

**Police station attacked**  
**F.P. Report**  
BANNU: Unidentified armed men attacked the Marian police station in Bannu, resulting in the death of a pedestrian and leaving four cops injured. According to local police reports, the attack, which took place earlier Friday, left the Station House Officer (SHO) and four other police officers injured, while a pedestrian lost life.

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**Rains claim 11 lives**  
**F.P. Report**  
QUETTA: The PDMA has said that 11 people have lost their lives since July 20, as monsoon rains continued with intervals in different districts of Balochistna. As per PDMA report issued on Friday, Barkhan received 35 mm, Khuzdar 18 and Kalat 11 mm of rain were recorded, Ziarat and Panjgur 2 while Quetta and Loralai received 1 mm of rain during 24 hours.

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KARACHI: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addressing business delegates from China.

## Bilawal flays judiciary for institutional friction

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in his address to the National Assembly on Friday congratulated Olympic champion, Arshad Nadeem on his victory. He said that Arshad made history by creating a new Olympic record and bringing home the gold medal for Pakistan. This is proof that the Pakistani youth, when given the opportunity, emerge victorious.

Chairman Bilawal called for consensus in the House over supporting youth in Pakistan, as they are capable of achieving such accolades. In Lyari alone, every other youngster is capable of bringing home the FIFA World Cup due to the influx of talent. Chairman PPP said that recently, he met young girls in Peshawar who are competing in Taekwondo from D I Khan and bringing medals for Pakistan. It is unfortunate that neither the federal government nor the provincial government provided the necessary support. In the next Olympics, every province of Pakistan should win a medal, Chairman PPP resolved while advising the Federal Minister for Sports to establish an endowment fund in collaboration with all provincial ministers for this purpose.

Chairman Bilawal said that the talents of the Pakistani youth, and the skills of the labour have turned vast deserts such as the Middle East into major cities. There is every possible resource available within Pakistan, Islamabad was made only to serve the people of the country. These buildings house the biggest institutions of the country. There is the presence of an entire battalion of bureaucracy in the country along with all the politicians and other powerful entities. However, ever since this city was made, we have never fulfilled the purpose for what it was created. We begin concocting conspiracies and fighting amongst one another. We keep bearing losses due to the infighting between politicians and the adventurism of the military generals. The politics of hate and division is at the peak, with unprecedented polarisation.

We are witnessing a plethora of crises, and have not been able to effectively address issues such as inflation and worsening law and order, Chairman Bilawal said. We are not even able to form the bare minimum consensus on protecting the country from terrorism. We are hurling insults at each other on the television. We would have to devise a way to compete with each other within political domains. We have to resolve the issues faced by the people.

## Jl's sit-in achieved its targets, claims Hafiz

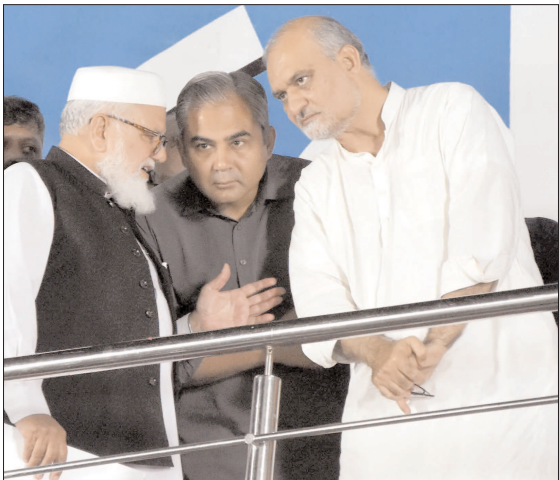
F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said that they have achieved the targets through its historical sit-in staged in Rawalpindi against the exorbitant electricity bills.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad on Friday, he said that the JI gave some time to the government to reconsider its policies pertaining to the Independent Power Producers (IPPs). "We have not called off our sit-in. We just put it on hold for some days and gave time to the government," JI emir said. He urged the government to cut its expenditures in order to avoid the JI's sit-in in future.

Hafiz Naeem added that the JI gave awareness to the people over the issues of exorbitant electricity bills and IPPs. "The joint committee of JI and government will review the electricity bills within a month," he said.

Earlier, the government and JI had reached an agreement pertaining to relief for the masses in electricity bills, reduction in taxes for the salaried class



and reviewing the IPPs contracts. The JI had staged a sit-in for its demands. Several rounds of talks between the government and the JI took place and on Thursday their negotiations concluded with the formation of a taskforce to resolve issues and announcement from the Jamaat to postpone its sit-in.

