman Barrister Gohar said that PTI got a green signal for the power show four months after the request for the NOC was made, but the commissioner cancelled the NOC. He stated that the commissioner has no authority to suspend the NOC.

Rehman highlighted concerns regarding the Supreme Court's decision on specific seats, insisting that partial acceptance of the ruling is unacceptable. He questioned the Election Commission's credibility following the Supreme Court's verdict, pointing out that Nawaz Sharif allegedly needed an additional 70,000 votes to secure his win. Criticizing the governance in Sindh, Naem-ur-

Rehman stated that a nationwide movement for the people's rights has been initiated, with planned protests set for tomorrow. He lamented the plight of the middle class, which he believes is being systematically destroyed. "The Supreme Court's decision is a breath of fresh air," Naem-ur-Rehman declared, calling for legislation in accordance with the court's directives.

## 2024 elections: JI calls for judicial commission

**F.P. Report**

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami has appealed the Supreme Court of Pakistan to establish a judicial commission to oversee the upcoming 2024 elections.

Speaking at a press conference in Lahore, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naem-ur-Rehman emphasized the necessity for a transparent electoral process. Hafiz Naem-ur-

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GAZA (Reuters): An Israeli airstrike killed at least 71 Palestinians in a designated humanitarian zone in Gaza on Saturday, the enclave's health ministry said, in an attack that Israel said targeted Hamas military chief Mohammed Deif.

It was unclear whether Deif was killed. "We are still checking and verifying the results of the strike," an Israeli military official told reporters. The militant Islamist group Hamas said in a statement that Israeli claims it had targeted leaders of the group were false and aimed at justifying the attack, which was the deadliest Israeli attack in Gaza in weeks.

Displaced people sheltering in the area said their tents were torn down by the force of the strike, describing bodies and body parts strewn on the ground. "I couldn't even tell where I was or what was happening," said Sheikh Youssef, a resident of Gaza City who is currently displaced in the

Al-Mawasi area. "I left the tent and looked around, all the tents were knocked down, body parts, bodies everywhere, elderly women thrown on the floor, young children in pieces," he told Reuters. The Israeli military said the strike against Deif also targeted Rafa Salama, the commander of Hamas' Khan Younis Brigade, describing them as two of the masterminds of the Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the nine-month war in Gaza.

Deif has survived seven Israeli assassination attempts, the most recent in 2021 and has topped Israel's most wanted list for decades, held responsible for the deaths of dozens of Israelis in suicide bombings. The Gaza health ministry said at least 71 Palestinians were killed in the strike and 289 injured, the deadliest toll in weeks in the conflict-shattered enclave.

Al-Mawasi is a designated humanitarian area that the Israeli army has repeatedly urged Palestinians to head to after issuing evacuation orders from other areas. Reuters footage showed ambulances racing toward the area amidst clouds of smoke and dust. Displaced people, including women and children, were fleeing in panic, some holding belongings in their hands.

The Israeli military published an aerial photo of the site, which Reuters was not immediately able to verify, where it said "terrorists hid among civilians." "The location of the strike was an open area surrounded by trees, several buildings, and sheds," it said in a statement.

The Israeli military official said the area was not a tent complex, but an operational compound run by Hamas and that several more militants were there, guarding Deif. Many of those wounded in the strike,

including women and children, were taken to the nearby Nasser Hospital, which hospital officials said had been overwhelmed and was "no longer able to function" due to the intensity of the Israeli offensive and an acute shortage of medical supplies.

"The hospital is full of patients, it's full of wounded, we can't find beds for people," said Atef Al-Hout, director of the hospital, adding that it was the only one still operating in southern Gaza. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant was holding special consultations, his office said, in light of "developments in Gaza." It was unclear how the strike would affect ceasefire talks underway in Doha and Cairo.

The Hamas-run media office said at least 100 people had been killed and wounded in the Khan Younis attack, including members of the Civil Emergency Service. A senior Hamas official did not confirm

whether Deif had been present and called the Israeli allegations "nonsense." "All the martyrs are civilians and what happened was a grave escalation of the war of genocide, backed by the American support and world silence," Sami Abu Zuhri told Reuters, adding the strike showed Israel was not interested in reaching a ceasefire deal.

Critics have accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians, which Israel denies. It characterises its actions as self-defense to prevent another attack like Oct. 7, though the International Court of Justice ordered Israel in January to take action to prevent acts of genocide. Hamas-led militants killed 1,200 people and took more than 250 hostages in the cross-border raid into southern Israel on Oct. 7, according to Israeli tallies.

Israel has retaliated with military action in Gaza that has killed more than 38,000 Palestinians, medical

authorities in Gaza say. Separately on Saturday, at least 17 Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack on a prayer hall at a Gaza camp for displaced people in west Gaza City, Palestinian health officials said.

Witnesses said the Khan Younis attack came as a surprise as the area had been calm, adding more than one missile had been fired. Some of the wounded who were being evacuated were rescue workers, they said. "They're all gone, my whole family's gone ... where are my brothers? They're all gone, they're all gone. There's no one left," said one tearful woman, who did not give her name. Rising up the Hamas ranks over 30 years, Deif developed the group's network of tunnels and its bomb-making expertise, Hamas sources say. In March, Israel said it killed Deif's deputy, Marwan Issa. Hamas has since neither confirmed, nor denied his death.

# PM directs latest technology to broaden tax net base

— asks FBR authorities to gird up loins for revenue generation with dedicated efforts, usage of latest technology

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday directed Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) authorities to tighten their belts and serve the nation by formulating a strategy and mechanism coupled with usage of latest technology to broaden the tax net base without further burdening the honest tax payers.

During a visit to FBR Headquarters, the prime minister said that the incumbent government had the sole agenda of putting Pakistan on path of progress with consistent improvement in the economic indicators. "Though it may be a difficult journey which requires collective and individual efforts, sincerity and sacrifices and putting forth the national interests supreme over all other interests," he emphasized.

Terming the staff level arrangement with International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a positive omen for the country's economy, he expressed the hope that IMF board would also give a go ahead in this regard. The prime minister said now it was their responsibility to act speedily and work tirelessly for making the IMF programme as the last one in the country's history, adding after which a journey of progress and prosperity would commence in the country.

The prime minister expressed the confidence that Pakistan could become a great and prosperous country with collective and individual efforts. If we want to get rid of foreign debts, the FBR should levy taxes on those who had not been paying any taxes, he opined.

The prime minister said that the country's top taxmen should realize the issue of repeatedly burdening of honest tax payers including the government employees who filed their annual tax returns. He stressed upon

## Shehbaz calls for exposing elements spreading uncertainty, instability

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday emphasized the need to expose elements spreading uncertainty and instability in the country. He made these remarks during a meeting with Parliamentary leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) in Senate and Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Senator Irfan Siddiqui. PM Shehbaz Sharif stressed the government as well as PML-N to pay attention to evolve an effective strategy to let down the organized campaign against the government, state and national security institutions. Appreciating the positive role of Muslim League (N) in the Senate, the prime minister said that the Upper House should guide all the elected houses for democratic values and dignified environment. While congratulating Senator Irfan Siddiqui on being elected as the Chairman of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, the prime minister hoped that the Foreign Affairs Committee under his leadership would pay special attention to promoting a positive, peaceful and constructive image of Pakistan in the world.

levy of taxes and broadening of revenue resources with usage of latest technology practiced worldwide including help from the artificial intelligence and said that digitization of FBR was a step in this regard which should be fully utilized.

The prime minister maintained that he felt pains over learning of seeking foreign debts as the nations could not be built like in this manner. He said his message was loud and clear that the current reforms in the FBR should be carried out without any personal likes and dislikes, and all the efforts should be directed under the national interests by rising above past tendencies. The prime minister also directed the FBR chairman to bring forth all the hidden issues related to the department on table without wasting time. He also lauded the FBR for collecting 30 percent more revenues as compared to the last year's corresponding period and emphasized that for the collection of its set target, the enforcement of taxes should be the top agenda.

The prime minister said that in

these efforts, the FBR should not create problems for the tax-paying businessmen and industrialists rather; it should provide facilities to encourage the tax payers. The prime minister said that some 27 years ago, in Punjab province, they had imposed tax on agriculture sector after a thorough consultations and consideration which was later emulated by other provinces. He also referred to the need of resolving the issue of general sales tax collection. The prime minister made it clear that he would not tolerate any lapses, adding that when determination was made with sincerity, paths leading to future were usually carved out.

Earlier, the prime minister arrived at the FBR Headquarters where he was welcomed by Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Ali Pervaiz Malik and Chairman FBR Malik Amjad Zubair Tiwana. The prime minister laid down floral wreaths on memorial of shuhada and offered Fateha, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

## Pakistan, IMF reach \$7b loan agreement

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have reached a US\$7 billion staff-level loan agreement on a comprehensive program endorsed by the federal and provincial governments, that could be supported by a 37-month Extended Fund Arrangement (EFF).

According to an IMF statement released on Saturday morning, this loan agreement is subject to approval by the IMF's Executive Board and the timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners. The program aims to capitalize on the hard-won macroeconomic stability achieved over the past year by furthering efforts to strengthen public finances, reduce inflation, rebuild external buffers and remove economic distortions to spur private sector-led growth.

Key policy goals of the authorities' program include: Sustainable public finances, through a gradual fiscal consolidation based on reforms to broaden the

## PM satisfied over deal

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday expressed his satisfaction over reaching of Pakistan's staff-level agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a new \$7 billion loan programme.

The prime minister said for the country's economy, they had taken harsh and difficult decisions and owing to these decisions, positive outcome was being achieved in form of economic stability. "IMF programme proved vital in steering Pakistan out of financial straits," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release in Urdu language, quoted the prime minister as saying. The IMF has agreed to extend \$7 billion loan to Pakistan, spanning over a period of 37 months. The prime minister observed that the new loaning programme would further strengthen the economy of Pakistan, ushering in a new era of economic prosperity and end to foreign loans. The prime minister thanked the IMF for its support in the difficult times and said that the government was continuing efforts towards strengthening of economy.

Revenue collections will be supported by simpler and fairer direct and indirect taxation, including by bringing net income from the retail, export, and agriculture sectors properly into the tax system. At the same time, the FY25 budget provides additional resources to expand social protection by increasing both the generosity and coverage of BISP, education, and health spending.

## FIA arrests Sanam Javed

**F.P. Report**

GUJRANWALA: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) arrested the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sanam Javed on Saturday. According to sources, two separate teams of FIA reached Gujranwala from Lahore and Islamabad to arrest the PTI leader.

The sources said that Sanam Javed was wanted to FIA in a case and she was arrested from the central jail Gujranwala. A day earlier, Lahore High Court had ordered immediate release of Sanam Javed from Gujranwala jail. A two-member bench headed by Justice Asjad Javed Gharal of the LHC issued a 14-page decision.

The court observed repeatedly naming the accused in the same kind of cases by the investigating officer without evidence showed malice, which exposed the deliberate attempt to defame and defeat the judicial system of the country. The court cited the Gujranwala case against Sanam Javed was fabricated and registered on the basis of malice and is therefore discharged immediately. Sanam Javed was detained by Gujranwala police in a May 9 riots case lodged against her.

# 71 Palestinians killed as Israel targets Hamas military chief







# Governor informed about traders concerns



**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi stated that the business and agricultural sectors are crucial for the advancement of the country. He expressed his commitment to promoting these sectors to achieve economic growth and stability. He shared these thoughts during a meeting with a delegation from the Peshawar Traders Chamber at the Governor House in Peshawar. The delegation was led by Provincial President Malik Mehr Elahi, Patron-in-Chief of the Peshawar Traders Chamber Baba-e-Tajir Amin Hussain Babar, and President of the Peshawar Traders Chamber Ghulam Bilal Javed.

traders' associations in Peshawar. The participants of the delegation informed the Governor about the traders' concerns regarding income tax. They mentioned that income tax has been imposed collectively on four to five markets in Peshawar. The delegation suggested that instead of income tax, it should be called property tax or another name and requested relief in this regard. They also requested the Governor to discuss this issue with the Chairman of the FBR and other relevant authorities. The delegation also demanded the solarization of mosques in the cantonment area. They informed the Governor about the issues faced by travel agencies related to Jerry, and discussed the problems of the industrial sector, particularly small industries, which are being neglected. The Governor took immediate notice of several issues, including issuing orders to open the U-turn in front of Takht Jamal on Arbab Road on Sadar Road. Regarding the allocation of 100 kanals of land in Peshawar for Indus Hospital, the Governor mentioned that he had discussed this matter with Dr. Bari. He assured the delegation that he would have a detailed discussion with the Prime Minister about income tax and would also discuss it with the FBR and other relevant institutions. While talking to the delegation, the Governor mentioned his recent visit to Tajikistan, where ample business opportunities are available. He suggested forming a joint delegation of the province's business community to visit Tajikistan to learn from their business sector's development. He also mentioned his recent meeting with the Chinese Ambassador, where they identified 10 economic zones under CPEC that are yet to be started. He pointed out that the location of the economic zone in D.I. Khan is inaccessible to traders. He emphasized the need for collective efforts to move the province forward and resolve its issues collaboratively. The Governor highlighted the importance of industrial development for national economic progress and stressed the need to provide all necessary facilities to the industry. He assured that the traders' issues would be addressed on a priority basis. On this occasion, the traders presented souvenirs and bouquets to the Governor.

## Improving health and education sectors need of hour, says Governor KP

PESHAWAR (INP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor, Faisal Karim Kundi stressing the need for improvement in health and education sectors and bringing workable and goal oriented reforms in existing systems of universities, medical colleges and hospitals on solid basis in the province has termed it need of the hour. The Governor was addressing a representative delegation of education experts led by Dr Aasia Khan and comprising Dr Qibla Ayaz, Dr Jamil Chitrali, Dr Abdul Rehman Khattak, Dr Sajjad Khan and others at Governor House Peshawar on Saturday. On the occasion, the delegation presented various suggestions for improvement of education sectors especially administration and financial affairs. The delegation was of the view that the systems of hospitals and universities in Sindh province in public interest was better than the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It further informed about a formal coordination/connection cell setup at Governor Secretariat Sindh for speedy disposal of matters pertaining to the public sector universities of the Sindh province. Dr Qibla Ayaz requested for review on Education Policy 2003 and establishment of a university for tribal youth either in Peshawar or Islamabad. The delegation informed the Governor about financial, education and administrative powers of the universities and its distribution among federation, province and Higher Education Commission. They suggested a separate higher education commission in the province to oversee matters of universities at provincial level. The Governor was also informed about appointment and promotion of the faculty at medical colleges, loopholes in admission system and legal lacuna. On this occasion, Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa underlined the need of maintaining highest standard in education imperative to enhance youth abilities. He said that a letter has been written to vice chancellors of public sector universities to inform about use of properties of all universities and income obtained from it besides other resources. This would help know about universities that always requested for grants are using its resources in correct way or otherwise. Faisal Karim Kundi said provision of best healthcare and education services was included in responsibilities of the government and stressed the need for collective efforts for betterment of education and health sectors by putting it on modern lines.

### KP govt announces Moharram holidays

PESHAWAR (APP): The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced two days holidays on the occasion of Ashura. The government declared public holidays on 9th and 10th Moharram, July 16 and 17, said a notification issued here on Saturday.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to CM Abdul Karim Tordher presiding over a review meeting of Namak Mandi Processing & Export City project.

## Dr. Shahzad completed his Ph.D Degree

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Dr. Shahzad Khan of Institute of Management Sciences has successfully defended his Ph.D thesis under the esteemed supervision of Dr. Muhammad Daud Ali. Dr. Khan as the first-ever Ph.D graduate from the Institute, setting a new precedent for academic excellence and research prowess. The Ph.D thesis titled "Psychological Factors Affecting the Transformation of Emerging Entrepreneurs into Brands" was evaluated by distinguished external examiners, Prof. Arif Khattak from Bahria University Islamabad and Prof. Dr. Waseef Jamal from the Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar. Dr. Tariq Iqbal Khan served as the internal examiner, ensuring a thorough and comprehensive review of Dr. Khan's work. The event was graced by the presence of Prof. Dr. Amara Gul Dean faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (online), Dr. Zia Ur Rahman, Controller of Examinations, along with notable faculty members Dr. Kamran Azam, Dr. Atiq Rafique Khattak, Shiraz Ahmad, Syed Tausef Shah, Atif Atiq and Malik Sajjad from the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC). Additionally, research students and other esteemed guests attended the defense, adding to the momentous atmosphere.

### ASJ orders registration of FIR

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Additional Session Judge (ASJ) Peshawar Aftab Iqbal has ordered registration of First Information Report (FIR) against three doctors of the Khyber Teaching Hospital (KTH) for their alleged negligence and carelessness during treatment, resulting in the loss of a patient's eye. The counsel Khalid Anwar Afridi argued that the doctors' negligence had caused his client to lose his eye. The petition was filed in 2022, and the court had ordered the police to investigate the matter. The police investigation found the doctors' negligence and carelessness to be the cause of the patient's eye loss. The court, in its decision, noted that the doctors' statements recorded by the police were not presented in court, and the available record supported the allegations against the doctors. The court ordered the police to register a case against the doctors under the relevant laws and to take action against them in accordance with the law.

## Sherpao hails decision of Supreme Court

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Demanding the resignation of the chief election commissioner, Qaumi Watan Party (QWP) Chairman Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao on Saturday hailed the decision of the Supreme Court in the reserved seats case. In a statement, he said that the resignation of the chief election commissioner and other members of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) would pave the way for ensuring the holding of the free and fair elections in future. Aftab Sherpao said that the Supreme Court's decision was a no-confidence against the ECP the way it conducted the general election 2024. "The apex court decision has proved that the ECP did not act as an impartial body in conducting the last general election in a free and fair manner," the QWP leader remarked, adding that the election watchdog had acted against the relevant laws and the Constitution. He called for bringing electoral reforms with the consensus of all the political parties as it was the only way and democratic solution to steer the country out of the prevailing challenges. He said that all the political parties were dissatisfied with the performance of the ECP, therefore, the chief election commissioner should resign as he failed to ensure free and fair election. Aftab Sherpao said that the Supreme Court decision also served as a reality check for the political parties that should realize that they should deliver and serve the people to remain relevant.



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur chairing 10th meeting of Provincial Cabinet.

## Country passing through critical phase of history, says Chairman Faiq Shah

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chairman, Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad Faiq Shah made it clear that issues would be resolved when law should be made equitable for all and stating that the country is passing through a critical phase of its history. While chairing a meeting of the party central council here on Saturday, Shah called upon lawyers and politicians to jointly struggle for supremacy of law. He said implementation of both legislation and law must be ensured. Faiq noted there is a visible difference between poor, powerless and powerful. The party leader said there must be speedy trials, judges' decisions and timely justice. Hence only speak of heroism for sake of judges' ego, personal interests and media impressions, which are never fruitful for country and justice, he added. The Amun Taraqqi Party Muhammad chief said electricity production and unfair distribution have become a nuisance for people. He said slogans, promises and claims of eliminating corruption were founding fake. He added the process of eradicating corruption and awarding punishment hadn't begun till date. Furthermore, he said NAB along with all other institutions were burdened on the national treasury. Shah said it could be better to change NAB into the National Agriculture Bureau to bring revolution in the agriculture sector. He added all are above the law and fearless. The party leader maintained those halting corruption have themselves involved in corruption. Faiq said his party has given a practical sketch of the Board of Wisdom and Honesty for completely wiping out the corruption. He said corruption would be curtailed by true enforcement of the proposal of the BWH. He, however, said rulers don't have interest in eliminating corruption as they came in parliament by spending millions and they had gone by accumulating billions. Shah said the Senate, Assembly, and power and authority gained for this purpose. He added inheritance has further prolonged this sequel. In the meanwhile, the party head Faiq Shah while speaking at KhanGarh said the country has caught a mess. The ATP chief stressed the provision of authority to people vital to end the crisis. He said the crisis can only be averted by joint efforts. He said if youth would take major decisions for this movement then the future will be secured.