Both sides reached an agreement with respect to reducing power tariff, reviewing IPPs contracts, and cutting taxes imposed on salaried class. Talking to journalists, JI Naib emir Liaquat Baloch had said, "An empowered taskforce

has been set up which will complete its work in a month and submit its report to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

"The sit-in staged by JI on July 26 has created a history as the government set up a taskforce to meet the JI's demands," he said. The government has also agreed on the ToRs of the taskforce, which include selecting experts from the public-private sector, involving the Wapda chairman and auditor general, and hiring a private firm and chartered accountants to examine the IPPs matters, Baloch said.

## SBP injects Rs3,174.35b into market

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs3,174.35 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO). According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted an Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 09, 2024, for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 30 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs3,084.35 billion.

The central bank received 13 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs732.2 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.57 to 19.60 percent while 19 bids were received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs2,542.25b at the rate of return ranging between 19.55 to 19.61%. The SBP accepted all 13 quotes for a 7-day tenor amounting to Rs550 billion at 19.57 % rate of return while 17 quotes for 28-day tenor amounting to Rs 2,534.35 billion were accepted at 19.57% rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah-based Open Market Operations for 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs90 billion in the market. For the 7-day tenor, the SBP received one bid amounting to Rs90b (face value of collateral) at 19.58% rate of return while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The central bank accepted the single bid for 7-day tenor at 19.58% cut-off rate.

## Model Town tragedy case adjourned

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Lahore's anti-terrorism court (ATC) has adjourned the case hearing of the Model Town incident until September 7. ATC judge Arshad Javed heard the 10 years old case related to the Model Town incident. Pakistan Awami Tehreek's (PAT) lawyer Makhdoom Majeed Hussain couldn't appear before the court and no proceedings were held.

Consequently, the court has summoned JIT member SP Saif Al-Murtaza, DSP Muhammad Azam and Asad Mazzafer as witnesses and adjourned the case hearing. In the last hearing, senior counsel PAT's Makhdoom Majeed Shah was summoned for cross-examination in the case. It is pertinent to note that a total of 98 witnesses' statements have been recorded in the Model Town tragedy case.

A total of 124 accused have been nominated in the Model Town tragedy prosecution case. Model Town Tragedy Incident At least 10 people were killed and around 100 injured during an anti-encroachment operation outside the Model Town residence of PAT chief Dr Tahirul Qadri on June 17, 2014. Idara Minhaj UI Quran, a subsidiary of PAT, had filed the private complaint before the ATC against the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif, sitting PM Shehbaz Sharif and almost all federal and provincial cabinets of PML-N besides officials of police and district administration accusing them of killing its workers.

# The Frontier Post

## Pakistan, China two iron brothers: PM

— Beijing-Islamabad relations transforming into enhanced investment, economic ties

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, emphasizing the transformation of friendly relations between China and Pakistan into enhanced investment, economic and trade ties, said that the next phase of CPEC will mainly involve business to business arrangements particularly in industrial sector.

He expressed the views while addressing the representatives of international companies doing business in Pakistan including China here on Friday. Governor and Chief Minister of Sindh, Federal Ministers, prominent businessmen and senior officers were also present on this occasion.

The PM said "Pakistan and China are two iron brothers and now we have to convert these relations of brotherhood and friendship into enhanced investment, economic and trade relations particularly in the fields of agriculture, information technology, mines, minerals and infrastructure."

Being an agrarian economy with over 60 % rural population Pakistan need to further strengthen and augment its agricultural produce, he said and informed that Pakistani agricultural exports increased by \$ 3 billion in the last financial year while we have fixed a target of additional 7 b for the current fiscal year. Terming it as a quantum leap that required vigorous efforts along with adoption of modern technology and techniques and best practices, PM Shehbaz said that China could be our best partner in achieving this target of boosting agricultural exports and value addition in exports.

Referring to his recent visit of China the PM said that fascinated by wonderful technology and educational culture in Chinese educational

## Shehbaz, Murad discuss current political situation, admn issues

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah discussed the current political situation and administrative issues on Friday. Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during his day-long visit to Karachi. The current political situation and administrative issues came under discussion during the meeting, the PM office press release said. Earlier, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif arrived on a day-long visit to Karachi and attended an inaugural ceremony of the international FoodAg-24 Exhibition held here at the Expo Centre. The prime minister also addressed the ceremony and held meetings with foreign delegates present there.

institutions he decided to send 1000 Pakistani boys and girls for advance training in China in Agriculture. That program was almost finalized and now these students would go to China for refresher courses, he added.