## Seminar on impact of anthropogenic chances of Kabul river water quality held

PESHAWAR (APP): Nawab, faculty and other participants participated in large numbers. Chairman Department of Water Resource Management Professor Dr. Muhammad Zubair, Regional Researcher Water Modeling, IWMI Dr. Muhammad Shahid Iqbal and General Manager WSSP Peshawar Syed Zameerul Hasan said that water is essential for the survival of all living beings and our existence. Clean water is essential for every aspect, Kabul River water is a very important supply for agriculture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It irrigates large tracts of agricultural land in the province, but the water quality of the Kabul River continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate. Various sources of pollution, including toxic water from human activities such as industries and climate change, are increasingly contaminating water. Residents of Charsadda, Warsak and Nowshera who live along the river are facing dire consequences as a result of this disaster. "Yes, we hope that this awareness seminar will lead to a better understanding of the impact of climate change and human activities on the water quality of the Kabul River," the speakers said. "If we first determine the factors contributing to pollution, we can guarantee that the Kabul River will continue to serve as an important resource for generations to come," they said. Implementation of more stringent measures to control pollution, exploration of sustainable water management techniques, and promotion of knowledge about the importance of clean water are essential, they said.

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PESHAWAR: Minister Mian Khaliq ur Rehman and Advisor KP Muzammil Aslam presiding over a meeting regarding tobacco.

## Chances of heavy rains in most upper districts

PESHAWAR (APP): The officials said that chances of rain with thunder in Chitral, Upper and Lower Dir, Shangla, Bitgram, Swat, Kohistan, Timargarh, Torgarh, Mansehra, Abbottabad, Haripur, Bajada and Buner and light rain in Nowshahr, Charsadda, Swabi, Peshawar, Landi Kotal, Mohmand, Khyber, Malakand, Kohat, Hangu. Landslides and floods are feared due to heavy rains in the upper districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the officials of the Meteorological Department said. The minimum temperature of Shiphar Peshawar is 31 while the maximum is likely to go up to 37 degrees Celsius and humidity ratio in the city is 52% record while during the last 20 hours, Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa recorded 21 mm rain, Meteorological Department officials said. Moreover, Dir 2 and Bannu 1 millimeter rainfall recorded, the official said.





## In brief

### 2 children die in lightning strike

MULTAN (INP): Sister, brother died due to lightning strike in Basti Maluk area of Multan, rescue officials said on Saturday. The sad incident occurred when both brother and sister named 10-year-old Faizan and 8-year-old Maimoona were bathing outside the house in the rain. However, the Rescue 1122 reached the spot and started necessary proceedings.

### Four drug peddlers held

PATTOKI (INP): The police arrested four drug peddlers, recovered narcotics valuing hundreds of thousands rupees and a drone camera during separate actions here on Saturday. The police teams constituted on directions of DPO Kasur, Muhammad Isa Khan during snap checking of vehicles at Clarkabad road arrested two drug pushers including Nisar and Abdul Majid after recovery of over one kilogram heroin and a drone camera. During another action, two suppliers Ramzan alias Jani and Jhedo were arrested with four kilogram hashish. The detainees had formed a network which was involved in supplying drugs in Kot Radha Kishan and surroundings. Separate cases were registered against the nabbed drug peddlers and investigations were kicked off.

### Rs 1m each for victims announced

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): Punjab government has announced to pay one million rupees to each of the four family members who died in roof collapse incident in Sheikhupura. In line with directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Deputy Commissioner Dr Waqar Ali Khan on Saturday visited residence of the affected family located at Sharqpur road in Siddiquia Colony near Milad Chowk. On CM's directives, the DC on behalf of Punjab government announced Rs10, 00,000 for each of the four victims of the four roof collapse victims. He also assured of providing best possible treatment facilities to the injured. Dr Waqar prayed to Allah to rest the departed souls in eternal peace, early recovery of the injured and for bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss with fortitude.

### 11 gas meters disconnected

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished 11 citizens in a crackdown during last 24 hours. According to officials of Task Force, the consumers were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and had also shifted meters at different sites by themselves. Gas metres of all the 11 consumers were disconnected for violation of the laws. The department urged citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number 061-9220085 as secrecy would be maintained.

### Security reviewed

LARKANA (APP): SSP Larkana Mir Rohal Khan Khoso visited various police stations and areas of the district Larkana on Friday and Saturday night to review the security arrangements in connection with Muharram ul Haram. He issued necessary instructions to the police officers and personnel on duty regarding law and order. During the visit, SSP Larkana briefed the SHO of different police stations about the law and order situation in their areas and the ongoing action against criminals.



HYDERABAD: Shiites mourners touching Zuljinnah during procession on 6th Muharram-ul-Harram.

## SC decision on reserved seats hailed

### F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Member National Assembly Aneeqa Mehdi Hassan Bhatti and MPA Ch. Zameer-ul-Hassan Bhatti said that the judges who returned reserved seats to PTI are working according to constitution and law are deserving special tribute while this verdict reflect that rule of law is existed in Pakistan still.

While commenting on judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan announced, they said that election symbol of PTI would be allotted to PTI very soon as like deserving seats in parliament. They said that judgment of the Supreme Court of Pakistan was declared that in fact PTI was deserved reserved seats.

They said that in general elections, the people of the Hafizabad were rejected ex-Federal Minister Saira Afzal Tarar and now she once again lost her seat because she was not deserving for reserved seat of woman.

They said that we salute the Judges of the Honorable Supreme Court of Pakistan who adhere to rule of law and confidence of the people on the Honorable Court would be enhanced while leadership, workers, voters and supporters of PTI were happy over this verdict of the Court.

They said that we reached to Assemblies to

elect with votes of the people but a mafia was existed in the country who desired to snatch two-time bread from the masses. Due to unwise policies and negligence of the Rulers, inflation is increasing in the country day by day and inflated electricity bills has prevailed despondency among people, they said and added that common people were already indulge in inflation and poverty whereas other hand, present government was levying tax on farmers which would be harmful for agriculture sector and farmers.

They also said that agriculture sector was backbone of our national economy and more than 60 percent population depended on agriculture. They regretfully said that unjustly distribution of empty bags for procurement of wheat were harmed farmers and no inquiry of corruption in distribution of empty bags was made so far.

DC visits various routes of processions: Deputy Commissioner Sundas Irshad visited different routes of processions of Muharram-ul-Haram in city and checked security and other arrangements made by the different departments to provide all basic and necessary facilities to devotees.

ADCG/Administrator Municipal Committee, AC Munawar Hussain, DO Civil Defence Shahid

Pervaiz, Chief Officer MC Ansar Sahi, Incharge Police Security and officers of other departments were accompanied by DC.

DC directed the officers concerned to improve cleanliness, drainage of rain water, to remove hanging electricity and telephone wires from the procession routes.

She warned the officers and officials of all departments that any kind of negligence would not be tolerated in connection with arrangements for holding majalis and processions. AC Hafizabad Munawar Hussain gave briefing regarding installation of CCTV Cameras on the routes of processions and at the places of majalis for monitoring.

Woman shot dead by husband: A man shot his wife dead over a petty domestic dispute in Hafizabad on Saturday.

According to police the deceased woman was a mother of three children. Police said a case of murder has been registered against victim's husband and his father. The accused returned from abroad two days ago.

According to text of the FIR, deceased woman's husband used to speak bitterly and last night he shot his wife dead. However, the police handed over the body to the family after post-mortem and arrested the suspect while still investigating the case.

## Under-trial accused of murder shot dead in court

### F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: An under-trial accused of murder was gunned down in the premises of court here on Saturday.

According to details, the police had brought the murder accused identified as Zahid to Havelian court for trial. The culprit opened fire at under custody accused killing him on the spot and fled the scene. The body was shifted to hospital for postmortem and police after registering a case against the assailant started raids for his arrest.

## FIA Cyber Crime team visits Kurram

### F.P. Report

PARACHINAR: The Cybercrime Team of Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on Saturday visited district Kurram and discussed with elders their objectives to take action against elements spreading hateful material on social media.

They held meeting with local elders and media persons and informed them about line of action and plan to stop spread of hateful videos, messages and posts on social media.

They asked people to abstain from uploading objectionable material on social media and said we should avoid disrupting peace and hurt the sentiments of people. People welcomed efforts of cybercrime team of FIA and assured them full cooperation to maintain peace.

## Three die in Chiniot mishaps

CHINIOT (INP): At least three people died and 20 others injured in separate incident incidents in different localities of Chiniot, police said on Saturday.

According to details, armed men gunned down a youth identified as Habib over property dispute in Chak No 244 of tehsil Bhawana in Chiniot and fled the scene. A 25-year-old unidentified man died after he fell down motorcycle at Chiniot road in Chenab Nagar.

One person died and 20 others injured in separate rain related incidents after heavy downpour lashed Chiniot city and surrounding areas. The bodies and injured were shifted to different hospitals of respective areas.

## Rickshaw driver dies, woman injured

FAISALABAD (INP): A teenager rickshaw driver died while a young female passenger was injured in a road here on Saturday.

According to details, a reckless driven mini loader van hit a rickshaw near Samanabad area of Faisalabad. As a result of collision, rickshaw driver Adeel Younus 18, hailing from Chak No. 245-RB Risala Road died on the spot while Nabeela Sajid 24, a resident of Chak No. 233-RB Risala Road sustained injuries. The body and injured were shifted to hospital.

## Flour dealers protest against withholding tax in Jamurd

### F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Flour dealers suspended their businesses in Jamrud in protest against withholding tax here on Saturday. It is to be stated here that the incumbent government has implemented withholding tax on flour mills that has caused price hiking of the commodity.

The flour sellers in Jamrud Bazaar said that flour mills owners and dealers associations across the country have started agitation against what they said was an unjustified tax. With imposition of withholding tax will directly affect the poor segments of the society, they added and said as integration to the



community, they also sealed their trade centers in protest.

They went on that the imposition of sternly tax on flour mills will raise price hiking of the edible item that will be like to deprive the poor of three times bread. In other countries food items were exempted

from taxes to ensure provision of edibles to the poor ones while in Pakistan adverse tax policies were introduced to further squeeze its citizens, they opined. They threatened that till withdrawal of the withholding tax they would never give up protest against it.

## JI Dir workers to fully participate in sit-in on 26th

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Jamaat-i-Islami district chief and former MPA Izazul Mulk Afkari asked party activists to mobilize the public to participate in the JI proposed sit-in in Islamabad against inflation, price hikes and lawlessness. He was addressing party workers at a camp set up in Chakdara. The JI district general secretary Hafiz Yaqub ur Rehman, tehsil

emir Dr Bashir Muhammad, Farooq Abdullah and others also spoke on the occasion.

Izaz said the JI had rejected the federal budget prepared with the technical support and help of the

International Monetary Fund. He said that salaried and poor class had been taxed while feudal, and wealthy people had been exempted from taxes. He said the JI postponed its protest rally in Islamabad on July 12 because of the Muharram processions. He said that hundreds of the JI workers would participate in the proposed sit-in in Islamabad on July 26.

Water filtration plant: The Al-Khidmat Foundation inaugurated a water filtration plant at Chakdara during a function. The function was addressed by the AKF central president Fazal Mahmood, provincial president Khalid Wiqas, district

president Hafeezullah Khaksar, JI district chief Izazul Mulk Afkari, district naib emir Syed Sultanat Yar and others.

The speakers said the AKF provided clean drinking water to consumers at their doorstep across the country. They said that most of the water-borne diseases spread because of consuming contaminated water. The speakers asked the philanthropists and wealthy people to financially assist the AKF for its humanitarian activities. They said the Foundation had installed two water filtration plants in the Lower Dir district from where the consumers could get clean drinking water easily.

## Muqam condoles death of slain senator Hidayat

### F.P. Report

KHAR: Federal Minister for SAFRON, Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs, Engr Amir Muqam here Saturday visited the residence of slain Senator Hidayatullah Khan where he condoled with his family.

Engr Amir Muqam also expressed his deep condolences with his family members including former Governor Shaukatullah and Haji Bismillah on behalf of the PMLN Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Government. Hidayatullah was the son of Haji

Bismillah Khan.

He offered fateha for eternal peace of Senator Hidayatullah Shaheed who was martyred along with three others people in a bomb blast few days ago at Bajaur. Speaking with the affectees and area elders at Nawagai, Engr Amir Muqam said that entire Federal Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was standing with the affected family.

He said the entire nation whether it was Federal or Provincial Governments or central or provincial leadership would collectively

fight the menace of terrorism. The Minister announced compensation for martyres on behalf of the Federal Government.

Former Governor Engr Shaukat Ullah thanked Federal Government, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Engr Amir Muqam for standing with them in this hour of difficulty. Former Member National Assembly and senior vice President PMLN Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shahabuddin Khan, president of Mohmand district Zar Khan Safi, President Bajaur Abdul Karim and other office bearers were present.

## Quetta to suspend internet, cellphone services

### F.P. Report

QUETTA: The Balochistan provincial government has announced that internet and cellphone services will be suspended in Quetta on the day of Ashura (10th Muharram), and five Quick Response Force platoons of the Pakistan Army will remain on standby. The cellphone services will also be suspended in the districts of Jhal Magsi, Jaffarabad and Usta Muhammad on Muharram 9 and 10.

public gatherings and pillow riding during this period.

According to Home Minister Meer Zia ullah Langau, 8,000 security personnel will be deployed in Quetta on the day of Ashura (10th Muharram), and five Quick Response Force platoons of the Pakistan Army will remain on standby. The cellphone services will also be suspended in the districts of Jhal Magsi, Jaffarabad and Usta Muhammad on Muharram 9 and 10.

The federal government has also approved the deployment of the Pakistan Army and Civil Armed Forces across the country as a security measure during Muharram. The details of troop deployment will be finalized with the authorities concerned. These security measures are being implemented to maintain law and order during the Muharram observances, which see large public processions and gatherings across the country.

## Commissioner inaugurates official web site Of APC

### F.P. Report

ABBOTTABAD: Commissioner Hazara division Syed Zahir-ul-Islam Saturday inaugurated the official website of Abbottabad Press Club (APC) and termed the pivotal role of media as the voice of the voiceless.

While addressing the launching ceremony of official web site of APC, the Commissioner praised the dedication of journalists in striving for societal improvement through bravery, impartiality, and simplicity in language, despite facing threats and intimidation.

He underscored the historical significance of journalists and lawyers in Pakistan's establishment and freedom movement,

stressing the current need for stability in the country. The Commissioner likened Abbottabad Press Club and its journalists to torchbearers, continuing the legacy of contributing to the development of Abbottabad and the Hazara region.

Earlier, President APC Muhammad Shahid Chaudhry and General Secretary Sardar Shafiq Ahmed highlighted the irreplaceable benefits of digital media. They pointed out that through modern tools, registered journalists can now connect globally and share news and videos of Abbottabad seamlessly on the website.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by print media, they noted that

electronic media continues to thrive by digitally disseminating their reports. The website of Abbottabad Press Club aims to transparently address community issues and provide easy access to relevant news and content.

Commissioner Zahir-ul-Islam officially launched the website by pressing the button. He received a briefing on the functions of APC. He also distributed press club cards among registered journalists, affirming their vital role in promoting responsible journalism and community welfare. Later, he also handed over the new membership cards of APC for the year 2024-25 to all members of the Club.

## Education the only way to progress

### F.P. Report

SUJAWAL: Deputy Commissioner Zahid Rind has expressed grave concerns over the crumbling state of education in Sujawal district, urging civil society to play its role in social development. Addressing the closing ceremony of a two-week summer camp at a community-based school in Sujawal, he said that education is the only way to progress and prosperity in today's era, and it has no replacement.

"I have visited different areas of the district where I witnessed a lack of awareness regarding the importance of education among children as well as their parents," he added, saying that this state of affairs was quite alarming for him as the chief executive of the

district. The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the efforts of Ismaili Youth Services, Aga Khan Education Board, and the school administration for organizing a summer camp to highlight the importance of science education, technology, and artificial intelligence.

Administrator of the Summer Camp Zeba Parveen shared that the camp aimed to foster interest in scientific education among students, improve their extracurricular skills, and attract them to the importance of the English language in their professional journey. She said that it was the second camp of its kind, with the first camp held by Aga Khan Education Board in December last year. The

chief guest inspected projects presented by students and was briefed about their 15-day journey at the camp.

## Body of girl found hanging with tree

THARPARKAR (INP): Body of a 10-year-old girl was found hanging with a tree here on Saturday.

According to details, the locals spotted body of young girl hanged with a tree in village Jamo Dhani of Tharparkar.

The police reached the scene and shifted the body to hospital for post-mortem. A case was registered into the incident and postmortem report was awaited for further investigation.





Sunday, July 14, 2024



GAZA: A Palestinian woman inspecting the damage, after Israeli forces withdrew from Shujayea neighborhood, following a ground operation.

## New heat wave in Greece expected

ATHENS (AP): Greek authorities warned of an impending weeklong heat wave during the summer tourist season, with a high risk of dangerous wildfires, as much of southern Europe sweltered under high temperatures.

The ministry for civil protection and climate change said southwesterly winds from Africa would bring temperatures sometimes exceeding 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) at least until July 19. The new heat wave comes on the heels of the hottest June on record in Greece, according to preliminary weather service data. It was also the hottest globally, according to the European climate service, Copernicus.

People have been advised to wear light clothing, drink plenty of water and avoid long hikes during the hottest part of the day. In June, several tourists were found dead on Greek islands after setting out on

long walks. In neighboring North Macedonia, authorities have also issued a weeklong heat alert starting in the small, landlocked Balkan country.

People were urged to stay indoors when possible and avoid heavy labor in the hottest hours of the day. Emergency measures announced include ordering employers to keep pregnant women and people aged over 60 off work, banning construction work from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and keeping kindergarten classes indoors after 11 a.m. Health officials have reported a rise in calls to emergency responders due to heat-related health problems.

North Macedonia's authorities also reported an increase in wildfires, saying 14 were registered nationwide in the past 24 hours. Wildfires are also plaguing Greece, and the civil protection ministry has warned of a very high

risk and Saturday. Officials have described this summer as the most dangerous in the past 20 years for wildfires, following an unusually rainless winter and spring that have left vegetation and forests tinder-dry.

Three fires broke out in northern Greece, although two of them were quickly brought under control. Greek firefighters, backed this summer by drones and a strengthened fleet of water-bombing aircraft, have dealt with more than 2,000 wildfires since the beginning of June. Most were tamed shortly after they broke out, which limited damage to buildings or property.

Dozens of people have been arrested and fined for accidentally starting fires, mostly during outdoor work near uncleared vegetation. Every summer sees devastating wildfires in Greece, and last year more than 20 people died in the blazes.

## Kenya police chief resigns after criticism

NAIROBI (AFP): Kenya's police chief has resigned after criticism of officers' conduct during recent antigovernment demonstrations in which dozens of protesters were killed. The presidency said in a statement that President William Ruto has "accepted the resignation" of Inspector General of Police Japhet Kooome, who has served in the role since November 2022.

Deputy Inspector-General Douglas Kanja has been appointed acting police chief with immediate effect, the presidency said. The announcement came a day after Ruto sacked nearly his entire cabinet, bowing to the demands of protesters.

Some of the young people behind the demonstrations had called for Kooome to go, with police accused of using excessive force during the protests, the most serious crisis of Ruto's near two-year presidency. Kenya's national rights watchdog said at least 39 people were killed in the antigovernment protests. Reporting from Nairobi, Al Jazeera's Catherine Soi said Kooome's resignation was "very significant".