Encouraging the Chinese businessmen to enter into business cooperation agreement with Pakistani counterparts the PM said that next phase of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) will mainly consist of business-to-business arrangements and joint ventures in industry particularly in textile, agriculture production and then export of these products to different countries. He added that Pakistan and China could devise a common mechanism for production and export of such products and it will be a win-win situation for both the countries.

He said that Pak-China friendship is not only higher than mountains but now it is touching skies as Pakistan has sent its own satellite into space with the assistance of China.

**Shehbaz vows to extend utmost support to exporters:** Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the government was determined to

extend utmost support to exporters and producers to facilitate them in serving the country with full capacity.

The Premier was addressing as chief guest at the inauguration ceremony of the Food and Agriculture Expo-2024 (FoodAg24) here at the Expo Centre. On the occasion, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with others performed the digital inauguration of the event.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said that the last years export of rice and other Agri items was commendable and the ministers, administrative secretaries and all those who contributed in it deserve appreciation. But this is not enough, because Pakistan got huge potential and this is high time to serve together with our full capacity, he added.

The Prime Minister called for the need to value addition to our produce and said for that we have to take appropriate steps like adaptation of latest technologies and more research and development. He also called for the need of comprehensive planning and effective implementation of the policies to achieve targets.

(Continued on Back Page)

## Pakistan to continue support to Kashmiris: FO

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The people of Jammu and Kashmir had the right to determine their own future in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions, and Pakistan would continue to provide moral, diplomatic and political support to this cause, Foreign Office Spokesperson said here on Friday.

Speaking during the weekly press briefing of the Foreign office, she said Pakistan remained committed to its Kashmiri brothers and sisters, and this commitment was once again reinforced on the 5th of August this year, when on the fifth anniversary of the unilateral and illegal measures by Indian occupation forces in IIOJK, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister addressed letters to the leadership of the United Nations and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to draw their attention towards the grave consequences of Indian actions on and since August 5, 2019.

She called for implementation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine their own future. "This reflects Pakistan's seriousness in resolving the

Kashmir dispute in accordance with international law and UNSC resolutions. The territory of Jammu and Kashmir belongs to the people of Kashmir," she observed.

To a question regarding the bill that had been introduced in the US Congress, the spokesperson said, "We have noted the reports. We have also noticed some unwarranted references to Pakistan. We have conveyed our concerns to the US side. Establishment of defence relations is the sovereign decision of countries. However, in doing so, friendly countries should not be targeted."

"We have been urging our international partners to take a holistic view of the issues of peace and security in South Asia. Pakistan values its close relationship with the United States. We believe in constructive engagement and dialogue based on sovereign equality, mutual respect and understanding and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs."

"We also believe that deliberations of legislative bodies should contribute to promoting positive dynamics in bilateral ties that should be based on mutual respect and understanding. We hope that the US Congress will play a sup-

portive role in strengthening Pakistan US ties and focus on avenues of mutual collaboration that benefit both our peoples and countries," she remarked.

To another question, she said, Pakistan and Bangladesh had positive relations, and these relations had continued to grow over the last several years. "With regards to the recent developments in Bangladesh, we have issued a statement. The government and people of Pakistan have expressed their support and solidarity with the people of Bangladesh. We sincerely hope for a peaceful and swift return to normalcy. We are confident that the resilient spirit and unity of the Bangladeshi people will lead them towards a harmonious future."

"The Prime Minister of Pakistan has extended felicitations to Professor Mohammed Yunus on his swearing in as chief Advisor of the government of People's Republic of Bangladesh. The Prime Minister has wished him great success in guiding Bangladesh towards a harmonious and prosperous future, and expressed the desire to work with Mr. Yunus to deepen cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh in the days ahead," she added.

## NA passes resolution to confer civil award on Arshad

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly resumed its session at the Parliament House in Islamabad today with recitation of verses from Holy Quran by Imam Masjid Al-Nabawi, Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq is chairing the session. Imam Masjid Al-Nabawi, Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair and Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki witnessed proceedings of the National Assembly today.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, amid the thumping of

desk by lawmakers, welcomed the visiting dignitary saying that his presence is a matter of pride and spiritual guidance for us. He said Masjid Al-Nabawi holds a special place in the hearts of all the Muslim across the world. The Speaker also felicitated Arshad Nadeem for winning gold medal at the Paris Olympics and expressed the confidence that he will continue to earn more laurels for the country. He said the success of Arshad Nadeem should serve as an example for the youth.

Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif welcoming Dr. Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair said

his presence is a matter of honor. Khawaja Asif also congratulated Arshad Nadeem for his record making win at the Olympics. He pointed out that Pakistan has won the gold medal at the event after three decades.

The PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also welcomed the Imam of Masjid Al-Nabawi at the Parliament. Felicitating Arshad Nadeem, the PPP Chairman said his victory reflects the talent of Pakistani youth in every field. He said steps should be taken for promotion of sports in the country so that Pakistan could win more medals at the world events.

## Israel agrees to resume Gaza truce talks

GAZA STRIP (AFP): Israel has agreed to resume Gaza ceasefire talks on August 15 at the demand of US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office said, as regional tensions skyrocket over the war.

Gaza's Hamas-controlled civil defense agency said Israeli bombardment killed more than 18 people in strikes on two schools on Thursday, as Iran accused Israel of wanting to spread war in the Middle East. After a week-long pause in November, US, Qatari and Egyptian mediators have endeavoured to secure a second truce in the 10-month-old war sparked by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel.

In a joint statement on Thursday, the three countries' leaders invited the warring parties to resume talks on August 15 in Doha or Cairo "to close all remaining gaps and commence implementation of the deal without further delay." A framework agreement was "now on the table, with only the details of implementation" left to conclude, and the mediators were "prepared to present a final bridging proposal" to resolve remaining issues, they said.

Netanyahu's office said later Thursday Israel would send a negotiating team on August 15 "to the agreed place to conclude the details of implementing a deal." A prospective cessation of hostilities also involving the release of hostages held in Gaza and scaled-up aid deliveries has centered around a phased deal beginning with an initial truce.

Recent discussions have focused on a framework outlined by US President Joe Biden in late May which he said had been proposed by Israel. "It's not like the agreement's going to be ready to sign on Thursday. There's still a significant amount of work to do," a senior Biden administration official said of the talks that come after calls between Biden and the Egyptian and Qatari leaders this week.





NAWABSHAH: MNA Asifa Zardari alongwith other officials visiting different areas of Nawabshah and city drain system.

### CM Murad invites Arshad Nadeem to visit Karachi

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, through a telephonic conversation, congratulated Arshad Nadeem on his extraordinary achievement of winning the Gold Medal and breaking the World Record in Javelin throw at the Olympics 2024 and invited him to visit Karachi and be his guest.

Murad Ali Shah called Arshad Nadeem from his mobile phone in Paris. He congratulated him on his victory and achieving a record-breaking throw of 92.97 meters in the men's javelin final at the Paris Olympics. "You have raised the heads of the nation in pride," he told Arshad on his cell phone.

The chief minister invited Javelin Champion Arshad Nadeem to visit Karachi and be his guest. "People of Sindh are anxious to receive you here," the CM told Arshad Nadeem.

Arshad Nadeem thanked the chief minister for his phone call and the cash prize of Rs50 million, which he announced to him in recognition of his achievement. "I am thankful to the chief minister for his appreciation and to the people of Sindh who prayed for my success," Arshad told the CM and accepted his invitation. He said he would visit Sindh shortly and call on him at the CM House.

### Over 1,700 complaints received in VCC

LAHORE (APP): Pakistan's first Virtual Centre for Child Safety, established in Safe City, has become a hub for child protection. The Virtual Child Safety Centre is helpful in cases of missing and found children from Lahore and across Punjab.

According to details, over 1,700 complaints have been received at the Virtual Child Centre in 2 weeks. The Child Safety Centre has facilitated the registration of more than 415 FIRs related to children.

Additionally, the Centre has resolved over 1,200 cases. Immediate police assistance is being provided for complaints regarding missing and found children, unaccompanied minors, runaways, victims of abuse, and other issues.

The Virtual Child Safety Centre receives complaints through 15 calls, the Punjab Police Pakistan App, the Child Protection Bureau, and chat services.

## Punjab govt to buy 27 quadcopters for surveillance

LAHORE (INP): On the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz, 27 quad copters will be purchased for surveillance and counter-terrorism operations in Punjab on Friday.

In this regard, the Punjab Cabinet has approved the summary of the Punjab Home Department regarding the purchase of modern quadcopters.

Moreover, Rs210.4 million has been sanctioned for purchase of modern quadcopters.

The government decided to purchase 20 surveillance quadcopters for Attock, Mianwali, Bhakkar, Layyah, DG Khan, Rajanpur and Rahim Yar Khan while seven quadcopters carrying payload for Mianwali, DG Khan,

Rajanpur and Rahimyar Khan will be purchased.

Payload-carrying quadcopters can fire two 80mm mortar shells at a target at a time. Punjab Interior Secretary said in this regard that we are providing ample resources against terrorists and criminal elements which will help in establishing rule of law in Kacha areas and border areas.