"This is what these young protesters and many other Kenyans have been asking for. They were asking for the police chief to resign because of how he handled those protests," she said. "It wasn't just tear gas the police were using, it was also live bullets. Some people are still in hospital because they were shot. Many others died because of the shooting."

## Mexico's coast battered by Hurricane

MEXICO CITY (BBC): Hurricane Beryl has lashed Mexico's Yucatán Peninsula after wreaking havoc across the Caribbean, causing at least 10 deaths. It made landfall as a category-two hurricane, bringing winds of up to 175km/h (108mph).

It was later downgraded to a tropical storm, but is expected to re-intensify over the Gulf of Mexico at the weekend. Beryl brought heavy rain to tourist hotspots of Cancún and Tulum. No major damage was reported but the high winds felled trees and caused power outages. Civil protection chief Laura Velazquez said power would be fully restored to those still without it by Sunday.

Tulum resident Carolina Vazquez was among those to be affected by the outages, speaking to the Reuters news agency as she queued at a soup kitchen organised by the Mexican army. "In my little house a tree fell down, half of the house cracked, the roof tiles," she said.

Fernando Trevino, an employee at a local business, said: "We are evaluating, but so far it seems that everything is in order with the protections that were put in place, the preparations and so." Ahead of Beryl's arrival, Schools were closed, hotel windows boarded up, and emergency shelters were set up in areas facing the brunt of the impact.

# Orban goes global as self-styled peacemaker without a plan

BUDAPEST (BBC): Hungary's Viktor Orban has no peace plan of his own, but he has spent the past two weeks on a whistle-stop tour of Kyiv, Moscow, Azerbaijan, Beijing, Washington and even Mar-a-Lago, on a one-man mission that has infuriated leaders in the EU and US.

"Peace will not come by itself in the Russia-Ukraine war, someone has to make it," he proclaims in videos posted daily on his Facebook page. He has been bitterly attacked by both Brussels and Washington for breaking EU and Nato unity and cosyng up to Vladimir Putin and China's leader Xi Jinping.

Few argue with his central premise, that there can be no peace without peacemakers. But his close economic relationship with Russia's president leaves him open to the charge of acting as Mr Putin's puppet. The right-wing Hungarian PM says a ceasefire tied to a specific deadline would be a start.

"I am not negotiating on behalf of anyone," he told Hungarian radio during a brief stopover in Budapest between visits to Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv and Mr Putin in Moscow. For the next six months, Hungary holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

Mr Orban followed up his first visit to Kyiv since the start of the war with the first trip by an EU leader to Russia since April 2022. That visit to the Kremlin clearly angered his European partners. Charles Michel, the head of the European Council of 27 EU governments, said the rotating presidency gave no mandate to engage with Russia on the EU's behalf.

Mr Orban admitted that was the case, but insisted: "I'm clarifying the facts... I'm asking questions." In Kyiv he posed "three or four" to President Zelensky "so that we can understand his intentions, and where the red line is, the boundary up to which he can go in the interest of peace". He has also been generous in his praise of two other allies, Xi Jinping and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Meeting Mr Erdogan on arrival at the Nato summit in Washington, he spoke of him as "the only man who has overseen an agreement between Russia and Ukraine" so far, referring to a now defunct Black Sea grain agreement. "China not only loves peace but has also put forward a series of constructive and important initiatives [for resolving the war]," he said of President Xi Jinping, according to Chinese state media. The final visit on his whirlwind tour was to presidential candidate Donald Trump, another close ally who he strongly backs to win again in November and who he refers to as a man of peace.

In one interview, he declared that during Trump's four-year term as president "he did not initiate a single war". This has been a remarkable trip in the international limelight for the leader of a small East European country with 9.7 million inhabitants. But who is it designed to impress, and could it have any effect? A key target of his message is the domestic public. Viktor Orban has had a relatively bad year so far, losing the two most prominent female politicians in his party to a scandal in February, and witnessing the emergence of his first serious challenger for more than a decade - Peter Magyar. In June, Mr Orban's Fidesz party won an impressive 45% in European elections, to 30% for Mr Magyar's three-month-old Tisza party. But he lost more than 700,000 votes (one in four) compared with the last parliamentary elections in 2022.

For the first time, he does not look invincible. What better way to show Hungarians that their leader was still strong than to parade across the world stage, in a global tour "to make peace"? His mission was also targeted at an international public, in the week that his new Patriots for Europe (PFE) group in the European Parliament attracted 84 MEPs from mainly far-right parties in 11 countries. Patriots for Europe has emerged as the third largest faction in parliament, edging aside the rival Conservatives and Reformist group of Italy's Giorgia Meloni.

Mr Orban's visit to Moscow won him effusive praise from the Russians: "We take it very, very positively. We believe it can be very useful," said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov. The US was less impressed. "We would welcome, of course, actual diplomacy with Russia to make it clear to Russia that they need to respect Ukraine's sovereignty, that they need to respect Ukraine's territorial integrity," said US State Department spokesman Matthew Miller. "But that is not at all what this visit appears to have been."

At the same time, the US did welcome Mr Orban's first visit to neighbouring Ukraine since the start of the full-scale Russian invasion. The Hungarian leader has given very little away about the actual content of his talks in Kyiv, Moscow or Beijing. A leaked version of his letter to Charles Michel, sent from Azerbaijan, offers some clues.

Mr Putin was open to a ceasefire. Mr Orban told the European Council president, provided it did not provide Ukraine with a chance to reorganise its army on the front lines. Three days earlier in Kyiv, on 2 July, the Ukrainian leader used a similar argument, telling Mr Orban that the Russians would abuse any ceasefire to regroup their invading forces. Mr Orban was apparently "surprised" that President Zelensky still believed Ukraine could win back its lost territories. And Vladimir Putin told Mr Orban that "time favours Russian forces", according to the leaked letter.

Arriving in Washington days later, Mr Orban posted yet another video on Facebook, saying he would argue that Nato "should return to its original spirit: Nato should win peace, not the wars around it". Unlike his Nato allies, Viktor Orban views Russia's two-and-a-half year war in Ukraine as a civil war between two Slav nations, prolonged by US support for one of them. One thing he probably does agree on is that this autumn the conflict will become only worse. A Trump presidential victory in November, he believes, would force the Ukrainians and Russians to the negotiating table.

## German shock at reported Russian assassination plot

BERLIN (BBC): German political figures have reacted angrily to a report that Russia had plotted to kill the head of Germany's biggest arms company Rheinmetall. Armin Papperger. The CNN report said US officials had told their counterparts in Berlin earlier this year and security around him was stepped up.

Germany's interior ministry refused to comment but Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock appeared to confirm the details. "In view of latest reports on Rheinmetall, this is what we have actually been communicating more and more clearly in recent months," she told reporters at the Nato summit in Washington. "Russia is waging a hybrid war of aggression." In Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected the allegations. "It's all presented in the style of another fake story, so such reports cannot be taken seriously." Rheinmetall avoided commenting on issues of "corporate security", but Mr Papperger is now being described as the most highly protected figure in Germany's economy. He told the Financial Times that German authorities had imposed a "great deal of security around my person".

The company is one of the world's biggest producers of ammunition and has become key to supplying Ukraine with arms, armoured vehicles and other military equipment. Rheinmetall recently opened a tank repair plant in western Ukraine. Last month, it signed an agreement with

Ukraine to expand co-operation in the coming years, including a joint venture to produce artillery shells. Mr Papperger said at the time his company wanted to hand over the first Lynx infantry fighting vehicles later this year and to start producing them in Ukraine soon.

Although Chancellor Olaf Scholz avoided commenting on the reported assassination plot directly, he said it was well known that Germany was exposed to a variety of Russian threats and was paying close attention to them. Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said "we are taking very seriously the significantly heightened threat of Russian aggression". Earlier this week, a senior Nato official told the BBC that Russia was "engaging in aggressive covert operations across Europe - involving sabotage, arson and assassination plots - aimed at weakening public support for Ukraine".

The German foreign minister said the Baltic states had already highlighted the various methods deployed by Russia's Vladimir Putin in his war on Ukraine. As well as sabotage, she spoke of cyberattacks and disrupting GPS signals so that Baltic flights could no longer land in neighbouring countries. "We have seen that there have been attacks on factories, and that again underlines that, together, we as Europeans must protect ourselves as best we can and not be naive," Ms Baerbock told reporters.

In early May, a building complex owned by the Diehl Metall firm went up in flames in south-west Berlin.

Although a technical fault was blamed for the fire, sabotage has not been ruled out. Suspicious fires have also been reported in Poland and Lithuania. Last April, Mr Papperger's garden house was set alight at Hermannsburg in northern Germany, although there has been no evidence of a Russian link.

The fire was quickly brought under control and a rambling, anonymous confession purportedly from leftist militants appeared on activist network Indymedia. The reported plot against such a high-profile German CEO has prompted widespread alarm. Leading conservative figure Roderich Kiesewetter said the chancellor should come clean with the German population about how great the threat from Russia really was. German intelligence needed to be boosted to the level of neighbouring countries, he said.

"We must take it very seriously and also prepare ourselves accordingly," he told public broadcaster ZDF. Michael Roth, who chairs Germany's foreign affairs committee told Bild newspaper that Vladimir Putin was waging a "war of extermination not only against Ukraine, but against its supporters and our values". The head of the defence committee, Marcus Faber, added his condemnation, saying if information about Russian intelligence involvement came to light, then "the expulsion of diplomats must follow and, if necessary, international arrest warrants must be issued".

## Alec Baldwin's Rust trial dismissed over hidden evidence

MEXICO CITY (BBC): Alec Baldwin broke down in tears as a New Mexico judge dismissed the involuntary manslaughter case against him for a fatal shooting on the set of the film Rust. The trial collapsed three days into Baldwin's trial in Santa Fe, at a court just miles from where Halyna Hutchins, a cinematographer, was shot with a revolver that Mr Baldwin was using in rehearsals.

It is the second time the case against the actor has been dismissed since the October 2021 shooting. He will not be tried again. His lawyers alleged police and prosecutors hid evidence - a batch of bullets - that could have been connected to the shooting. A key aspect of the case has been how live ammunition ended up on the set and Mr Baldwin's lawyers have questioned the investigation and mistakes made by authorities who processed the scene.

Their motion to dismiss sparked a remarkable set of events, with one of the two special prosecutors leading the case resigning, and Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer dismissing the jury to hear from multiple witnesses. The bullets, Mr Baldwin's lawyer said, could be related to Ms Hutchins' death, but were filed in a different case with a different

number. Prosecutors argued the ammunition was not connected to the case and did not match bullets found on the Rust set.

The judge ruled, however, that they should have been shared with Mr Baldwin's defence team regardless. "The state's wilful withholding of this information was intentional and deliberate," she said from the bench. "There is no way for the court to right this wrong." Prosecutors will not be able to lodge the charge against Baldwin again, as the judge did not rule the case a mistrial, but instead outright dismissed it with prejudice.

"It was the nuclear option. The case is over," Los Angeles trial attorney Joshua Ritter told the BBC. Mr Baldwin, best known for his role on the NBC sitcom 30 Rock and for portraying Donald Trump on sketch show Saturday Night Live, wept as the judge read from a lengthy statement detailing her reasons for the dismissal. His wife, Hilaria, covered her mouth. Other members of his family cried and smiled.

The actor hugged his lawyers then embraced his wife, who was seated behind him. They walked out hand-in-hand through a tunnel of press into a black vehicle without answering

any questions or making any comments. The evidence came to light, when a crime-scene technician told the court that a man named Troy Teske, a retired police officer, had turned over live ammunition that could be related to the case. Mr Teske is friends with the step-father of Hannah Gutierrez-Reed, the film's armourer who was convicted of involuntary manslaughter earlier this year. He was working with Seth Kenney, who helped with props and ammunition on the film set. After the judge sent the jury home, the court heard from a series of witnesses about the bullets, including authorities who led the case and Mr Kenney.

Towards the end of the hearing, one of the prosecutors leading the case - Kari Morrissey - took the stand to testify about the bullets and why they weren't shared with the defence. It's remarkably rare for a prosecutor to testify in a case they bring about their role in the investigation. Ms Morrissey testified the ammunition had "no evidentiary value" from her perspective. While on the stand, she said that her co-prosecutor, Erlinda Ocampo Johnson, resigned as the judge weighed to dismiss the case.

## Five jailed for Ecuador presidential candidate's murder

QUITO (BBC): Five people linked to one of Ecuador's biggest criminal gangs have been jailed for the murder of presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio last year.

Mr Villavicencio, a member of the country's national assembly and an ex-journalist, was shot dead as he left a campaign rally in the capital, Quito, last August. Carlos Angulo, the alleged leader of the Los Lobos gang, and Laura Castilla were sentenced to 34 years and eight months in prison for directing the hit.

Two men and a woman were handed 12-year sentences by the court in Quito for aiding a hit squad in the attack. Prosecutors alleged that Angulo - widely known as The Invisible - ordered

the hit from the Quito prison in which he is detained. He denied the charges, claiming he was being made a "scapegoat" for the hit.

Castilla was left in charge of logistics for the hit. She allegedly supplied weapons, money and motorcycles to the men to carry out the hit. The others - Erick Ramirez, Victor Flores and Alexandra Chimbo - were accused of helping the hit squad track Mr Villavicencio's movements. More than 70 people gave evidence during the trial, including a key witness who said the gang had been offered more than \$200,000 (£154,000) to kill Mr Villavicencio.

A crusading anti-corruption activist, Mr Villavicencio had been one of the few candidates to

allege links between organised crime and government officials in Ecuador. In the weeks leading up to the election, the politician had received death threats and been given a security detail. But he continued to campaign and was gunned down by a group of assailants on 9 August outside a school in the north of Quito. Prosecutors said during the trial that one of the men involved in the assassination was shot dead in a confrontation with police at the scene. Six other men - all Colombian nationals - were later arrested in connection with the killing, but were subsequently found murdered at El Litoral prison, where they were being held in pre-trial detention.



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## Usual suspects fear a Turkiye, Syria thaw

**T**URKISH President Recep Tayyip Erdogan expressed openness last July to talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad, but not if withdrawing Turkish troops from Syrian territory was a condition. A year later, Erdogan has indicated that he would invite Assad “any time” for discussions to “restore Turkiye-Syria relations to the same level as in the past,” which was a groundbreaking statement. Interestingly, there was no mention of a condition involving the withdrawal of Turkish troops from northern Syria. Iraq and Russia have been advocating this meeting for a while, and recent developments in Syria have been fostering the possibility.

Turkiye would have two objectives: first, to establish full control over its border with Syria, as on its border with Iraq, aimed at eliminating elements of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the PYD. The Iraqi government, previously critical of Turkish operations, has given the green light for Turkiye's new security policy in Iraq. Turkiye now seeks a similar understanding from Damascus to ensure that northern Syria does not pose a threat to its national security. The second objective is the safe return of Syrian refugees, a complex issue with both security and humanitarian dimensions. Turkiye has hosted over three million Syrians for more than a decade, always viewing this as a temporary measure while pushing for a political solution.

Turkiye's policies toward Iraq and Syria have significant distinctions, but also parallels, both aimed at securing its borders with the approval of the other two governments. Turkiye signed critical deals with both countries in the 1980s and 1990s. The 1998 Adana Agreement lays the groundwork for a possible Turkish-Syrian thaw, as it did decades ago. It was signed at a time when relations between Turkiye and Syria were strained to the brink of war.

Damascus has been allowing Abdullah Ocalan, leader of the outlawed Kurdish separatist PKK — who is now serving a life sentence on the Turkish island of Imrali — to take shelter in Syria and direct the group's activities for years. When Turkiye threatened military action, Damascus deported Ocalan and closed PKK camps in Syria.

The Adana agreement was designed to help restore relations: some described it as a Turkish-Syrian version of the Camp David agreement between Egypt and Israel. Syria's decision to expel Ocalan and negotiate with Turkiye was linked to its concern about the strength of the Turkish military compared with its own weakness. In an interview later, however, Assad said: “The deportation of Ocalan was not out of fear, but because we preferred you. We could either be friends with the Turkish people or prefer the Kurds and lose you. Because our preference was with you, we sent Ocalan out.”

Damascus now has a choice: normalize relations with Turkiye and join forces against the Kurds, or continue its policy of the past decade, allowing Turkiye to maintain its forces in the north. Significant signs suggest it may opt for normalization. Fears of a permanent Kurdish presence in northern Syria could lead to Ankara-Damascus talks, with discussions underway to launch a joint military operation against Kurdish groups who Turkiye considers terrorists. This process began with intelligence officer meetings in 2020 and progressed to meetings between defense and foreign ministers, though subsequent progress has been a challenge.

An Erdogan-Assad meeting would be driven by the need to address mutual issues, and to solve Syrian problems cooperatively. However, as Turkiye's last ambassador to Damascus Omer Onhon has pointed out, even if they met soon the process would be complex, with intertwined issues and no quick solutions. Who would worried about a Turkish-Syrian thaw? Well, the usual suspects: first, the PYD and SDF. As primary opponents, they stand to lose the most. Second, the US. As the Kurds' patron, Washington's influence could wane in Syria at the expense of Russia. Third, the Syrian armed opposition. Dependent on Turkish support, they might feel betrayed by Turkiye's shift toward Assad. Fourth, the Syrian refugees; those living in Turkiye and in Turkish-dominated areas in northern Syria could face uncertainty and upheaval. There have already been protests against the Turkish government in northern Syria, and attacks on Syrian migrants by Turks in parts of Turkiye. Northwest Syria, home to about five million people, including local populations and displaced opposition Syrians from areas under Assad's control, remains volatile. Moreover, there are members of armed groups and other opposition Syrians who have been living in northern Syria within the framework of the de-escalation zone agreements signed in 2017.

How Turkiye and Syria can agree on groups they perceive as threats remains to be seen. For instance, Turkiye considers the Kurds terrorists, while Damascus views armed groups fighting against the Assad regime as terrorists. The differing perspectives, the complex humanitarian situation, and the vested interests of stakeholders all pose challenges to this process. These fundamental differences will be a significant hurdle in any potential rapprochement.

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## How Israel spins Gaza killings to avoid being held accountable

Ray Hanania

**M**ORE than 38,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israel's nine-month military assault against the civilian population of the Gaza Strip. However, according to The Lancet medical journal, the number of fatalities is probably more like 186,000, shining a spotlight on how difficult it is to measure the carnage because of the restrictions Israel has placed on news reporting of the Gaza conflict.

Israel only embeds journalists with its army in the Gaza Strip if they agree to allow its censors to review all reports and videos. Reporters who refuse are banned from entering the Strip. However, independent Gaza-based reporters, mainly from Arab media outlets, have been covering the Israeli carnage and many of them have paid the ultimate price for seeking to report the truth.

According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, 108 journalists have been killed in the war and many more wounded. It is the deadliest period for journalists in the history of the organization, which began documenting media deaths in 1992. Last week, one CNN reporter noted that his reports were not censored or reviewed by the Israeli military, although he only interviewed the Israeli spokesperson on what was happening in Gaza.

Controlling the media and restricting and censoring news reporting in a conflict zone is the first step toward controlling the narrative. And Israel needs to ensure its spin is dominant because, while Hamas militants killed about 1,200 Israelis on Oct. 7, including some soldiers, the Israelis have killed about 30 times more Palestinians, including some Hamas militants.

Controlling the reporting gives Israel the ability to lie to the public about what it is doing and blur the reality of the carnage. For example, a majority of those killed by Israel are believed to be civilians. The UN estimated in May that 69 percent of the reported deaths were of women and children. But because Israel refuses to permit UN workers to monitor the killings first-hand, banning them from much of the Gaza Strip, the UN revised its estimate down to 52 percent a few days later.

Israeli pundits did not say what caused the revision but did stress that the number was exaggerated. In fact, The Times of Israel incorrectly stated that the UN “sharply revised” down the number of “identified” women and children killed. “The new figures ... reduce by more than half the number of women and children that it previously said had been killed during the war, although other ‘unregistered’ deaths may be pending,” it reported. However, a reduction from 69 percent to 52 percent is not “more

raised a national storm of indignation and outrage that echoed through the halls of American politics — Israeli spokespeople continue to assert that the deaths are a consequence of Hamas' actions. This aims to allow the Israeli soldiers who put these Palestinian women and children in their sniper scopes or target them with rockets and bombs to remain blame-free.

Israeli military spokesman Peter Lerner last month said: “Every civilian life lost in this war

many women and children.

Just look at the coverage of the Russian war against Ukraine. It is reported without pushback from Moscow that more than 8,000 civilians have been killed by the Russian assault just in territory controlled by Ukraine. Nearly every day, American media reports cite the number of Ukrainian civilians killed. In the last week, the Associated Press reported, without worrying about angering the censors, that 31 people were killed in a single Russian assault.

Blaming the Russians for civilian deaths strengthens the national outcry against Russia. Meanwhile, deflecting blame for the killing of Palestinians gives Israel the political cover to continue what it is doing without an American backlash. Another win for Israel is how the media restricts its coverage of the issue of hostages. Hamas took hundreds of civilian and military hostages during its Oct. 7 attack. Their plight is given regular front-page coverage by the US news media.

But Israel has held thousands of Palestinian civilians hostage over the years in so-called administrative detention, a system that allows the Israeli authorities to hold anyone they like without ever having to lay any charges. These hostages are incarcerated for infinitely renewable six-month periods without ever facing legal proceedings.

Many of the thousands of administratively detained Palestinians — men, women and children alike — constitute an obvious form of hostage-taking that is intended to subdue anti-Israel expressions by Palestinians. Support in the US for Ukraine is driven by an emotional indignation that is spun by the way the war and the deaths are presented. In the Israel-Palestine war, support for Israel is driven by the spinning of perceptions, which minimizes the moral outrage of it killing women and children.

How Israel and its American supporters conduct themselves has nothing to do with the rule of law, democracy, human rights, morality or even ethics. It is all about the ability to make yourself look good and moral, even while inflicting the most horrendous human suffering.

Arab News

**But to ensure that American sympathies are not eroded by the adjusted 52 percent figure — after all, Hamas was only accused of killing a handful of children in the Oct. 7 assault and that raised a national storm of indignation and outrage that echoed through the halls of American politics — Israeli spokespeople continue to assert that the deaths are a consequence of Hamas' actions. This aims to allow the Israeli soldiers who put these Palestinian women and children in their sniper scopes or target them with rockets and bombs to remain blame-free. Israeli military spokesman Peter Lerner last month said: “Every civilian life lost in this war is a result of how Hamas has operated.” The Washington Post noted after reporting this quote: “Israeli officials routinely deny charges that they have deliberately targeted civilians and blame Hamas for operating in areas where civilians are put at risk.” I guess the word “routine” makes the Israeli assertions reportable.**

than half,” but what can only be considered a “slight” revision. Even if the figure is 52 percent, that still represents more than 19,000 women and children — that we know of.

That must be a “win” for Israeli propaganda and a consequence of controlling the reporting from the war zone that Israel continues to dominate. But to ensure that American sympathies are not eroded by the adjusted 52 percent figure — after all, Hamas was only accused of killing a handful of children in the Oct. 7 assault and that

is a result of how Hamas has operated.” The Washington Post noted after reporting this quote: “Israeli officials routinely deny charges that they have deliberately targeted civilians and blame Hamas for operating in areas where civilians are put at risk.” I guess the word “routine” makes the Israeli assertions reportable.

If this were happening anywhere else in the world, the media would take an entirely different and more confrontational stand against the party responsible for the massacre of so

## Putin watching West's indecision with derision

Pyotr Kozlov

**T**HE full-scale invasion of Ukraine by President Vladimir Putin, a nuclear-armed authoritarian leader, poses what appears to be a completely unsolvable challenge for Western diplomacy. While Russian gliding cruise bombs and ballistic missiles have been falling from the sky onto peaceful Ukrainians for two and a half years, Kyiv's Western allies have been unable to overcome their internal disagreements to decide whether to negotiate or fight Putin. The more visible this indecision is, the more brutally Russia will strike at Ukraine.

Economic sanctions were not enough to bring Putin to his knees and make him pliable. For the Kremlin, large-scale economic restraints were a touchy, but predictable step — and therefore not an existential threat. Instead

of gas and oil money from the West, a stream of money from China and India poured into Russia, allowing the Kremlin to buy the loyalty of Russia's hesitant elites, give more money to the population, and finance large-scale munitions production. Putin, a Soviet KGB officer, paranoid of any dissent, felt his confidence and stability grow after he was elected to another presidential term this year. Conveniently, his main opponent, anti-corruption campaigner Alexei Navalny, mysteriously died in prison shortly before election day.

The special services — the FSB, heirs of the Soviet Chekists; the Investigative Committee, headed by Putin's Leningrad State Institute contemporary Alexander Bastrykin; and the Rosgvardia National Guard, headed by Putin's former personal security guard Viktor Zolotov —

have acted as a force deterring Russians from any dissent.

Another setback awaited the West in its attempt to isolate Putin by making him persona non grata on the world stage. Although the warrant for his arrest from the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague remains in force, leaders of major powers have gradually resumed their visits to Moscow. China's Xi Jinping continues to speak of Beijing developing a “boundless partnership” with Moscow. This week, India's newly re-elected Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Putin's residence outside Moscow, embracing him and calling him “dear friend” and “Your Excellency.”

But even more egregious for the West was seeing Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban

being driven to negotiations in the Kremlin in Putin's luxury (US-sanctioned) Aurus limousine, accompanied by a motorcade, from Moscow's government-run Vnukovo Airport, where Western airlines have not flown since the beginning of the war.

Orban, the leader of the Hungarian presidency of the European Commission, was traveling to discuss the terms of a possible ceasefire in Ukraine. European leaders are outraged. The Kremlin, on the other hand, watched the Twitter scandal with undisguised derision, my insiders say. Western leaders have advocated since the start of the full-scale invasion that Ukraine should reclaim territory annexed by Russia and bring Putin a strategic defeat on the battlefield.

And from the very beginning of the invasion, they have promised Kyiv

## We built our world for a climate that no longer exists

Jeff Goodell

**E**ARLIER this week, the Third Avenue Bridge in Manhattan had to be shut down because the bridge — which pivots to allow ships to pass — wouldn't close correctly. Why? Because it was so hot in New York City that day the metal in the bridge swelled, and the closing mechanism wouldn't work. Firefighters had to spray water on the structure for several hours to cool it off before the bridge could be reopened to traffic.

A tragedy? Hardly. But it's evidence of one of the central truths of our time, and one that is becoming more and more apparent every day: We have built our world for a climate that no longer exists. Consider Houston, the throne of Big Oil, where the electric grid has the same hub-and-spoke basic architecture as it did 100 years ago. This week, Hurricane Beryl knocked out power to more than 2 million homes. Yes, hurricanes are devastating. But less than two months earlier, a sudden windstorm in the city blacked out electricity for more than a million people.

How many blackouts will it take before we realize today's power grid was built for yesterday's climate? Or consider the wildfires in California earlier this month. They occurred during a heat-wave that broke many all-time temperature records in the West, including an astonishing 122 degrees Fahrenheit in Palm Springs. One consequence of this heat was that it was too hot for firefighters to fight the fires without risking heatstroke.

If it were much hotter, water bombers and helicopters could not fly, radically diminishing firefighters' ability to control the flames. Once you start to look, danger signs of Old World infrastructure are everywhere. The vast majority of buildings and homes in European cities like London, Paris and Madrid have no air conditioning. When an extreme heat wave hits, the people who live and work in them are increasingly vulnerable (one recent study published in Nature Medicine estimated there were more than 60,000 heat-related deaths in Europe during the summer of 2022).

Reservoir dams around the world are stressed by extreme rainfall events. Airport tarmacs soften in the heat, causing flights cancellations. Sea walls that protect coastal cities from flooding are more and more ineffective as sea level rises and storm surges become more powerful. Cities are becoming human frying pans. In Phoenix this summer, surface temperatures on streets and sidewalks hit 160 degrees Fahrenheit — even a few seconds of contact could cause severe burns.

And it's not just infrastructure that is maladapted to our rapidly warming world. Our economic systems and cultural lives are out of sync, too. The Summer Olympics (and American football) become dangerous games in 100-degree heat. The insurance business was not structured to deal with permanent flooding from sea level rise. Religious pilgrimages, such as the Hajj in Saudi Arabia, during which more than 1,300 people died amid blistering temperatures last month, are not supposed to be essentially death marches. Big automakers like Toyota and GM, both of which have been slow to adapt to the EV

revolution, risk sharing the fate of Kodak at the dawn of the digital age. Even Big Oil executives — the ones that I've talked to, anyway — know their days are numbered (which is why they are fighting so hard to derail or stall the clean energy revolution).

It's tempting to believe that we can adapt to all these changes with better technology. And it's certainly true that better technology is a powerful force. One clear example: the incredible decline in the cost of renewable power in recent years. Twenty years ago, when I started writing about climate change, fossil fuel executives argued that we needed to keep burning fossil fuels because they were cheaper than renewable power, and access to cheap energy was important for economic development, especially in the Global South.

Now, that economic paradigm has been reversed. In virtually every part of the world, electricity generated by renewable power is cheaper than electricity generated by fossil fuels. As a result, the amount of electricity created by wind, geothermal and especially solar is increasing fast. Here in Texas where I live — hardly a bastion of tree-huggers — as much as 70% of the power on the grid this year is coming from renewable sources.

Despite this progress, the clean energy revolution is still happening too slowly to stop the rising heat and extreme weather we are experiencing. In fact, global oil and gas consumption hit an all-time high in 2023 — not surprisingly, so did the level of climate-warming CO2 emissions. Air conditioning is another example of the complexity of technological progress. When I talk with people about my book, “The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet,” I often hear some version of this: Yeah, the heat can be brutal. Good thing we have air conditioning!

AC is becoming a survival tool for many people in ever-hotter climates, but it is not a magic fix for a superheated world. More than 750 million people on the planet don't even have access to electricity, much less AC. We are not going to air condition the ocean, which is full of mysterious and beautiful creatures which hundreds of millions of people depend on for sustenance. We are not going to air condition forests, which are key to maintaining biodiversity on Earth. We are not going to air-condition the fields where food crops are grown.

Our dependence on AC, in fact, masks the true scope and scale of the challenges we face. In the end, addressing the climate crisis is not about building better technology. It's much bigger than that. We need to rebuild our world. Fast-rising temperatures and more extreme weather are forcing us to rethink everything about how we live — where we get our energy, how we grow our food, how we build our cities, and, mostly importantly, who we vote for.

The sooner we stop clinging to the old ways and focus on building a smarter, more sustainable, more equitable future for everyone, the better off we — and every living thing on this planet — will be. What has already been lost during the climate crisis is a tragedy. But what can be won in this fight is worth imagining too.

CNN



# Biden or plan B? Democrats’ election dilemma

WITH the 2024 US presidential election four months away, Democrats are facing a perfect political storm. President Joe Biden’s startlingly unfocused debate performance against Donald Trump has left party officials, major donors and many of the Democrats’ likeliest voters calling for a change at the top of the ticket.

A few weeks ago, backing Biden was thought to be the Democrats’ best hope. After all, it is not easy to beat an incumbent. Since 1932, only Herbert Hoover, Jimmy Carter, the elder George Bush and Trump have failed to win reelection. Scenarios in which Biden would retire or face a credible primary challenge seemed needlessly dangerous. When the Democrats Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson chose not to seek reelection — in 1952 and 1968, respectively — the Republicans Dwight Eisenhower and Richard Nixon rode to victory. Similarly, a Democratic primary challenge from Edward Kennedy in 1980 helped cripple Carter’s reelection campaign, ultimately sending Ronald Reagan to the White House.

With this history in mind, most Democrats thought it safer to stick with Biden, a man who has already beaten Trump once. No Democrat who aspires to be president someday wants to be the one to hobble an already vulnerable incumbent.

But growing worries about Biden’s age — he is 81 now and would be 86 at the end of a second term — have become the central issue of the campaign, even as Trump faces sentencing for a felony conviction in New York (how is that for an indicator of just how dysfunctional America’s politics have become?). Following Biden’s debate debacle, the editorial board of The New York Times, the center-left establishment paper of record, urged the president to

drop out and recent polls signal that about half of Democratic Party voters agree.

Unless Biden decides to leave the race, however, the odds of replacing him are virtually zero.

**Unless Biden decides to leave the race, however, the odds of replacing him are virtually zero. During his sweep through the primary election season, he secured the support of the delegates he needs to be nominated at the party’s convention in Chicago in August. These delegates are pledged to back Biden unless he releases them. Moreover, even if the Democrats could easily replace Biden, who would be the party’s new nominee? Poll after poll shows that Vice President Kamala Harris is no more popular than Biden, but pushing her aside for another contender risks alienating large numbers of women and minority voters.**

During his sweep through the primary election season, he secured the support of the delegates he needs to be nominated at the party’s convention in Chicago in August. These delegates are pledged to back Biden unless he releases them. Moreover, even if the Democrats could easily replace Biden, who would be the party’s new nominee? Poll after poll shows that Vice President Kamala Harris is no more popular than Biden, but pushing her aside for another contender risks alienating large numbers of women and minority voters. As for the alternatives — California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Michigan Gov. Gretchen

Ian Bremmer

Whitmer, Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and others — they are largely untested on the national stage. To understand how quickly an unproven candidate might flounder, look no further than

sides believing that the future of American democracy is at stake, voter turnout will likely be high across the board.

But the hill that Biden must climb will become steeper in the coming weeks as a steady stream of anonymous Democratic officials warn in the media that he must go. This drip-feed of negative coverage will weigh on the president’s ability to turn the page, at least until the convention next month. If there is any talk of advancing the date on which Biden is formally nominated, it will fuel speculation that he is panicking, even if he is not. And all this will be happening at a time when the Biden campaign hoped to keep media attention on Trump’s many liabilities.

For now, the Democratic Party is paralyzed. Ousting a sitting president would be an enormous political gamble; sticking with a stumbling incumbent might be even riskier. Trump, meanwhile, has enjoyed a charmed few weeks of good news. Almost all his legal headaches have been postponed until after the election. Sentencing has been delayed in his New York “hush money” trial. Recent Supreme Court rulings have reduced the likelihood of him facing jail time, as well as reminded conservative voters that he pulled the court rightward and would do so again if he wins. The media is more focused now on Trump’s search for a running mate than on his own erratic behavior.

The decision on Biden’s political future rests with the president himself, and it is impossible to know what he will do. For now, he appears intent on staying the course and trying to change the subject. But with each passing day, the pressure for a change at the top of the Democratic Party’s presidential campaign will grow. It is an unprecedented predicament in what was already a uniquely dysfunctional US presidential election.

**T**EME Teme Wanga and I used to share an office building in Finsbury Park, north London. In one room was our constituency case-work team, helping Islington North residents with the many problems they faced. Next door was the Congolese Community Council, which provided support for Congolese refugees. Our offices worked together to ensure people could get the help they needed. Teme is – and always has been – a pillar of the Islington community, and there are countless people in Islington who owe him a debt of gratitude. I am proud to say that I am one of them.

During the election campaign in Islington North, Teme spoke to hundreds of people to ask them to elect me as their independent MP. He didn’t sign up to our campaign’s “phone-banking” system, which asked volunteers to call up voters who had already expressed their support. He didn’t need to. He had his own contacts book, and called up his friends and neighbours one by one. Teme has dedicated his life to offering advice to his community; no wonder they listened to him when he explained why they should put a cross next to my name.

This election wasn’t about me. It was about our community, and there was only one way we could win this election: together. Teme was one of thousands of people who gave up their time to support our campaign in a variety of ways: knocking on doors to speak to voters, offering posters to residents and shops, sending messages in family or street WhatsApp groups, stewarding rallies, creating art, or making cups of tea for those entering data late into the evening.

Underneath is one common endeavour: reaching out, connecting and mobilising people to build collective power. We didn’t leaflet outside schools and train stations to take selfies for social media. We leafleted to encourage people to talk to their friends and neighbours about how we can improve our world together. We didn’t hold rallies so we could make ourselves feel better. We held rallies because we wanted people across the constituency to be excited

Jeremy Corbyn

by – and join – our grassroots campaign. And we didn’t visit places of worship and community centres to find last-minute votes. We visited them to draw on years of practical solidarity – of working together to improve each other’s lives. These bonds were far stronger than any digital advertising campaign could ever hope to replicate.

The time for celebration, however, is over. Building for the future starts now. Here in Islington, we are planting the seeds for a new way of doing politics. That

campaign will organise with those who have been inspired by our victory to build community power in every corner of the country. Once our grassroots model has been replicated elsewhere, this can be the genesis of a new movement capable of challenging the stale two-party system. A movement that offers a real alternative to child poverty, inequality and endless war. A movement that provides a real opposition to the far right – one that doesn’t concede ground to divisive rhetoric, but stands by its principles of anti-racism, equality and inclusion. I have no doubt that this

**We didn’t hold rallies so we could make ourselves feel better. We held rallies because we wanted people across the constituency to be excited by – and join – our grassroots campaign. And we didn’t visit places of worship and community centres to find last-minute votes.**

starts with our first People’s Forum. It will be a monthly opportunity for residents to hold me, their elected representative, to account. It will be a chance for local people to ask me anything about the month gone by and give me instructions for the month ahead. It will be a shared, democratic space for local campaigns, trade unions, tenants’ unions, debtors’ unions and national movements to organise, together, for the kind of world we want to live in.

Listening to the voices of those who elected me. Discussing the concerns and hopes of our community. Empowering each other to do something about it. That is what real democracy looks like.

The general election did not allow for the full expression of people power. Rather, we saw a rejection of the political establishment, leading to a loveless landslide; this election saw the second-lowest turnout since 1918 and the smallest combined vote share for the two main parties since 1945. Public discontent with a broken political system will only grow as the government fails to make the real change that people expect.

That energy needs somewhere to go. It needs to be channelled. It needs to be mobilised. That’s why our

movement will eventually run in elections. However, to create a new, centralised party, based around the personality of one person, is to put the cart before the horse. Remember that only once strength is built from below can we challenge those at the top.

Look at where other independents challenged the main parties most effectively. They built on community power to stand up for themselves and against those who had ignored their demands for peace and humanity. It’s that sort of power that needs to be built everywhere. Make no mistake: this is just the beginning. It is the beginning of a movement that can win with – and for – communities all over the country. People in power underestimate the power of people at their peril.

The brighter future we speak of is no pipe dream. Our community in Islington North is proof that a fairer world is possible. We have proved that you can challenge party machinery with a well-organised grassroots campaign. We have proved that you cannot crush dissent without consequences. We have proved that, with people such as Teme Wanga on your side, we can beat the odds, and win.

The Guardian

## Make no mistake: Destroying hospitals is part of Kremlin’s strategy

**T**HE news from Kyiv on July 8 about another attack on Ukrainian cities, with missiles hitting medical infrastructure – including Ukraine’s largest children’s hospital – is shocking. Alas, these events come as no surprise when we look at how attacking hospitals is not unintentional, but part of a strategy Russia has deployed before.

We saw this in Syria following Moscow’s 2015 intervention. If the trend in Ukraine continues, it is plausible that the Russian army will continue to use its toolbox that we have already seen in Syrian cities. Russia sent military forces to support President Bashar al-Assad’s regime at a time when Syrian rebels were mere miles away from the presidential palace in Damascus. Taking advantage of the civil war, Moscow expanded its existing positions and built new bases for its forces deep inside Syrian territory, which are still active today. These bases played an important role in stabilizing the Syrian regime and pushing rebels out of many areas of the country.