## Qaiser highlights agricultural innovations at Karachi Expo



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visited the Food and Agriculture Exhibition at the Expo Center Karachi, joined by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Minister of Commerce Turkey Mr. Omar Bolat, Federal Minister Finance, Commerce, Privatization,

Information, Law, Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, and Governor Kamran Tessori. The exhibition highlighted key innovations in the food and agriculture sectors and attracted significant attention from industry leaders, foreign investors and the public.

The dignitaries explored the various exhibits, underscoring the importance of advancing agricultural

technologies and enhancing food security. Their visit emphasized the government's commitment to support these critical sectors and fostering collaboration for national growth.

Later, the Federal Ministers alongwith Federal Ministers, Chief Minister Sindh and Governor Sindh attended zoom meeting with Bill Gates which was attended by Chief Secretaries and IGP's of all provinces on eradication of polio virus in Pakistan. The visit of PM concluded after luncheon with Chinese investors at a local restaurant in Karachi which was attended by Turkish Minister of Commerce, Federal Ministers of Pakistan, Chief Minister Sindh, Governor Sindh, Chinese Ambassador and others.

## Investigation uncovers 6,342 perpetually absent teachers

KARACHI (PPI) A recent investigation revealing that 6,342 teachers within the Sindh Education Department are perpetually absent has prompted Halem Adil Sheikh, President of PTI Sindh, to call for the immediate resignation of the Sindh Education Minister.

Speaking at Adil House in Karachi, Sheikh accused the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) of pushing the education system in Sindh to the brink of collapse, with thousands of government schools reportedly converted into cattle pens. These issues were highlighted following revelations by the Director General of Monitoring and Evaluation for the School Education and Literacy Department, leading Sheikh to demand accountability from the Education Minister.

Sheikh criticized the extensive corruption with-

in the department, alleging that "Perpetually absent employees" are drawing salaries from public funds, with many of these employees residing abroad without facing any consequences. He expressed deep concern over the state of education in Sindh, highlighting that despite a budget of Rs. 2,374 billion allocated to the department over the past 16 years, around 6 million children in the province remain out of school.

He pointed out several alarming statistics, noting that over 12,000 schools are non-functional, more than 26,000 lack access to drinking water, over 19,000 have no toilets, 31,000 are without electricity, 21,900 lack boundary walls, 36,000 do not have playgrounds, and 47,000 are without laboratories. He blamed the PPP for the deteriorating educa-

tional standards in Sindh, which he claimed are the lowest in the country.

Sheikh also alleged corruption in the distribution of scholarships and free textbooks meant for deserving students, further accusing the Sindh government of failing to provide basic educational facilities, thus depriving the children of Sindh of their right to education.

Sheikh, claimed that Sindh has the highest number of "Perpetually absent teachers" in the country, with many schools reportedly being converted into cattle pens and guesthouses. He alleged corruption in the distribution of scholarships intended for deserving students and in the provision of free textbooks. Sheikh further stated that due to this corruption, the educational standards in Sindh are now the lowest in Pakistan.

who had deprived citizens of billions in a visa scam.

The suspects also included Malik Bilal, Umair Kazmi, and Saddam Hussain along with the woman gang member. The suspects, who had scammed people out of billions, had been nominated in multiple first information reports across the country.

The gang was facing charges in the FIA, center, and all of the four provinces of Pakistan in cases registered in the last two years. The FIA spokesperson said that the suspects have also received money from the citizens via bank channels.

### CM Maryam announces Rs 100m reward for Arshad Nadeem

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif announced a reward of Rs 100 million for the Olympic javelin thrower Arshad Nadeem while congratulating him on winning a gold medal for Pakistan in the Paris Olympics, that has won hearts of millions of Pakistanis. She also announced the construction of a sports city in his hometown of Mian Channu, named after Olympian Arshad Nadeem.

The CM paid tribute to Arshad Nadeem and his coaching staff for breaking the 118-year-old record in javelin throw and winning gold medal for Pakistan after 40 years. "If you believe in yourself, success is guaranteed. Victory is a beautiful thing, to win you have to lose yourself", she added.

Maryam Nawaz said that Arshad's journey from a small village of Mian Channu to the Paris Olympics is very much inspiring and praise worthy. She added that making a new Olympic record is a proof of his sincere commitment to the cause for which he made history. The CM termed the medal as a gift to the nation on Independence Day.

### 18 properties sealed in LDA operation

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore Development Authority (LDA) on Friday sealed another 18 properties during an operation against commercial fee defaulters and illegal commercial usage in Sabzazar and Allama Iqbal Town.