The firm foothold in Syria that the Russian army, together with Iran, built over three years came the cost of civilian casualties and destruction. This alliance with Tehran is active once again in

Ukraine, as Iranian-origin drones targeted civilian infrastructure in Ukrainian cities. From 2015 until February 2022 Russian forces used Syrian territory for three main purposes: creating a bridgehead for military operations in other areas such as Libya, strengthening military and political positions in the Mediterranean, and weapons testing. It is hard to forget how proudly President Vladimir Putin said that Russia had successfully tested more than 200 weapons in Syria. Some of these missiles and shells have been used in Ukraine since 2022, and the Russian army has been sending weapons captured on the Ukrainian front to Syria and Iran for research.

But in addition to weapons, Russia tested concepts in Syria that it would repeat against the Ukrainian population. The attacks on hospitals are emblematic of this. As a result of strikes and military operations by the Assad regime and Russian aircraft, nearly 90% of the medical infrastructure in Syrian cities with increased rebel activity has been damaged and put out of action. In major cities such as Damascus and Aleppo, entire neighborhoods have been destroyed. The similarities with the war in Ukraine are many, and the

Ruslan Trad

difference is that, in the case of Ukraine, the Russian army has been implementing for months a strategy of destruction that has been developed in Syria for several years.

The destruction of civilian infrastructure will continue because that is the way of warfare. The brutality is directly linked to events on the front. Russia’s advance into the Kharkiv region has stalled, nor is the advance in eastern Ukraine going according to plan. The Ukrainian army has several problems, notably a lack of manpower and weapons, but it has managed to repel most of the attacks on the front lines. The Kremlin provided diplomatic cover to the Assad regime after Damascus used chemical weapons against its own citizens. Furthermore, Russia targeted hospitals and other critical infrastructure, including those whose coordinates were shared with the Russian command by the UN, to undermine the morale of rebel forces and force them to disperse.

Russia is trying to do the same in Ukraine today, acting with special brutality when its war is not going to plan. The Russian army is attacking civilian areas to disperse the resources of the Ukrainian

forces currently concentrated along the front. Moscow knows that Ukraine needs additional air defense systems to defend its cities and skies, and it is exploiting this weakness with devastating consequences. Despite all the terrible losses, Kyiv’s Western allies are still preventing the Ukrainian armed forces from launching long-range strikes against Russian military infrastructure, and this is a mistake. All signed security treaties and such support are worthless without permission to counter-attack deep inside Russian territory. Otherwise, strikes like today’s will continue without serious consequences for the Russian army infrastructure and bases.

Attacks on hospitals and other infrastructure will not stop even if there are negotiations. The purpose of the invasion of Ukraine was to seize, occupy, and exploit territory that Russia believes is its own, not to sit around a table talking. Attacks like the one on the children’s hospital in Kyiv and the medical center in Dnipro are just part of this strategy and should remind Ukraine’s allies – some of whom have wavered – that Kyiv urgently needs military support and guarantees that it will be able to defend its skies. Reality is not just knocking at the door – it is blowing up cities.

## Patriots for Europe?

Cas Mudde

**“Victory in defeat, there is none higher,” wrote Robert A Heinlein in Stranger in a Strange Land, about unsung heroes who never give up. Although the far right likes to portray itself as unsung heroes, it has mostly found defeat with a series of pyrrhic victories in recent weeks, unable to turn record electoral support in the EU, France and the UK into concrete political power.**

This was perhaps best exemplified by Jordan Bardella, Marine Le Pen’s hand-picked “golden boy”, portrayed as almost infallible in much of the media. He led National Rally (Rassemblement National, or RN) to new highs in the 9 June European elections (eight percentage points up on the party’s 2019 performance) and France (14.5 percentage points up on the party’s showing in the first round of legislative elections in 2022). And yet, on Monday, Bardella was not announced as the new prime minister of France, but as the president of Viktor Orbán’s new Patriots for Europe (PfE), one of three rival far-right groups in the European parliament. The others are the longstanding European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), dominated by Giorgia Meloni’s Brothers of Italy (FdiI), and a smaller, more extreme group called Europe of Sovereign Nations, launched on Wednesday by the German far-right Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland, or AfD).

Although officially a new group, and now the third-biggest in the parliament, PfE is mostly just the old far-right Identity & Democracy (ID) of which Le Pen’s National Rally was the biggest player, with the addition of Orbán’s

Fidesz party. Among a few other gains and losses, the only real surprises are former Czech prime minister Andrej Babiš’s Action of Dissatisfied Citizens (ANO), and the Spanish party Vox.

So far, Orbán has been unable to win over his regional allies, such as the Slovak prime minister, Robert Fico, or the Slovene ex-prime minister, Janez Janša. Consequently, the new group has only one government leader among its members, Orbán himself, though others could join him around the table of the European Council in the coming years. Ultimately, Orbán is less interested in the European parliament than in the decision-making Council, where he needs an ally to fight EU sanctions on Hungary.

The far right struggles to collaborate internationally for many reasons including clashing personalities, party volatility, ideological extremism and strategic considerations. But these factors are dynamic and have changed as the far right slowly but steadily moves from the margins into the mainstream of European politics. In the 1980s, a bad personal relationship between the then National Front (FN) leader, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and the Austrian Freedom party (FPÖ) leader, Jörg Haider, hindered their collaboration in Europe. But this was a time when the far right was mostly politically ostracised and its politicians were not used to compromising for political gain. Today, many far-right leaders are, or aspire to be, part of governing coalitions and have learned to compromise to get things done. Hence, while Le Pen, Meloni and Orbán might not be close friends, there are no personal grudges that stand

in the way of future political cooperation.

A revolving door of unstable parties is also, mostly, a thing of the past. A strong core of far-right parties has been represented in the European parliament for decades now. Similarly, a solid core of far-right MEPs has been involved in European politics in Brussels for years, having established personal connections and political experience.

It is true that ideological extremism, particularly competing nationalisms, complicate things. For instance, in 2007, the far-right Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS) group split over anti-Romanian remarks by an Italian MEP. And more recently Fidesz claimed that it had refused to join the ECR because it included what it called an “extreme anti-Hungarian” party. Still, in both cases, there were other reasons at play, not least fierce resistance to Fidesz within the ECR.

Much of that resistance to Fidesz is about Orbán’s pro-Russia positioning and yet this is only partly an ideological dispute. While the ECR, which includes Poland’s Law and Justice (PiS), presents itself as the “pro-Ukraine” far-right group and loves to boast about vehement opposition to Putin, the same PiS supported Fidesz’s membership of the ECR and later even negotiated with Orbán about joining PfE. In the end, PiS has remained in the ECR on pragmatic rather than ideological grounds, having achieved a compromise with Meloni about dividing up the leading jobs in the group.

The main hindrance to collaboration on the far right is strategic,

rather than ideological, organisational or personal. Far-right parties have often used international collaboration to fight isolation domestically, by showing either that they do not stand alone internationally or that mainstream(ed) parties in other countries want to collaborate with them. Much of the Russia-Ukraine debate is also more about strategy than ideology, as foreign policy is of secondary concern for most far-right parties. Parties such as AfD, Fidesz and RN carry a strong international stigma that is considered a hindrance for parties trying to find mainstream acceptance (for example, Sweden Democrats) but less so for those who do not (such as Chega in Portugal) or who have already achieved it (Italy’s League).

In the end, the foundation of Patriots for Europe (and, to a lesser extent, the even newer Europe of Sovereign Nations) will help to further mainstream the far right in the EU. They will pull the rightwing European People’s party, which is the largest group in the parliament, even further to the right on such issues as the European Green Deal and immigration, and towards an even more conciliatory relationship with the ECR. In other words, the far right continues to move forward, maybe not at the lightning speed often proclaimed by both the far right and the media, but forward nevertheless. At the same time, Orbán’s Patriots for Europe represents yet another pyrrhic victory. Yes, it is the biggest far-right group ever to be constructed in the European parliament, but it is also almost completely ostracised, excluded from committee roles by an ongoing “cordon sanitaire” of pro-EU parties.

## People-power led to my re-election

**T**EME Teme Wanga and I used to share an office building in Finsbury Park, north London. In one room was our constituency case-work team, helping Islington North residents with the many problems they faced. Next door was the Congolese Community Council, which provided support for Congolese refugees. Our offices worked together to ensure people could get the help they needed. Teme is – and always has been – a pillar of the Islington community, and there are countless people in Islington who owe him a debt of gratitude. I am proud to say that I am one of them.

During the election campaign in Islington North, Teme spoke to hundreds of people to ask them to elect me as their independent MP. He didn’t sign up to our campaign’s “phone-banking” system, which asked volunteers to call up voters who had already expressed their support. He didn’t need to. He had his own contacts book, and called up his friends and neighbours one by one. Teme has dedicated his life to offering advice to his community; no wonder they listened to him when he explained why they should put a cross next to my name.

This election wasn’t about me. It was about our community, and there was only one way we could win this election: together. Teme was one of thousands of people who gave up their time to support our campaign in a variety of ways: knocking on doors to speak to voters, offering posters to residents and shops, sending messages in family or street WhatsApp groups, stewarding rallies, creating art, or making cups of tea for those entering data late into the evening.

Underneath is one common endeavour: reaching out, connecting and mobilising people to build collective power. We didn’t leaflet outside schools and train stations to take selfies for social media. We leafleted to encourage people to talk to their friends and neighbours about how we can improve our world together. We didn’t hold rallies so we could make ourselves feel better. We held rallies because we wanted people across the constituency to be excited

## Trans fat: Invisible killer

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus & Tom Frieden

**C**OOKIES. Pizza. Cake. All are delicious – but potentially deadly. In addition to their often-high sugar, salt or fat content, these foods can also contain a toxic ingredient that kills almost 300,000 people from coronary heart disease each year: industrially produced trans fat.

Invented in the early 20th century as a substitute for butter and later used to increase the shelf life of food products, industrially produced trans fat is highly hazardous to human health. There is no safe level of consumption. Fortunately, this toxic food additive can be replaced easily with healthier alternatives – there is no difference to taste or manufacturing costs, and hundreds of thousands of lives a year can be saved.

Six years ago, WHO called on countries and the food sector to eliminate industrially produced trans fat from the global food supply. At that time, only a small proportion of the world’s population – less than one in 10 people – were protected from this toxic chemical. A new WHO report on the state of global trans fat elimination details the tremendous progress we’ve made in just the past few years. Today, 53 countries with nearly four billion people are implementing WHO-recommended best practice policies that include bans or limits on trans fat, removing this major health risk for almost half of the world’s population.

WHO has recognised five countries – Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand – for their world-leading efforts to become trans fat-free, having gone beyond the adoption of best-practice trans fat policies to include monitoring and enforcement frameworks that will maximise and sustain the health benefits of these policies.

However, we still have a lot of work to do. More than four billion people remain unprotected from this toxic chemical. Globally, most of the remaining deaths caused by trans fat are concentrated in just eight countries, mostly in Africa and the Asia Pacific. Implementing best practice policies in these additional countries could prevent 90 percent of the global deaths associated with this harmful ingredient – an important milestone in the fight against noncommunicable diseases. As trans fat restrictions increase worldwide, food manufacturers will likely dump products containing this toxic chemical that have been banned elsewhere into a dwindling number of markets without regulations.

All countries, regardless of income level, can protect their people by implementing regulations, even if trans fat levels in food are low. Trans fat elimination is a cost-effective means to tackle noncommunicable diseases and save lives, as shown by studies in Argentina, Kenya, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Union which demonstrate that industrially produced trans fats can be eliminated and replaced with healthier fats or oils without changing the cost, taste or availability of food.

Countries that have implemented best practice trans fat policies can support others to do the same by sharing their experience and know-how. Food manufacturers, especially national and global conglomerates that have long profited from products containing deadly trans fat, have a responsibility to consumers to invest in healthier replacements. Advocates in the global community should continue to push for the total elimination of trans fat through the introduction of WHO-recommended best-practice policies. Three priority actions are needed to

achieve a trans fat-free world.

First, we call on all governments to limit or ban trans fat in all foods, in line with WHO-recommended policy. This includes a national limit of 2 grams of industrially produced trans fat per 100 grams of total fat in all foods, and a mandatory national ban on the production or use of partially hydrogenated oils – a major source of artificial trans fat – as an ingredient in all foods.

Second, we call on governments to ensure limits and bans are monitored and enforced. To encourage and strengthen enforcement, WHO has created the Trans Fat Free Validation Programme to formally recognise countries’ efforts to eliminate trans fat, similar to how WHO validates countries for eliminating malaria or neglected tropical diseases.

Third, we call on the food industry to implement WHO recommendations, making sure that when trans fat is removed, it is replaced with healthier fats and oils, and to minimise fats linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease, such as saturated fat. Companies should also agree to not sell products containing trans fat in markets where no policies yet exist. Large food manufacturers and a large ingredient producer have taken steps in this direction, and other companies should follow their lead.

The push for the global elimination of industrially produced artificial trans fat marks the first time the world has been mobilised to completely remove a dietary risk factor for heart disease. We know what to do, we know how to do it, and we know it works. The world is making good progress. It’s time for country leaders to finish the job of protecting their people from this toxic food additive.

Aljazeera





# ‘Vast opportunities of investment in Pakistan’

ISLAMABAD (PPI): President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister of Board of Investment, Privatization and Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has said that Pakistan pays high regards to bilateral relations with all European countries and considers it much valuable.

He added that France has vast opportunities to invest in the fields of Minerals, Energy, Agriculture, Information Technology and Defense production. This was expressed by Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan while addressing as a Chief Guest at the ceremony held here on the

National Day of France where Federal Ministers, Senators, Members of the National Assembly, Diplomats and prominent political, business and social personalities were present.

Ambassador of France in Pakistan, Nicolas Galey welcomed all the distinguished guest and briefed them on the historical significance of the French National Day. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan in his address said that bilateral friendly relations between Pakistan and France has great significance as 1.25 lacs Pakistanis are residing in France while thousands of

students are studying there.

He said that Pakistan and France can more flourish in Trade, Economy, Education and cultural sectors where bilateral cooperation is being strengthened day by day. Abdul Aleem Khan appreciated that Pakistan and France have already agreed on road map of bilateral trade and cooperation last year which is commendable.

President Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party and Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan, while congratulating Ambassador H.E Nicolas Galey and other participants on the National Day of France and said that the

people of France, having historically wonderful traditions who have a consistent response towards progress and development.

On this occasion, Ambassador of France in Pakistan Nicolas Galey expressed his desire to increase trade and other affairs with Pakistan. Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Senators Sherry Rehman and Saleem Mandviwala, Member National Assembly Dr. Farooq Sattar, Ex Federal Minister Fawad Hasan Fawad and important political figures were also present on the occasion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Communications and Privatization Abdul Aleem Khan in a group photo during The French Embassy in Islamabad hosted a special event.

## Tribunal maintains penalty

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal upheld findings of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) in the appeal filed by M/s NFC Employees Cooperative Housing Society. In 2016, the residents of the society complained to the CCP that they were being deprived of choice in terms of cable television. They were forced to subscribe to the sole cable television network provider i.e. MC Networks.

The Commission's order imposed a penalty of Rupees One Million on the NFC Employees Co-operative Housing Society Limited for granting exclusivity to a cable service provider and restricting residents' choices, thereby violating Section 4(2)(a), 4(2)(b) and 4(2)(d) read with Section 4(1) of the Competition Act, 2010.

The Tribunal reduced the penalty to PKR 500,000, keeping in view compliance oriented approach of NFC Employees Cooperative Housing Society.

# ‘Govt decision of hike in power tariff harsh on masses’

ISLAMABAD (INP): President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari has said that the government increased power tariff four times in 10 days to appease the International Monetary Fund (IMF) which has made the livelihood for common miserable besides depriving traders and industrialist of their right to conduct business.

Addressing a business delegation at Chamber House on Saturday, he pointed out that the government's policies are detrimental to business expansion, investment, unemployment reduction, inflation control, and achieving tax targets, which raises questions about how the government plans to collect taxes when the economy was faltering.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari criticized the government

for not consulting the business community before finalizing the budget, leading the country towards an economic crisis. He highlighted that inflation has left people struggling to pay utility bills, and the government is not targeting those who should be paying taxes, resulting in severe exploitation.

He condemned the exemption given to tax defaulters, tax evaders, electricity thieves, and failed government institutions, which places the burden of their extravagance on taxpayers and the general public.

The ICCI President noted that while the government has announced relief for users of 200 units, it has paradoxically spent millions on its publicity.

He demanded that contracts with Independent Power Producers should

not be renewed and that the provision of free electricity worth Rs. 300 billion to WAPDA employees should be discontinued immediately.

He urged the government to adopt alternative energy resources like hydel and solar power to address the issue and emphasized that proper policy implementation and reforms in the electric power sector could help prevent future unrest and improve the overall situation.

Zafar Bakhtawari warned that if the government does not review its policies, doing business in the country will become increasingly difficult, exacerbating the suffering of the masses.

He revealed that a meeting of all stakeholders will be convened at ICCI next week to devise a joint strategy to address the situation.

# APBF flays NEPRA for hike in fixed power tariff for industry

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Business Forum (APBF) has rejected the frequent increase in prices of electricity, gas and petroleum products, saying the massive jump in electricity base rates and petroleum products prices would make local products uncompetitive in the international market.

The APBF president held an emergent meeting of stakeholders on higher electricity tariffs, stating that NEPRA's latest forecast for power purchase prices for the current fiscal year reveals a substantial financial burden, with consumers to bear 300% of costs for fixed capacity payments. He was of the view that substantial fuel costs, particularly petroleum imports, potentially pose extreme volatility and strain on foreign exchange reserves.

APBF President Syed Maaz Mahmood remarked that at a time of unsatisfactory export volumes and

low industrial growth, the hike in electricity base tariffs for the industry, especially for the SMEs, was really surprising. If the decision is not withdrawn, it will prove dangerous for the country's SME sector, he stressed.

He said that the ever-increasing cost of production in the country is the real threat to both large-scale manufacturing (LSM) and small-scale businesses (SMEs), as frequent upward revisions in policy rate and continuous fluctuations in rupee against dollar are posing further challenges for the economy. APBF Chairman Ibrahim Qureshi while describing the government's decision to increase electricity tariffs as an incorrect move, urged the government to reverse the proposed increase. The government's decision to increase the electricity tariff is anti-industry, and the APBF strongly condemns the government's decision and calls on it to withdraw this move.

The APBF leader said

the unprecedented increase in fixed charges was tantamount to destruction of industries and burying people alive. The traders warned of the government for launching an agitation campaign. They also made it clear that if in case, the decision couldn't be withdrawn immediately, aggressive and harsh steps would be taken against unfair and unjust hike in fixed charges, and government and relevant authorities will be responsible for any unfortunate incident, he added.

He said the government should prioritize resolving the energy crisis by providing sufficient and affordable electricity and gas to industries. The import bill should be reduced by imposing bans on luxury products. He highlighted controlling inflation to ensure affordable living costs for the masses and containing the cost of production for businesses at a local level.

He stressed the need for a revisit of the economic policies, as the economic

indicators throughout the 2024 remained very depressed amidst high inflation, low exports, depleting foreign reserves and continued uncertain position of the local currency.

He said that the aggressive economic measures, high borrowing rates, inflation, oppressive taxation and unstable currency have been negatively affecting running businesses, many of which have closed their operations. He said that with a view to deal with fiscal challenges the government will have to work on the three-way strategy by implementing short-term goals that will help to keep generating resources for smooth fiscal operations, medium-term goals where the government should focus on financial inclusion, documenting the economy by designing a system where all businesses can be registered and properly document their income including collection of sales tax, initiating the process of privatisation as well as improving governance by introducing reforms in each sector.

Syed Maaz Mahmood said that the increase in base rate of electricity is also part of pact signed between the government and IMF, which says that the government has to notify NEPRA's determinations without any delay and amendment.

## SNGPL disconnects 11 gas meters

MULTAN (APP): Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) punished 11 citizens in a crackdown during last 24 hours.

According to officials of Task Force, the consumers were using gas illegally as they were found making commercial use of gas, offering illegal connections to others and had also shifted meters at different sites by themselves.

Gas metres of all the 11 consumers were disconnected for violation of the laws. The department urged citizens to cooperate and informed about illegal use of gas at phone number 061-9220085 as secrecy would be maintained.

According to Regional Manager Hussain Zafar, a special cell has been introduced to respond to complaints. Some officers have also been deputed in the special cell to ensure timely resolution of complaints.

## Gold rates up by Rs.400/tola

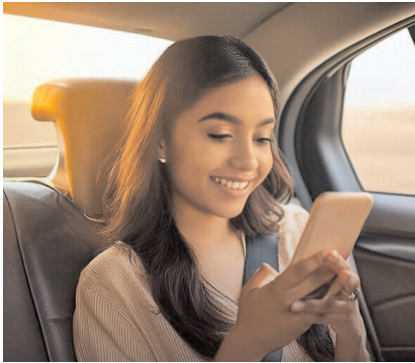
ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.400 and was sold at Rs.249,400 on Saturday against its sale at Rs.249,000 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.343 to Rs.213,820 from Rs. 213,477 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.196,002 from Rs. 195,687, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,900 and Rs.2,486.28 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased to \$2,410 from \$2,404, the Association reported.

# Yango celebrates year of transformative operations



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The international ride-hailing service Yango, a part of the global tech company Yango Group, proudly marks the first year of operation in Pakistan, now covering five of the nation's major cities since 2023. The milestone further builds on Yango's commitment to revolutionising the mobility industry in Pakistan and delivering unparalleled services to its users and partner drivers.

In a span of one year, Yango service has made substantial strides in the Pakistani market, demonstrating the profound impact of advanced technology, affordable pricing, and stringent safety measures. Yango has enhanced the ride-hailing experience and instigated positive changes within the mobility industry.

The service has prioritised safety since its launch, continuously enhancing the user experience to ensure security and comfort. Key safety features include an SOS button for immediate connection with local authorities in emergencies, a share route option that allows users to share trip details with trusted contacts, and verified drivers through regular checks of their driver's licence, photos and vehicle documents to ensure compliance. These features are just a few examples, with more safety enhancements planned for the upcoming months. Additionally, Yango has established a diligent support team available 24/7 to assist users and partner

drivers in Pakistan with inquiries and provide timely solutions.

Yango's business model actively supports local businesses and fosters economic growth. The availability of Yango's services in Pakistan resulted in the creation of numerous direct and indirect jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities. Till date, Yango has partnered with over 50 transportation companies in Pakistan making every single partner driver a stakeholder who is utilising Yango's ride-hailing solutions to provide exceptional transportation services and to support a valuable and stable additional earning stream.

In its first year, Yango customer support service showcased its efficient and customer-centric approach by returning over 1,400 lost items to their respective owners. Mobile phones were the most commonly lost items, while the most unique returned item was a wedding album. Yango's application diverse range of services is further highlighted by the longest trip to date, an impressive 387 km journey from Islamabad to Lahore.

"Yango's one year anniversary in Pakistan is a moment to celebrate our achievements, assure our commitment to providing seamless customer experiences, and further focus on the happiness and well-being of our partners and partners drivers. We are dedicated to enhancing our safety features while introducing additional features for both passengers and drivers. We are also focused on implementing initiatives that will positively impact our users, partner drivers, and the Pakistani community as a whole," Miral Sharif, Country Manager for Yango in Pakistan said on the occasion.

As Yango ventures into its second year in Pakistan, the service plans to launch into new cities, further expanding its coverage and extending the reach achieved in the past year. Moving forward, Yango aims to become the go-to mobility platform in Pakistan, distinguished by its innovative safety solutions. By doing so, it reinforces its role as a part of a tech giant committed to making a positive impact daily.

possible central bank intervention. One day after slides by the S&P 500 and Nasdaq ended a run of records, New York indices were back on the front foot.

US wholesale inflation rose 0.2% in June, more than expected, according to Labor Department data.

However Friday's data was not bad enough to overshadow Thursday's benign consumer price index report that boosted expectations for Federal

Reserve interest rate cuts, analysts said.

"Yesterday's decline appears to be a one-off and it's not leading to more selling," said Adam Sarhan of 50 Park Investments, who considers the current dynamics a bull market.

The hardest-hit large bank after earnings was Wells Fargo, which sank 6.0 percent as it reported lower profits due in part to a decline in net interest income.

# Stocks flirt with fresh records, rebounding yen hits Nikkei

NEW YORK (AFP/APP): Global stock markets mostly powered ahead on Friday, lifting the Dow above 40,000 and near a fresh record despite disappointing US inflation data and a lackluster market reaction to American bank earnings.

All three major US indices climbed after both Paris and Frankfurt packed on more than one percent.

Tokyo bucked the trend as the yen shot higher on

the government.

He said that it is possible to reduce the government expenditure by reducing the interest rate by 550 basis points, otherwise the relief that the people got from the reduction in inflation will not remain.

Karim Aziz said that the State Bank gradually reduced the interest rate to 12% and the interest payment on loans is 9770 billion rupees in the current financial year, while 8730 billion rupees will be spent on the payment of interest rate on internal loans.

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Ferozepur Road Industry Association (FRIA) has warned the high cost of doing business would hurt economic growth, demanding a careful policy to keep it in control, as Pakistan's inflation reading ticked up 0.11% in the week ended July 11, 2024 compared to the previous week, fueled by the hike in food prices, and maintained its uptrend for the second successive week.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), the short-term inflation gauge, called the Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI), registered a surge of 23.33% when compared with the same week of last year.

FRIA Senior Vice Chairman Shahbaz Aslam said that the most serious threat to the economy in the current fiscal year is the inflation, as the govern-

ment plan of approaching the International Monetary Fund for financial assistance has brought a fresh wave of price-hike, because inflation is already hitting due to continuous raise in oil prices and depreciation of local currency.

He predicted that inflation would remain high and may even increase further due to market frictions caused by relative demand and supply gap of essential items, exchange rate depreciation and recent upward adjustment of administered prices of petrol and diesel.

He said that due to the lagged effect of floods, production losses, especially of major agriculture crops, has not yet been fully recovered. Consequently, the shortage of essential items has emerged and persisted. Inflation may further jack up as a result of second round effect.

Shahbaz Aslam said the IMF loan would have dev-

astating effects on the economy, as with more taxes and increased rates of utilities, cost of production would further increase. This will render Pakistani exports uncompetitive in the global market.

FRIA SVC said that there is a consensus that a low inflation rate helps economic activities, while high inflation hurts economic growth. The high inflation environment affects decision making of all economic agents in economy, like investors, savers, consumers and producers through uncertainty about the expected payoffs from their decisions.

Moreover, a persistently high inflation also causes erosion of the value of the local currency in terms of foreign currencies. Such uncertainties, in turn, have adverse implications for economic activities.

He said low inflation helps economic agents to

predict outcome of their economic decisions with fair level of certainty. Especially, producers follow their plans for business expansion with more confidence; and new investment is undertaken in the expectation of predictable returns.

The rise in week-on-week inflation was led by the farm broiler chicken, which became costlier by 16.34% to Rs373.25 per kg in the week under review compared to Rs320.84/kg in the previous week.

The SPI-based short-term inflation index comprises 51 essential items whose data is gathered from 50 markets across 17 cities in the country.

During the week ended July 11, 2024, prices of 23 (45.10%) items increased, rates of six (11.76%) items decreased while prices of 22 (43.14%) items stood unchanged compared to the preceding week.

# Export-led growth necessary for economic revival in country

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital office Karim Aziz Malik on Saturday said that export-led growth is necessary for economic revival in the country, which will increase the trend of economic development in the country.

At this time, search for new potential markets and product diversification is very important for export-led growth in the country to enhance the economic growth, Chairman, Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Capital office Karim Aziz Malik told APP here.

The Chairman Capital office Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) said that the government has to explore new markets for market diversification and increase regional trade, which will also improve the business trend in the country.

Along with this, new sectors have to be brought into the field for Product diversification and for this, value added products have to be introduced in all important business sectors, he said.

Malik said that after Covid-19, obstacles have arisen in the global supply value chain, Pakistan also has to align itself with the global supply value chain, which will increase domestic exports.

He said that value addition in agriculture and development of agri-industry is necessary so that a country's exports can increase its export volume.

He said that this year there was a record export of rice with a volume of \$ 3.5 billion and in the next one-year rice exports will reach \$5 billion.

Senior business leaders said that rice is currently the second largest sector in the country's exports and there is a need to make it zero-rated like other export sectors.

Malik said that for the economic revival in the country, energy prices have

to be brought equal to the regional countries so that the domestic industry can develop.

He said that Central Asian countries are very important for the promotion of regional trade and there are great opportunities for Pakistan's trade there.

He said that the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) should reduce the interest rate so that the Rs 30 trillion lying in the country's banks can be used for the promotion of business and investment in the country.

Chairman Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) said that the government has to fix the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) system to increase the tax revenue, new taxes of Rs 1700 billion will increase the inflation in the country.

He said that the government should adopt the austerity measure and also rapid the process of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) privatization to stop the irrelevant expenditure of

the government.

He said that it is possible to reduce the government expenditure by reducing the interest rate by 550 basis points, otherwise the relief that the people got from the reduction in inflation will not remain.

Karim Aziz said that the State Bank gradually reduced the interest rate to 12% and the interest payment on loans is 9770 billion rupees in the current financial year, while 8730 billion rupees will be spent on the payment of interest rate on internal loans.

My General Surgery Specialization (FCPS) degree issued by College of Physicians and Surgeons Pakistan has been lost. Please forward to the address below if anyone finds it. Dr. Rumman Khan Son of Sharifullah Khan Resident of House No. 396 Phase 6 Hayatabad Sector F 7 Peshawar

## Lost and Found





In brief

Shaheen's leave for Australia

KARACHI (APP): Pakistan Shaheen's squad on Saturday left for Brisbane, Australia from Jinnah International Airport Karachi. The team will land in Brisbane, Australia via Dubai. The Shaheen will play two matches against Bangladesh A-1. The squad will also play T20I tournament.

Immobile joins Besiktas

ISTANBUL (AFP): Lazio record goal-scorer Ciro Immobile has signed a two-year deal with Turkish club Besiktas after eight seasons and more than 200 goals with the Roman club. "An agreement has been reached with the player for two seasons," the Istanbul club said in a statement, adding he would be paid six million euros (\$6.5m) per season. The 34-year-old Italian international was welcomed on his arrival in Istanbul by hundreds of 'Black Eagles' fans. The former Borussia Dortmund forward joined Lazio in 2016 from Sevilla and scored a club record total of 207 goals in 340 matches. He holds the joint record for the most goals scored in a Serie A season with 36 in 2019-20. But a checkered 2023-24 season during which he scored just seven league goals, saw the striker lose his indisputable starting status and suffer the brunt of the frustration of disgruntled Lazio fans. He won three trophies during his time with Lazio -- the Italian Cup in 2019 and the Italian SuperCup twice. An important player during Italy's European title success in 2021, the 57-times capped forward with 17 goals was not selected for Euro 2024. Immobile's mission will be to revitalise the Besiktas attack: the 16-times Super Lig champions last won the title in 2021. Last season they finished sixth, more than 40 points behind champions Galatasaray and second-placed Fenerbahce, its two great Istanbul rivals.

Kane out to crown England legacy

LONDON (Agencies): Harry Kane's move to Germany has not yet yielded the trophies he craved, but in Berlin on Sunday the England captain could quench his craving for silverware in style by winning Euro 2024. Kane's strike to bring England level in a dramatic semi-final victory over the Netherlands was his 406th goal for clubs and country. Yet, he is approaching his 31st birthday without a single trophy to his name. Kane transferred his prolific Premier League form to the Bundesliga with ease last season, scoring 44 times in 45 appearances since joining Bayern Munich from Tottenham for a reported fee of £82 million (\$105 million). Yet it still did not result in collective success as Bayer Leverkusen did not taste defeat once in winning a domestic league and cup double, while Bayern bowed out to eventual winners Real Madrid in the Champions League semi-finals. Kane came off towards the end of the decisive second leg against Madrid with a back injury that hampered the end of his club campaign and rolled into the Euros. He was unusually the target of stinging criticism from former England strikers Gary Lineker and Alan Shearer for his laboured performances early in the tournament which were symptomatic of a highly-fancied side that failed to shine. The Three Lions won just one of their opening five matches in Germany in 90 minutes and have needed late goals to come from behind in each of the three knock-out rounds against Slovakia, Switzerland and the Dutch.

# Krejcikova wins Wimbledon for second Grand Slam singles title

LONDON (AFP): Barbora Krejcikova of the Czech Republic defeated Italy's Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon women's title on Saturday for her second Grand Slam singles triumph. Krejcikova, the 31st seed, won 6-2, 2-6, 6-4 to add the 2024 All England Club crown to her 2021 French Open victory. Her win comes 26 years after her mentor Jana Novotna, who died of cancer in 2017, claimed the Wimbledon title. "Before she passed away, she told me to go and win a Slam. I did that in Paris in 2021 but I never dreamed of winning the same trophy that Jana did," said the 28-year-old Krejcikova, who secured the title in a nervy final service game on a third championship point. "It's unreal what just happened. The best day of my tennis career and the best day of my life. "I was just telling myself to be brave. It was such a difficult match, a great final, a great competition and I'm super happy to be standing here enjoying this moment." Krejcikova, who will return to the top 10 following her victory, came into Wimbledon after a testing season. A back injury

and illness meant she went winless on the tour from February until June. "I was injured and ill and didn't have a good start to the season and now I'm Wimbledon winner. How did that happen?" "I think nobody's going to believe I won Wimbledon. I still can't believe it. Two weeks ago (first round) I had a very tough match, 7-5 in the third set and I wasn't in good shape." The result means seventh-seeded Paolini has lost two Grand Slam finals back-to-back after coming off second best to Iga Swiatek at the French Open last month. "I'm a little bit sad but I try to keep smiling. I have to remember today is still a good day," said Paolini, who had never won a grass-court match in her career until last month. "I remember watching Wimbledon as a kid cheering for Roger Federer, so to be here now is crazy. It's been a beautiful two weeks." She added: "Barbora, you played unbelievable. You play such beautiful tennis. Congrats to you and your team." Krejcikova set the tone at the start of the match by breaking the Italian in the opening game and backing up the advantage with a

hold to love. Nervy conclusion Paolini, the first Italian woman to reach a Wimbledon singles final, had to save two break points in the third game but she cracked under the strain again as the composed Czech stormed into a double-break ahead for 4-1. Krejcikova moved to three set points in the eighth game and only needed one as Paolini dumped a backhand return into the net. The nerve-wracked Italian managed to claim just four points on the Czech's serve in the 35-minute opener. Krejcikova hit 10 winners to the Italian's five. Paolini dashed off Centre Court for a bathroom break and returned re-energised. She had also dropped the first set in her marathon semi-final triumph over Donna Vekic and on Saturday she launched another second set fightback. Breaks in the second and eighth games levelled the final after a set in which Krejcikova made 14 unforced errors to seven for her opponent, taking her double-fault count to a tournament-high of 33. The Czech managed just four winners in the set as she went spectacularly off the boil.



LONDON: Barbora Krejcikova lifts the Ladies' Singles Trophy following victory against Jasmine Paolini during her Ladies' Singles Final match during day thirteen of The Championships Wimbledon 2024.

## BCCI brushes aside reports of India not travelling to Pakistan

NEW DELHI (Web Desk): The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Vice-President Rajeev Shukla denied the reports suggesting that the Indian cricket team will not travel to Pakistan to participate in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025. Earlier this week, Indian media reported, citing a source from the BCCI, that the Indian team will not be visiting Pakistan for the upcoming ICC event. Reports further claimed that the board is planning to formally propose Dubai and Sri Lanka as potential venues for hosting India's matches. Meanwhile, BCCI VP Rajeev Shukla, during a telephonic conversation with an Indian media outlet, asserted that the cricketing body has not issued any information regard-

ing their team's participation in Champions Trophy 2025. "We do not know which source gave such information. BCCI has not put out any official information regarding this," Shukla told ThePrint over the phone. Last year, India refused to travel to Pakistan to participate in the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023. As a result, the continental event was held in a hybrid model with Sri Lanka stepping in as a co-host. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) submitted the schedule for the Champions Trophy to the ICC last week, which was reportedly approved by all the participating countries except India. The BCCI has emphasized that India's visit to Pakistan is contin-

gent upon receiving permission from the government. "In the case of the Champions Trophy, we will do whatever the Government of India tells us to do," BCCI Vice-President Rajeev Shukla said in May. "We send our team only when the Government of India gives us permission. So we will go according to the decision of the Indian government." It is worth noting that India has not travelled to Pakistan since the Asia Cup in 2008 due to the long-standing political tensions between the two neighbouring countries. In contrast, Pakistan has made four trips to India in the last 16 years. Their most recent visit was last year for the ICC Men's World Cup 2023.

## Atkinson can shape England's post-Anderson era: Joe Root

LONDON (AFP): Joe Root has backed Gus Atkinson to play a key role in shaping England's fast-bowling attack following Jimmy Anderson's emotional farewell at Lord's. Anderson played his final Test for England after a glittering career that featured 704 wickets in the five-day format -- more than any other quick in history. England batsman Root labelled Anderson "our greatest ever bowler", but the 41-year-old's exit in the aftermath of Friday's innings and 114-run rout of the West Indies in the first Test provides opportunities for a new generation to emerge. Atkinson's remarkable Test debut against the West Indies, in which he surpassed Anderson's career-best match figures with 12 for 106, has made the transition look less daunting for Ben Stokes' side. "I think the future does look very bright in the

bowling department. We've lost our greatest-ever bowler, but for Gus to come in and do that shows a lot about where we are as a team. We are moving in the right direction," Root said. England will face the West Indies in two more Tests and then host Sri Lanka in a three-match series later in the summer. But Root is already looking ahead to the next Ashes clash with Australia, which is scheduled for late 2025 into 2026. England will be aiming for a first series win over Australia since 2015 and Root believes Atkinson could emerge as a key figure. "I think as a player (the Ashes) is the series that you're always looking forward to, they're the ones you're always building towards," Root said. "When teams have gone out there, what they need for those conditions is someone like Gus that can bowl in the late 80mphs,

early 90mphs, and still move the ball around and make things happen at high pace. "It was great to see him come in and do that on such a slow wicket here." Anderson will be around to mentor Atkinson and the rest of England's pace bowlers as part of an arrangement that lasts for the rest of the summer. "All I've ever known for England is playing alongside Jimmy. I'll terribly miss playing alongside him but the fact that he'll be around for the summer will be great for the young bowlers coming through," Root said. "You can't buy that experience, can you? No fast bowler has played that amount of Test matches, taken that amount of wickets. "So for young guys coming in, someone like Gus or the likes of Dillon Pennington and Matthew Potts, to have that knowledge to bounce off, it's invaluable really."