On the directives of DG LDA Tahir Farooq, LDA teams took action in Sabzazar and Allama Iqbal Town, covering Kashmir Block, Zeenat Block, Huma Block, Umar Block, and Neelam Block in Allama Iqbal Town, as well as Blocks E and G in Sabzazar.

The sealed properties include private schools, offices, shops, academies, and other establishments. These properties were found to be defaulters of millions of rupees in commercialization fees.

The operation was led by the Director Town Planning Zone II under the supervision of Chief Town Planner I, Asad Ul Zaman. Before the operation, notices had been issued to the owners of these properties.

### Passing out parade held

KARACHI (INP): A passing out parade of Batch 44 recruits of Pakistan Coast Guards (PCG) was held here at the Coast Guards Training Center Korangi on Friday. Director General Pakistan Coast Guards Brigadier Ghulam Abbas was the chief guest at the ceremony.

### Name Correction

My father's correct name is M u h a m m a d Azam, which is mistakenly written as Azam Khan in documents. It is requested to correct the name in all documents. Muhammad Abbas s/o Muhammad Azam, CNIC# 17301-0831822-5, village Garhi Atta Muhammad, De Bahader Peshawar.

## Senator Rubina Khalid reveals plans to enhance BISP



F.P. Report

MARDAN: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), has announced that the scope of the BISP is being expanded according to the instructions of the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari.

She stated that the transparency of the BISP has been recognized by international organizations, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and that 9.3 million deserving families are benefiting from the program. "Our aim is for women to receive their money with dignity and respect, without any deductions," she added.

These remarks were made by Senator Rubina Khalid while speaking to media representatives during her visit to Mardan. Senator Rubina Khalid further mentioned that BISP has introduced a new banking system to facilitate the payment of funds to deserving women. Under this system, the services of six banks are being procured to minimize human intervention, ensur-

ing that beneficiaries receive their full amount.

During her visit to the BISP District Office in Mardan and the Takhtbhai Office, Senator Rubina Khalid interacted directly with deserving women, listened to their concerns, and reviewed the registration process. She directed the staff to guide elderly women with dignity and respect.

She also instructed the women to visit the office to collect their money only after receiving a message from 8171. Senator Rubina Khalid planted a sapling under the Benazir Plantation Campaign in the lawn of the District Office in Mardan and prayed for the prosperity of the country.

While addressing a public gathering at Gulli Bagh, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that the BISP provides educational stipends to the children of deserving families under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Program, with more scholarships allocated for girls' education. Under Benazir Nashonuma, pregnant women and infants are provided with cash grants and nutritious food.

Additionally, a unique skills program is being launched for deserving women and their family members to help reduce poverty among these families. Senator Rubina Khalid also addressed the misconception that the program is creating dependency, stating that the BISP is providing additional financial support to alleviate the economic hardships of poor families.

In her address to a gathering of women, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto laid the foundation of this program for the economic empowerment of poor women in Pakistan while in exile in Dubai. The program was implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008.

She informed the women that there is no fee to participate in the BISP survey and that dynamic registry centers have been established in tehsil offices for enrollment in the program. She advised the women to ensure that they complete the necessary documentation to avoid any issues during the survey process.

## Blasphemy prosecutions surge from 9 to 705 in three years

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The number of persons incarcerated for blasphemy in Pakistan has gone up exponentially over the last three and a half years from 9 incidents in the year 2021 to 705 cases in 2024, says the Report on 'Pakistan's Compliance with CERD' submitted by National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR). The report will be presented before the International Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on August 8, 2024.

The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) is one of the core human rights Conventions that Pakistan is a signatory to. The ICERD, under Article 1, defines racial discrimination as distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent or national or ethnic origin. ICERD obligates Pakistan to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms, and to promote understanding among all races.

The report highlights the fact that while Pakistan is a signatory to the ICERD, an understanding of racial discrimination in the country is subpar as racial discrimination has not been defined under any domestic statute. Other barriers include lack of resources, lack of understanding and awareness and an absence of clear policies as well as lack of training continues to impede the real-

ization of CERD in Pakistan.

The report identifies the issues related to racial discrimination in Pakistan and the steps taken by the government of Pakistan and NCHR to address these issues. Based on ICERD definition of racial discrimination, the report highlights various issues of racial discrimination within the context of Pakistan such as ethnic marginalization and lack of political representation, religious and sectarian discrimination, socio-Economic disparities and refugee populations.

Quoting civil society reports, the report mentions that at least 136 persons cases of alleged forced conversion occurred during 2023, the majority of whom were Hindu women and girls in Sindh. Alarming, the provinces of Punjab and Sindh, where terrorism incidents were previously lower compared to other provinces, have witnessed the highest number of incidents against minority communities. 142 in Punjab and 47 in Sindh in 2023 alone.