## India crush Zimbabwe to wrap up T20 series win

HARARE (AFP): Yashasvi Jaiswal and captain Shubman Gill thrashed Zimbabwe's bowlers to all parts of the Harare Sports Club on Saturday to secure a 10-wicket in the fourth T20 international and with it claim the series. Chasing Zimbabwe's 152 for seven, India cruised him with 28 balls to spare to take a 3-1 lead in the five-match series. The left-handed Jaiswal hammered 93 not out off 53 balls and was named player of the match while Gill made 58 not out off 39 deliveries. "Chasing was something we talked about," Gill said at the post-match presentation. "We couldn't do it in the first game so it was good to get it done." Zimbabwe won the first match by 13 runs last Saturday but India have taken charge since then, dominating the next three matches. Although captain Sikandar Raza hit 46 off 28 balls, Zimbabwe were unable to capitalise fully on their first good start of the series. Wessly Madhevere (25) and Tadiwanashe Marumani (32) put on 63 for the first wicket after Zimbabwe were sent in to bat. But the openers fell in successive overs to part-time bowlers Abhishek Sharma and Shivam Dube. India again opted to field only four specialist bowlers, including new cap Tushar Deshpande, who claimed the wicket of Raza while conceding 30 runs in three overs. Raza said he had thought after his team's innings that 160 was a par score but admitted: "The way they batted, 180 would not have been enough." Jaiswal set the tone in the first over of India's innings, hitting three boundaries off Richard Ngarava. There was no let-up as India's fifty was posted inside four overs and the hundred inside 10 overs. Jaiswal hit 13 fours and two sixes, while Gill hit six fours and two sixes. The series wraps up with the fifth T20 in Harare on Sunday.

## PCB denies NOC to Naseem Shah for The Hundred – reports

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Saturday, decided against granting the No Objection Certificate (NOC) to right-arm pacer Naseem Shah, owing to his participation in The Hundred. According to the details, the cricketing body made the decision in a bid to prevent Naseem from potential injuries and to ensure his workload management as he is Pakistan's first-choice pacer in all three formats. Notably, Naseem was signed by Birmingham Phoenix in the £125,000 category and his absence from the tournament will result in him suffering significant financial loss.

Considering Pakistan's upcoming busy season which includes World Test Championship (WTC) matches against Bangladesh, England and West Indies while also playing an ODI tri-series against New Zealand and South Africa ahead of the Champions Trophy 2025, the PCB is unwilling to take any risks regarding Naseem Shah's fitness. For the unversed, Naseem also missed the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India due to a shoulder injury. The right-arm pacer suffered the injury during the ACC Men's Asia Cup 2023 fixture against India which resulted in him ruling out of the tournament

remainder. The incident occurred in the 46th over of India's innings when he walked off the field favouring his bowling shoulder on the reserve day allocated for the blockbuster clash between two Asian giants. Briefly, after Pakistan's 228-run defeat against arch-rivals India, the PCB called up Zaman Khan and Shah Nawaz Dahani as backup pacers for the rest of the tournament, as a precautionary measure to provide a cover for injured Naseem and Haris Rauf. Later, the PCB confirmed that Naseem Shah was ruled out of the Asia Cup 2023 and Zaman was added to the Pakistan squad.

## Tele'a double edges All Blacks past England 24-17 to win series

AUCKLAND (AFP): Wing Mark Tele'a scored two tries on Saturday as New Zealand squeezed past England 24-17 to win a hard-fought second Test in Auckland. Tele'a touched down either side of half-time as the All Blacks took the series 2-0 and extended their 30-year unbeaten record at Eden Park. Just like in the 16-15 first Test win at Dunedin, New Zealand had to wrestle back the lead in the second half from a spirited England side. "Hugely proud of the boys to hold on and win the arm wrestle and finish off a good performance," said New Zealand captain Scott Barrett. "Test matches certainly challenge your character and we had to dig deep there, right till the last minute." Fly-half Marcus Smith led the visitors to a 14-13 advantage at half-time after his pin-point cross-field kicks created tries for wing Tommy Freeman and Immanuel Feyi-Waboso. After a breathless opening spell, the All Blacks took the lead when Tele'a caught the England defence napping from a ruck to dart over for a try. All Blacks fly-half Damian McKenzie landed the conversion, but England immediately hit back. Smith kicked wide into the arms of Feyi-Waboso, who stepped inside the

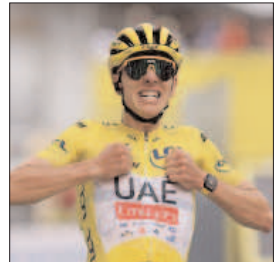


defence for a converted try. New Zealand should have had a second try when Tele'a broke away, but Smith intercepted the final pass to Stephen Perofeta on the England tryline. McKenzie landed a penalty, but Smith quickly took the kick-off to pin the All Blacks deep in their own half, where they stayed for the next 15 minutes. McKenzie stroked over another penalty, but England led at half-time after Freeman outleapt Tele'a to haul in Smith's kick. The England number 10 successfully converted from the touchline. England started the second-half camped in the All Blacks half and Smith extended the lead to 17-13 with a penalty. With half an hour left, scrum-half Cortez Ratima came on to make his All Blacks debut when he replaced the dazed

Finlay Christie. The game's momentum swung New Zealand's way when the All Blacks brought on Beauden Barrett. The twice world player of the year showed his class by restoring the lead for New Zealand when he scythed through a gap to put Tele'a over. McKenzie missed the conversion, but landed two penalties to pull New Zealand out of England's reach. The visitors fought until the end with England captain Jamie George denied near the New Zealand line from scoring a potential match-leveling try. "I think we're significantly better than when we started," said England captain George. "There's hugely exciting times ahead for this English team. We'll welcome them to Twickenham in November, we'll look forward to that."

## Pogacar pummels Tour de France rivals with Pyrenees win

SAINT-LARY-SOULAN (AFP): Tadej Pogacar extended his overall lead on the Tour de France when he won stage 14 in the Pyrenees on Saturday. His arch rival Jonas Vingegaard came second at 39sec while Remco Evenepoel was third at 1min 10sec. Ahead of another monster run in the Pyrenees on Sunday, Pogacar extended his lead to 1min 57sec over Vingegaard as Evenepoel dropped to third at 2min 22sec. With bonus seconds for the win, his 13th Tour de France stage victory, Pogacar extended his lead by 43sec. He punched the air in triumph at the line. "The plan was to come to the final and make the sprint hard, maybe take some seconds and a stage win. But in the end this it's much better," he said at the line. "I'm super, super happy to get this," he said. Pogacar's team UAE waited until the third and final climb of the day before sending Adam Yates on an attack seven kilometres from the line on the 11km ascent to the Pla d'Adet. The English rider was waiting to help after the



Slovenian launched his own attack. When Pogacar unleashed a ferocious acceleration, his two podium rivals followed, but were either unwilling or unable to match the pace. Over the final section of a climb, packed on either side by raucous fans, 2020 and 2021 champion Pogacar kept up his pace all the way to the line after dropping Yates. Wearing a mask in the mix zone, Evenepoel seemed relaxed and happy too. "I tried you keep up as long as possible but he's wild," said the Belgian, who thanked his team members by name for their support. Saturday's stage first took the peloton up the feared Col du Tourmalet with tens of thousands of fans partying all day. Before the peloton arrived, holidaying

cyclists rode up the 19km climb at an average 7.5 gradient to 2,115m altitude, many pushing their bikes or using electric assistance. Pidcock drops out When the peloton set off from Pau, the gateway to the Pyrenees, only 158 riders of the original 176 remained. Cross-discipline maverick Tom Pidcock was absent, the latest to pull out with suspected Covid. He is due to protect his mountain bike Olympic title in just three weeks. The race zipped through pilgrim site Lourdes, one of the most visited cities in France due to its grotto and fountain. Sunday's 15th stage falls on July 14 and should provide a show for the roadside and arm-chair fans alike. Warren Barguil is the last Frenchman to provide a win on the national holiday back in 2017. The wait is unlikely to end, but Romain Bardet in his retirement year will likely reach beyond himself trying. Instead the five fearsome climbs should provide a further battleground for Pogacar, Vingegaard and Evenepoel.





## In brief

### Secretary information, PIO extend condolences

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Information and Broadcasting Secretary Shahera Shahid and Principal Information Officer Mubashir Hassan on Saturday expressed their grief and sorrow over the death of the mother of senior journalists Aon Sahi and Nokhaiz Sahi. Federal Secretary Information and PIO expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family of the deceased. Shahera Shahid said she was deeply saddened to hear the news of the death of the mother Aon Sahi and Nokhaiz Sahi. She said the demise of a mother was a great tragedy. The secretary information and PIO said that they stood with the bereaved family in this hour of grief. They prayed to Allah Almighty to rest the departed soul in eternal peace and grant courage to the bereaved family to bear this loss with fortitude.

### IRSA releases 292,000 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Saturday released 292,000 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 347,100 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1523.34 feet and was 125.34 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 182,400 cusecs and 139,400 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1194.00 feet, which was 146.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 32,100 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 164,600, 180,600, 151,400 and 82,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 69,200 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 33,600 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### IGP reviews security arrangements

RAWALPINDI (APP): Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab, Dr Usman Anwar, visited Rawalpindi on Saturday to review the security arrangements put in place for Muharram ul Haram. He was accompanied by Additional IG CTD Waseem Syal, Regional Police Officer (RPO) Rawalpindi Region Babar Sarfaraz Alpa, City Police Officer (CPO) Rawalpindi Syed Khalid Mehmood Hamdani, and SSP Operations Flight Lieutenant (ret'd) Hafiz Kamran Asghar, along with other senior officers. IGP Anwar inspected the security measures for the Ashura main procession and Majlis. RPO Alpa briefed him on the arrangements over there. The visit was aimed to review the Muharram security across Punjab, following instructions from the Chief Minister Punjab. IGP Punjab said that Police teams are working tirelessly to ensure law and order with the support of various stakeholders, including scholars, administrators, and citizens. He emphasized the collaboration with Majlis organizers, peace committees, district administration, and security agencies to ensure foolproof security. RPO Alpa stated that complete screening and sweeping of routes and venues are conducted before sensitive processions. He also mentioned that all processions are monitored through CCTV cameras from a control room. CPO Hamdani highlighted that the code of conduct and security Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Muharram are strictly enforced.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi presenting souvenir to US Ambassador Donald Blome. —APP Photo

## Romina chairs moot on establishing mountaineering school

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam chaired PM's committee meeting on establishing a mountaineering school in Gilgit Baltistan to promote sustainable green tourism, mountaineering education and local community engagement ensuring environmental conservation.

The committee discussed a thorough plan for the establishment of a mountaineering school, overseeing the implementation process from conception to reality. Addressing the meeting the PM's aide said the success of the project is in team work and the suggestions of all the participants will be incorporated to finalize the establishment of the mountaineering school. Romina Khurshid stressed the need for such initiatives that can help slow down global warming and overcome the devastating impacts of climate change, particularly in mountain regions.

The meeting decided to form three sub-committees that will design a

comprehensive curriculum, identify suitable locations, prepare a detailed budget, engage with relevant stakeholders and establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to establish mountaineering school.

The first sub-committee will be headed by Secretary Inter Provincial Coordination will prepare a detailed feasibility, assessing the potential sites, infrastructure requirements, and financial implications, identify suitable locations for the construction of the Mountaineering School, considering accessibility, environmental impact.

The second sub-committee headed by Secretary Federal Education will design a comprehensive curriculum for the Mountaineering School, incorporating international best practices and standards in mountaineering, rescue operations, and environmental conservation. Establish training programs for instructors and staff, ensuring high-quality education and skill development for students. The third sub-committee headed by National High-Altitude Mountaineering, Naila Kiyani will

engage with relevant stakeholders, including the Government of Gilgit Baltistan, local communities, mountaineering associations, and international experts, to ensure comprehensive input and collaboration.

Facilitate coordination with the Government of Gilgit Baltistan to align the project with regional development plans and secure necessary approvals and support, establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to track the progress of the project, assess outcomes, and ensure accountability of the project.

Federal secretaries from ministries of Federal Education and Professional Training, Inter Provincial Coordination and Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and executive director, NAVTTC attended the meeting while ex-Minister for Tourism, Gilgit-Baltistan, Ghulam Muhammad and Gilgit-Baltistan, and representatives from Ev-K2-CNR, tourism educationists from KIU Hunza and Baltistan University and mountaineers including Naila Kiyani participated in the meeting online.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam chairing PM's committee meeting on establishing a mountaineering school in Gilgit Baltistan.

## Punjab Cabinet Committee visits main procession route

RAWALPINDI (APP): Punjab Cabinet Committee on Law and Order here on Saturday visited the main procession route of Rawalpindi and reviewed all the arrangements.

The Cabinet Committee members under the leadership of Khawaja Salman Rafique reviewed all the arrangements in detail and issued instructions to the authorities concerned to ensure law and order.

The Committee was briefed that the main procession would start from Imambargah Colonel Magbool Hussain and culminate at Imambargah Qadeemi. The Cabinet Committee also visited Madrassa Taleem-ul-Quran and met with Mohtamam Maulana Ashraf Ali.

Khawaja Salman Rafique said, "We witnessed an atmosphere of interfaith harmony, unity, peace and tolerance throughout the province during visit of different cities." Apart from the security arrangements, peace committees were active for interfaith harmony, he added. "We have to forget the differences and talk about commonalities," the Chairman Cabinet Committee said. He informed that three security tiers had been set up for security of the processions and majalis across Punjab.

In addition to monitoring the use of the loudspeakers and social media, records of majalis and muharram processions were being compiled, Khawaja Salman Rafiq added. There should be a strong briefing for the officials deployed in the field, he instructed.

'Sabeels, Niaz and Langar' were being managed under the direction of Chief Minister Punjab, he informed. Provincial Ministers, Mujtaba Shuja ur Rehman, Bilal Akbar Khan and Special Assistant, Zeeshan Malik were included in the delegation.

Secretary Home Department Punjab, Noor ul Amin Mengal, Inspector General of Police, Punjab, Dr. Usman Anwar, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak, Regional Police Officer, Rawalpindi Region, Babar Sarfaraz Alpa, members of Divisional and District Peace Committee were also present on this occasion.

**CTP Rawalpindi issues traffic plan for 7th Muharram processions**  
RAWALPINDI (APP): Following the instructions of Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) Taimoor Khan, the City Traffic Police (CTP) Rawalpindi on Saturday has issued traffic plan to maintain the flow of traffic for 7th Muharram ul Harram processions.

The plan involves 199 officers and personnel, including 4 DSPs/Circle Incharges and 46 Traffic Wardens. The main procession will start from Sadiqabad and pass through several key points including Nishtar Street, Transformer Chowk, Kurry Road, Chah Sultan Chowk, Chaklala Road, Glass Factory Chowk, Zafarul Haq Road, Leprosy Hospital, Murree Road, Committee Chowk, and Iqbal Road.

It will join other processions at Naya Mohalla Chowk and continue through Fawara Chowk, Raja Bazar, Dingi Khoi, Bansanwala Chowk, and Jamia Masjid Road, ending at Imambargah Qadmi.

The CTP Rawalpindi has made necessary arrangements to ensure public convenience and smooth traffic flow, preventing any untoward incidents until the procession passes Shaheen Chowk. Nishtar Street to Shaheen Chowk on Kurry Road will be closed for all traffic, while Band Khanna Road and Murree Road will be open as alternate routes. Murree Road will remain closed for all kind of traffic, with Rawal Road as its alternate route. The procession will pass through Committee Chowk, Liaquat Bagh Road, Iqbal Road, Alam Khan Road, and Fawara Chowk. Bansanwala Chowk and Bani Chowk will also be

## Gilani pays tribute to Kashmir martyrs

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Saturday paid tribute to the martyrs of Kashmir, honoring their sacrifices and struggle against the Indian occupied forces.

In a message on "Kashmir Martyrs' Day," he said that the martyrs of July 13, 1931, laid the foundation for today's freedom movement. He said that generations of Kashmiris have been making sacrifices and struggling against the Kashmiri Hindutva government's conspiracy to destroy their identity.

Gilani condemned unlawful and tyrannical occupation of Indian forces on Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the right of self-determination of Kashmiris, affirming Pakistan's commitment to supporting the freedom movement until the liberation of occupied Kashmir. He expressed confidence that the day to end India's illegal occupation is not far off.

closed, with alternative routes including Rawal Road, Murree Road, City Sadar Road, Gunjamandi Road and Saidpur Road. Liaquat Bagh Road, Iqbal Road, Alam Khan Road, and Fawara Chowk to Bansanwala Chowk will experience intermittent closures.

## Right to self-determination fundamental right of Kashmiris

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Saturday paid tribute to people of Indian occupied Jammu Kashmir for rendering sacrifices for their freedom and the right to self-determination.

In his message on the occasion of Kashmir Martyrs' Day, he said, "July 13, 1931, 22 Kashmiris laid down their lives while facing the Dogra forces."

On this day (13th July) in 1931, the troops of Dogra Maharaja had killed 22 Kashmiris, one after the other, outside Central Jail in Srinagar during the court proceedings against one Abdul Qadeer who had asked

Kashmiri people to defy the Dogra rule. Thousands of people had gathered outside the court to show their solidarity with Abdul Qadeer.

The speaker said that the people of Pakistan continue to remember the sacrifices of their Kashmiri brothers and sisters. He said that the struggle against India's unlawful occupation of Jammu and Kashmir continues to this day. "History has witnessed that attempts to silence the voices of Kashmiris through force have failed," he added.

He strongly condemned the Indian government's attempts to alter the demographic structure of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that such

plans would never succeed. "The right to self-determination is a fundamental right of the Kashmiri people," he stated. The Speaker demanded that India end its inhumane atrocities in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and urged the international community to take action against India's blatant violations of human rights.

He also appealed to the global community to play its role in resolving the dispute in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions. "Pakistan will continue to extend full moral, political, and diplomatic support to our Kashmiri brothers and sisters," he affirmed.

## French envoy expresses commitment for strengthening bilateral ties



ISLAMABAD (APP): In a show of friendship and cooperation, the French Ambassador to Pakistan, Nicolas Galey, hosted a reception Friday night to mark France's National Day, known as Bastille Day.

Bastille Day, or "le Quatorze Juillet" in French, commemorates the storming of the Bastille prison on July 14, 1789.

This event was a significant moment in the French Revolution, symbolizing the fight against oppression and the beginning of a new republic based on liberty, equality, and fraternity.

Bastille Day is celebrated across France with various festivities, including a grand military parade on the Champs-Élysées in Paris.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey and Pakistan's Minister for Privatization, Investment Board and Communications Aleem Khan expressed their commitment to strengthening the friendship between their two countries.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey on the occasion highlighted historical and cultural connections between France and Pakistan and also appreciated Pakistan's active participation in the celebrations.

He emphasized that cultural exchanges are crucial for enhancing mutual understanding and cooperation. Ambassador Galey also highlighted France's support for Pakistan's development initiatives, particularly in sustainable energy, infrastructure development, and vocational training.

Privatization Minister Aleem Khan, who was a chief guest on the French National Day highlighted the importance of strong economic and trade relations between Pakistan and France. He reaffirmed Pakistan's dedication to working closely with France to explore new areas of collaboration, especially in trade, education, and technology.

"The friendship between Pakistan and France is not only based on cultural ties but also on economic cooperation. We are dedicated to

expanding our trade relations and exploring new opportunities for collaboration," he said.

Both officials acknowledged the contributions of the Pakistani community in France and the French community in Pakistan, recognizing their role in bridging cultural and social gaps.

They vowed on the occasion of potential initiatives to further enhance people-to-people contacts and promote cultural and academic exchanges, such as student exchange programs, joint cultural festivals, and collaborative research projects.

Both ambassador and Privatization Minister Aleem Khan expressed optimism about the future of Pakistan-France relations, emphasizing the need for continuous dialogue and cooperation.

The event was attended by numerous diplomats, politicians, and journalists, reflecting the importance of the occasion and the strong ties between the two nations.