Nonetheless, the report says that realizing its obligations the State has taken various steps to protect its citizens from racial discrimination, by focusing on issues such as minority rights, hate speech etc. which were recognized and appreciated by this Committee in its review of Pakistan in 2016.

The report shows that between January 2022 and July 2023, the NCHR undertook 133 cases concerning the protection of minority

rights. These cases included 76 complaints and 57 suo motu actions. The highest number of cases were in Punjab, and the second highest were reported in Sindh.

Commenting on ethnic and racial diversity in Pakistan, Chairperson NCHR Rabiya Javeri Agha said that Pakistan, with a population exceeding 240 million, is a multi-ethnic and multilingual country. "Pakistan is home to a rich tapestry of ethnic groups and religious minorities. While this diversity is a source of cultural richness, it also presents significant challenges related to ethnic and racial discrimination," she said. The key recommendations given by the NCHR for the State Party's consideration include unified policy on religious extremism, fair employment and implementation of minority quotas, access to justice, speedy investigation of religious and ethnic violence and strengthening accountability in investigations.

The report also calls for establishing specialized police units, introducing program to curb extremism and hate speech, emphasizing tolerance and inclusivity in educational institutions, implementing government's pledge to reform the Madrassa education system, promoting human rights and responsibilities and effective Implementation of Justice Jilani Judgment besides drafting and implementing comprehensive policy for online and offline hate speech.

## FIA arrests two over alleged visa scam

LAHORE (INP): The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has arrested two individuals involved in a visa scam and human trafficking.

As per details, the accused, identified as Sarfraz and Faizur Rehman, were found to be involved in human smuggling and visa fraud. FIA spokesperson said that Sarfraz was arrested from Raiwind Road, Lahore, and five passports were recovered from his possession.

According to the FIA spokesperson, Sarfraz had been deceiving citizens by promising them jobs abroad and extorting large sums of money. Five passports were also recovered

from the accused and he failed to satisfy the authorities. In a separate operation, Faizur Rehman was arrested from Garden Town, Lahore. He was found to be involved in deceiving citizens and extorting money in the name of passport fees.

The FIA has initiated an investigation into the matter and has arrested the accused. Earlier, the FIA busted a gang involved in defrauding people in the name of foreign jobs.

A spokesperson for the FIA said that the Anti Human Trafficking Circle conducted the raid in the F-7 sector of Islamabad and arrested four including a woman gang member,

PAKISTAN CIVIL AVIATION AUTHORITY (PCAA)  
INVITATION TO BID

Sealed bids (in accordance with PPRA Rule No. 36(b)) are invited by below mentioned office for the following requirements in Pak Rs.:-

Description & Bid No.	Fixed Bid Security (PKR)	Bid Submission Date / Time	Bid Opening Date / Time / Place	Basis (Price)
PROCUREMENT OF REGULATOR & CYLINDER ASSY-OXY 77CF "RA QTY. 01 ITT.NO. HQCAA/1992/258/XXLN	Rs. 124,550/-	29-08-2024 1100 Hours	29-08-2024 1130 Hours Log. Center (S) (Log. ANS Branch)	F.O.R

Bids may be submitted as per conditions set out in Bidding documents available on PPRA E-PAD System <http://eprocure.gov.pk>.

Bids should be submitted electronically through PPRA EPADS web portal <http://eprocure.gov.pk> as well as physically submitted (sealed envelope) before closing time & date at below-mentioned address, otherwise the submission shall not be considered.

Bids must be submitted electronically as well as in hard format, in a sealed envelope duly filled and attached with requisite information in the specified format provided in the Bidding Document, to the address as mentioned below on or before prescribed schedule otherwise the submission shall not be considered. The sealed bids shall be opened on the same day at given time.

**Note: All prospective bidders interested to participate shall immediately inform PCAA through Intimation letter (along with proof of active taxpayer list (100% compliance) [ATL for sales tax] of FBR) and GSN/NTN certificates at the address below OR on email: [sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk](mailto:sajid.noor@caapakistan.com.pk).**

Original Bid Security must be attached with the Technical Proposal (hard format sealed envelope) and the Bid Security copy (pay order / bank guarantee) must be attached through EPADS online submission as well before submission Date & Time.

Time period for performance of contract: Till the satisfactory completion of contract and warranty period.

PCAA reserves the right to accept/reject any or all bids due to cogent reasons which will be communicated to bidders on request.

This advertisement is also available on CAA Website [www.caapakistan.com.pk](http://www.caapakistan.com.pk) and PPRA website [www.ppra.org.pk](http://www.ppra.org.pk).