## ANF seizes 411 kg drugs in seven operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting seven operations across the country managed to recover over 411 kg drugs and arrested four accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Saturday.

He informed that 2.1 kg ice was recovered from a passenger going to Bahrain at Karachi Airport. 180 kg opium and 30 kg

hashish were recovered from Nokundi Chagai area while 110 kg hashish was recovered from Pisin Gwadar area.

43.2 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused netted from Al-Asif Square Karachi. 37 kg hashish was recovered from a vehicle intercepted in Kalibata Zai Pasni.

In 6th operation, 7.2 kg

hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused held on Airport Road Quetta.

2 kg heroin was recovered from an accused nabbed from Shahrah-e-Faisal Karachi.

Cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act have been registered against the arrested accused and further investigations are under process.



ISLAMABAD: A view of New Electric Bus on the way in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo









RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari offering fateha for Captain Muhammad Osama bin Arshad Shaheed, during his visit to Shaheed's family home.

## KP cabinet approves amends in Mines and Minerals Act 2017

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The 10th meeting of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provincial cabinet, held at Civil Secretariat Peshawar was presided over by Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur. The meeting of the provincial cabinet was attended by Ministers, Advisors, Special Assistants, Senior Member Board of Revenue, Additional Chief Secretaries and relevant administrative secretaries.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) regarding shared fiscal responsibilities for the financial year 2024-25, intended to be signed between the Federal Government and all Provincial Governments was presented in the cabinet meeting. The cabinet has approved communicating the provincial government's stance to the Federal Government, stating that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Government will agree to the proposed budget surplus of Rs. 178 billion only if the Federal Government fulfills its commitment to resolving the province's financial issues, as discussed with the Federal Finance Secretary. Additionally, the approval is contingent on the FBR completely achieving the revenue target set in the Budget Estimates 2024-25.

It is noteworthy that the MoU on shared fiscal responsibilities was initially presented in the Provincial Cabinet meeting held on June 27, 2024. After due consideration, the cabinet nominated the Advisor to the Chief Minister on Finance to address the financial issues of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with the Federal

Government. As a result, a delegation from the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa met with the Secretary of the Finance Division on July 2, 2024.

While debating and deciding on the draft Gandhara Corridor Act 2024 proposed by the Federal Government, the provincial cabinet asserted that the Gandhara Corridor is a cultural heritage of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and therefore a provincial matter. Consequently, the cabinet approved the decision to communicate its reservations to the Federal Government and advised against legislating on this provincial subject.

The provincial cabinet has approved the forwarding of two resolutions from the provincial assembly to the Federal Government. Resolution No. 02, presented by MPA Muhammad Yameen, calls for the immediate release of former Prime Minister Imran Khan and other political prisoners. Resolution No. 04, introduced by MPA Ahmad Kundi, addresses the issue of Palestine, urging the Federal Government to advocate for international awareness and action on the conflict in Palestine and to strive for convening an OIC meeting on this matter.

A detailed report from the cabinet's ministerial committee, which was formed to investigate the engagement of private testing agencies by various departments and offices of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in violation of government orders, was presented to the provincial cabinet. The cabinet approved the committee's recommendations. The ministerial committee, chaired by the Minister for Local Government, Elections, and Rural

Development, was established by the provincial cabinet on March 28, 2024. Its mandate was to assess the capacity of the ETEA, examine cases of tests assigned to private testing agencies, and seek explanations from administrative departments that did not adhere to the cabinet's decision regarding conducting tests through ETEA. The tenure of the committee was extended to further six months with the responsibility to oversee the function and performance of the ETEA.

The provincial cabinet approved monthly sustenance and food ration allowance to the additional 554 temporary displaced families of North Waziristan Merged District. This approval included release of Rs. 359.3176 million on monthly basis instead of 348.00 million to meet the current requirement, Rs. 100.71 million for clearance of pending liability of 554 families from October 2023 to June 2024.

The provincial cabinet approved the provision of funds 551.900 million to PDMA for provision of tents, NFIs and cooked food for 6455 repatriating families to Rajgal valley in Khyber Merged District. Upon the request of Deputy Commissioner Khyber, the cabinet also approved declaration of emergency under section-16 (A) for the NDM Act 2010 for necessary arrangements.

The provincial cabinet approved draft important amendments in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Mines and Minerals Act 2017 also amending its schedule IV-A and schedule-IX. Amendments aimed at strengthening the legislative framework of the mineral sector for attracting investment to the province.

## Moonis, six others declared absconders

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The special central jail in Lahore has declared Moonis Elahi, son of Chaudhry Pervez Elahi, and six other accused absconders in the money-laundering case filed by Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

The special central jail heard the money laundering case today. FIA submitted the incomplete challan of nine accused including Moonis Elahi in the court. Chaudhry Moonis Elahi and other six accused have been declared proclaimed offenders in the challan against Monis Elahi and other nine accused. The proclaimed offenders include Firasat Ali, Imtiaz Ali, Amir Sohail, Wajid Ahmad and Amir Fiyaz. The accused, Zara Elahi, Ahmad Farhan and Zaigham Abbas have been included in column no 4 for being on bail.

FIA has requested the court to freeze the properties of Moonis Elahi and other nine accused. The court has frozen the properties of seven accused except Monis Elahi and Zaigham Abbas. Counsel of Moonis Elahi and Zaigham Abbas requested time for arguments on properties freezing matter from the court.

The court directed counsel to present arguments until August 20. Judge Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh has issued the written verdict of early hearing on challan. The judgement mentions that Interpol is being engaged for the arrest of Moonis Elahi and Interpol has issued red notices to him. Zara Elahi is accused of kick-backs. As per investigative officer, Zara Elahi couldn't present evidence of her income sources.

As per challan, Zaigham Abbas is a cash boy of Moonis Elahi and accused Zaigham Abbas used to do illegal money transactions in the bank accounts of other accused. It has been alleged that accused Ahmed Farhan used to deposit money in the bank accounts. It is pertinent to note that FIA registered the money-laundering and corruption case against Moonis Elahi on June 6, 2023.

## Flour crisis feared in Sindh

F.P. Report

KARACHI: There are fears of a flour crisis developing in Sindh, especially in Karachi, as the countryside strike by flour millers against the imposition of withholding tax in the federal budget entered its third day on Saturday.

On Friday addressing an emergency meeting of Sindh's flour millers in Karachi, Flour Mills Sindh Circle Chairman Chaudhry Amir Abdullah vowed to continue the struggle come what may. "The very fact that all flour mills' owners from the province are present at today's meeting is a proof of our unity," he said, adding, "We will remain on strike as long as our demands are not met." Chaudhry Amir said that despite the passage of two days, the government had not made any contact with the flour millers for negotiations.

On the other hand, labourers have been rendered jobless as flour mills are shut across Sindh. Flour mills' owners had gone on strike on Thursday morning on the call given by the Pakistan Flour Mills Association (PFMA), saying they would not relent until the government withdrew newly imposed taxes.

# President for joint efforts to ensure sustainable uplift

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for collaborative efforts by the Eastern nations to ensure sustainable development and common prosperity through the China's Global Development Initiative (GDI).

He highlighted that GDI had great potential to significantly shape the future of the world by promoting shared development. He urged the developing countries to play a leading role in the global development process. The President expressed these views while virtually addressing the 2nd High-level Meeting of the Forum on Global Action for Shared Development, organized by the China International Development Cooperation Agency (CIDCA), in Beijing, on Saturday.

Representatives of foreign countries, international organisations, foreign companies and non-governmental organisations attended the event held in Beijing. In his statement, President Zardari underscored the importance of viewing global challenges such as progress, development, and health, from an Eastern perspective.

He pointed out that most of the global population

## Zardari visits residence of Captain Osama Shaheed

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: President Asif Ali Zardari on Saturday visited the family home of Captain Muhammad Osama bin Arshad Shaheed, who was martyred in a fire-fight with terrorists in North Waziristan and offered heartfelt condolences to his family members.

Speaking with the father of Shaheed Captain Osama, the president paid tribute to the martyred who laid down his life for the country. President Zardari also commended the bravery, patriotism, and services of Captain Osama Shaheed. He offered Fateha for Captain Muhammad Osama bin Arshad Shaheed and prayed for the elevation of ranks of the departed soul in Jannah. He also prayed for grant of courage to the bereaved family members to bear this loss with patience.

lived in the Eastern hemisphere, particularly in countries like China, Pakistan, and other neighbouring nations. The President emphasized that Pakistan was eager to see President Xi Jinping and the People's Republic of China spearheading GDI, leading the East and the entire world into the new millennium.

It is worth stating that through the Global Development Initiative, China aims to help accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and solve the dilemma of global development. China is collaborating with global part-

ners to speed up the implementation of GDI by enlarging its Friend Circle, mobilizing resources, and building capacities for shared prosperity.

China and Pakistan have also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Strengthening Development Cooperation and Promoting the Implementation of Global Development Initiative, focusing on areas including poverty reduction, medicine, education, infrastructure construction, agriculture, planning consultation, culture and sports, law-enforcement cooperation, and human resource development.

# Malala calls on govt to stop deporting Afghans

NEW YORK (AFP): Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai has called on the federal government to stop deporting undocumented Afghans, saying she was especially concerned about the "dark future" awaiting women and girls sent back.

"It is deeply concerning that Pakistan is forcing Afghan refugees based in Pakistan back into Afghanistan, and I'm deeply concerned about the women and girls", the activist, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014, told AFP in an interview. "A lot of these girls in Pakistan were studying, they were in school, these women were doing work", said Malala, 27, who grew up in Swat valley.

She had to move to the UK after she was shot, aged just 15, for resisting the banned militant Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan's then-ban on girls' education in her

hometown. "I hope that Pakistan reverses its policy and that they protect girls and women especially because of the dark future that they would be witnessing in Afghanistan," she added.

Speaking to AFP on her birthday, recognised by the UN as Malala Day, the activist launched into the challenges facing the only country in the world where girls over 12 are barred from school. "I cannot believe that I'm witnessing a time when girls have been banned from their education for more than three years", she said, adding that while the situation was "shocking", she "admired the resilience of the Afghan activists".

The Malala Fund is campaigning for the UN to formally broaden its definition of crimes against humanity to include "gender apartheid" — a phrase the

UN has used to describe the situation in Afghanistan. Earlier this month, the UN and Taliban sat down for talks in Doha for the first time since the latter came to power but without women in attendance. Malala said the Doha talks made a "compromise on the future of women and girls", calling for a "principled engagement" with the Taliban.

"World leaders need to realise that when they sit down with the Taliban [...] and they're excluding women and girls, they are actually doing the Taliban a favour," she said. "I want to call out those countries as well — that includes Canada and France — who have a feminist foreign policy" to "condemn" conversations like the Doha talks, she added. Malala also called for an "urgent" ceasefire in the bombardment in Gaza.

# 'I'm not going anywhere,' Biden says as campaign struggles

DETROIT (Reuters): Seeking to revive his struggling reelection campaign, President Joe Biden held a rare rally in Detroit, telling a cheering crowd he wasn't going to leave the race and warning that Republican Donald Trump poses a serious threat. Biden, 81, is trying to shift the conversation from his mental sharpness and a growing number of Democratic defections to the impact of another Trump presidency, as he tries to reboot his campaign after a shaky debate performance on June 27.

"I am running and we're going to win," he said to a crowd that carried "Motown is Joetown" signs and chanted: "Don't you quit." "I'm the nominee," he said. "I'm not going anywhere." Pointing to the press area in the gym, Biden said: "They've been hammering me," to which the crowd boomed. "Guess what, Donald Trump has gotten a free pass," he added. "Hopefully with age comes a little wisdom."

Biden said, in a defiant and sometimes gleeful performance. "Here's what I know - I know how to tell the truth, I know right from wrong ... and I know Americans want a president, not a dictator." Biden also laid out what he intended to do with his first 100 days of a second term, including codifying abortion rights, signing the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, ending medical debt, raising the minimum wage and banning assault weapons.

These sweeping changes would be difficult or impossible without Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress. While union and religious leaders attended, Michigan's governor Gretchen Whitmer and its Democratic senators, Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, did not. Earlier on Friday, Biden made a surprise stop at a restaurant in a Detroit suburb, where he told diners he planned to "finish the job," and said: "I promise you... I'm okay."

Biden got a boost on

Friday when two prominent Democrats - Representative James Clyburn and California Governor Gavin Newsom - said he should stay in the race. On Friday afternoon, United Auto Workers president Shawn Fain, who had previously said he was worried about the president's chances, praised Biden for standing "with the working class," without using his name.

But there were signs that his support was weakening elsewhere, as two more lawmakers called on him to drop out. "It is time to move forward. With a new leader," Representative Mike Levin, from California, said in a statement. Levin, like many others who have called on Biden to leave the race, faces a competitive reelection battle of his own this year. Since the debate, at least 19 lawmakers have urged Biden to step aside so the party can pick another candidate, as have some donors, Hollywood stars, activist groups and news outlets.

## Blome called on Naqvi

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister, Mohsin Naqvi, met with US Ambassador to Pakistan, Donald Blome, and both sides agreed to strengthen mutual cooperation in counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics, and security.

The US Ambassador visited the Ministry of Interior, where Mr Naqvi welcomed him. Other officials were also present on the occasion. During the meeting, both sides discussed the Pakistan-US relations, security and other matters of mutual interest. They pledged to enhance cooperation in security, counter-terrorism, anti-narcotics, and other areas.

Both sides agreed to organize "Law enforcement dialogues" in October. The Interior minister assured the US Ambassador of the Interior Ministry's full cooperation in enhancing bilateral relations. Talking about his recent visit to New York, Mr Naqvi said that the issue of cooperation between Islamabad and the New York Police Department was discussed. He said a delegation of Islamabad Police will soon visit New York to improve mutual cooperation. He said officers from Islamabad Police are keen to receive training from the New York Police Department.

# Asian Development Bank delegation calls on KP CM

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A delegation of Asian Development Bank met with Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur here at CM Secretariat on Saturday.

Apart from Additional Chief Secretary Planning, Administrative Secretaries of concerned departments and other officials were also present in the meeting. The two discussed in details issues related to the ongoing important development projects in various sectors in collaboration with the Asian Development Bank in the province.

The Asian Development Bank is supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in different sectors include road infrastructure, water, agriculture, energy, urban development and health. A detailed discussion was also held on the progress on these development projects as per the timelines and the matters related to their timely completion.

In the meeting, the development projects to be started with the support of the Asian Development Bank during the next three years were also discussed. The two have agreed to start implementation of these projects early if pre-requisites are completed soon. The delegation of the

Asian Development Bank expressed their willingness to release funds ahead of the timelines for the implementation of these projects.

These projects include various projects under KP Sustainable Urban Mobility, KP Rural Roads Development, KP Cities Improvement Project, KP Food Security and Livestock Management Program. The Chief Minister also instructed to the concerned authorities to complete the required accessories as soon as possible in this regard.

The meeting also reviewed the proposed projects for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa under the five-year Country Partnership Strategy 2026-30. The two sides also agreed to expand cooperation in social sectors. The provincial government values the cooperation and collaboration of the Asian Development Bank for the development of social sectors, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur said.

The provincial government is investing heavily in potential sectors to increase its revenue, Chief Minister said. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has enormous investment opportunities in the fields of agriculture, livestock, tourism, minerals, hydropower and housing, Ali Amin Gandapur said.

Providing self-employment opportunities to people by developing these sectors is an important part of the provincial government's vision, Chief Minister informed the delegation. Our goal is to put people on their feet, Ali Amin Gandapur said. Development of infrastructure and providing employment opportunities to the people is the main priority of the provincial government, Ali Amin Gandapur said.

To solve the problem of food security of the province on a permanent basis, projects of small dams including CRBC are the priority of the provincial government, Ali Amin Gandapur informed the delegation. The provincial government, he said, is investing to implement these projects. In this regard, the cooperation of partner institutions is also needed, Chief Minister said.

The present provincial government is introducing fundamental reforms in its development program, Chief Minister said. "We have reduced the throw-forward of development projects from 13 years to 6 years, Chief Minister Ali Amin said. The provincial government, he said, is working on providing its electricity at cheaper rates to local industries.

# Iran's new president warns US his country won't be pressured

TEHRAN (AP): Iran's newly elected president said his government will create "balance in relations with all countries" in line with national interests and the prerequisites for peace but stressed to the United States that his country "will not respond to pressure."

Masoud Pezeshkian penned "My Message To The New World" in the country's state-owned Tehran Times, praising the latest presidential election that "demonstrated remarkable stability" and vowing to uphold "promises I made during my campaign."

Pezeshkian, a 69-year-old heart surgeon and longtime lawmaker, bested hard-liner former nuclear negotiator Saeed Jalili to clinch July 5's runoff election to replace President Ebrahim Raisi, who was killed in a helicopter crash in May. He said in his message his administration would

"prioritize strengthening relations with our neighbors" and urged Arab countries to use "all diplomatic leverages" to push for a lasting ceasefire in the ongoing Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip that started Oct. 7.

Iran has long supported the militant group Hamas, and Pezeshkian on Wednesday expressed his all-out support of "the Plastesinan resistance" in a message to the group's chief Ismail Haniyeh. Pezeshkian, in the letter Friday, hailed his country's relations with Russia and China which "consistently stood by us during challenging times." He said Moscow was "a valued strategic ally" and his government would expand bilateral cooperation. He also expressed willingness to "support initiatives aimed at" achieving peace between Russia and Ukraine in the ongoing war that entered its third year.

The president also said he looked forward to furthering cooperation with Beijing and applauded it for brokering a deal to normalize relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia after seven years of diplomatic tensions. Pezeshkian said he looks forward to engaging in constructive dialogue with European countries "based on principles of mutual respect" despite a relationship that has known "its ups and downs."

In May 2018, the US unilaterally withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action — a nuclear agreement that also included Russia, China, Britain, France and Germany. Since then, Western powers have accused the Islamic Republic of expanding its nuclear program and enriching uranium to an unprecedented 60 percent level, near-weapons-grade levels. The US has issued

severe, mainly economic, sanctions against Iran. Pezeshkian accused the European countries of renegeing on commitments made, following the US withdrawal, to ensure "effective banking transactions, effective protection of companies from US sanctions, and the promotion of investments in Iran." However, he added there were still many opportunities for collaboration between Iran and Europe.

He then addressed the US, underscoring his country's refusal to "respond to pressure," adding that Iran "entered the JCPOA in 2015 in good faith and fully met our obligations." Pezeshkian said the US backing out has inflicted "hundreds of billions of dollars in damage to our economy" and caused "untold suffering, death and destruction on the Iranian people — particularly during the Covid pandemic" due to sanctions.

Pezeshkian said Western countries "not only missed a historic opportunity to reduce and manage tensions in the region and the world, but also seriously undermined the Non-Proliferation Treaty." He emphasized that "Iran's defense doctrine does not include nuclear weapons." Iran has held indirect talks with President Joe Biden's administration, though there's been no clear movement toward constraining Tehran's nuclear program for the lifting of economic sanctions.

Pezeshkian also accused the US administration in his open letter of escalating "hostilities" by assassinating General Qassem Soleimani, the architect of Iran's regional military activities, who was killed in a US drone strike in neighboring Iraq in 2020. Besides regional turmoil and tense relations over Iran's nuclear program, Iran's president faces many

challenges locally. He must now convince an angry public — many under financial duress due to sanctions, stubbornly high inflation and unemployment — that he can make the changes promised while dealing with an administration still largely governed by hard-liners.

Pezeshkian has aligned himself with other moderate and reformist figures since his Presidential campaign. His main advocate has been former Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, who reached the 2015 JCPOA. Pezeshkian appointed Zarif as the head of the Strategic Council for the transition period of the administration. The council, comprised of experts and advisers, will focus on assessing potential candidates for key cabinet positions and ensuring a seamless handover of leadership.