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# Health Department soon to have Climate Change Cell

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Health Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Syed Qasim Ali Shah, has announced the establishment of a dedicated Climate Change Cell within the Health Department to address the growing health challenges

posed by climate change. The Minister emphasized that health is one of the first sectors to be impacted by climate-induced disasters such as floods and other natural calamities. "Climate change has introduced new health challenges to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with dis-

eases like malaria, dengue, and leishmaniasis making their way into the region. Instead of merely responding to outbreaks, we must now focus on preventing them and preparing our health department to tackle the impacts of climate change effectively," stated Minister Syed Qasim Ali

Shah. The Minister highlighted that in recent years, monsoon-triggered floods have led to a significant increase in malaria cases, particularly in the southern districts. Contaminated drinking water during floods has also resulted in the spread of gastrointestinal dis-

eases. Additionally, skin conditions and vector-borne diseases have become more prevalent, all of which are consequences of climate change. Extreme heat and cold waves are particularly affecting vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, and

women. Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah underscored the fact that climate change is impacting health centers, healthcare workers, and the public alike. "Climate change is the most significant public health challenge we face today. To address these challenges, the establishment of a

Climate Change Cell within the Health Department is essential. All departmental actions, projects, and initiatives must be reviewed with climate change in mind." The Minister further informed that technical consultations have been completed, and the formal establishment of the

Climate Change Cell will soon be materialised. This initiative marks a critical step towards making the health sector of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa more resilient to the impacts of climate change, ensuring better preparedness and response in the face of emerging health threats.

# Gold for Pakistan: Arshad Nadeem’s inspiring Olympic journey

## Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal



Arshad Nadeem's monumental victory in the javelin throw at the Paris Olympics has not only brought a gold medal to Pakistan but has also united the nation in celebration and pride. His triumph stands as a beacon of hope and a testament to the untapped potential that lies within our athletes, waiting to be recognized and nurtured. This singular achievement has stirred the hearts of millions, reminding us of the power of perseverance, dedication, and the importance of supporting diverse sports disciplines beyond cricket.

Arshad Nadeem's journey to Olympic gold is a story of sheer determination and relentless effort. Born in a small village of Mian Channu, Arshad faced numerous challenges, from limited resources to inadequate training facilities. However, his passion for javelin throw and his unwavering belief in his abilities propelled him forward. With minimal support and often practicing in less-than-ideal conditions, Arshad honed his skills, inching closer to his dream with each throw.

The significance of Arshad's victory cannot be overstated. It is a moment of immense pride for Pakistan, a country often overshadowed in the global sports arena. Historically, our nation's focus has predominantly been on cricket, a sport that has garnered immense popularity and governmental support. While cricket has its place and has brought numerous laurels to the country, Arshad's achievement in athletics sheds light on the need to diversify our sports priorities. It underscores the potential for excellence in other disciplines if given the proper encouragement and infrastructure.

Arshad's win is not just about the

gold medal; it's about breaking stereotypes and challenging the status quo. It highlights the extraordinary capabilities of Pakistani athletes in fields other than cricket. His success story sends a powerful message to young athletes across the country that with hard work and determination, they too can achieve greatness, regardless of their chosen sport.

The reaction to Arshad Nadeem's victory has been overwhelming. From social media to the streets, Pakistanis have expressed their joy and pride in myriad ways. The nation, long in need of uplifting news, has found a hero in Arshad. His story has been widely shared, inspiring countless young minds to pursue their dreams despite the odds. This victory has sparked a renewed interest in athletics and other sports, encouraging a broader conversation about the importance of investing in and supporting a diverse range of sports.

Adding to the national euphoria, this gold medal serves as a wonderful gift for the nation on the occasion of Independence Day, 14 August. As Pakistan prepares to celebrate its 77th year of independence, Arshad's triumph brings an extra layer of joy and pride to the festivities. It is a reminder of the resilience and potential of our people, reflecting the spirit of independence and the ongoing quest for excellence.

The government's role in this scenario is crucial. Arshad's victory is a clarion call for the authorities to recognize and promote talents across all sports disciplines. It is imperative for the government to create an environment where sports other than cricket can thrive. This means building state-of-the-art training facilities, providing financial support, and creating opportunities for athletes to compete at national and international levels. The success of athletes like Arshad Nadeem should serve as a wake-up call to re-evaluate our sports policies and ensure that all athletes receive the support they need to succeed.

Investment in sports infrastructure and talent development is not just about winning medals; it's about fostering a culture of physical fitness, discipline, and national pride. A robust sports program can lead to healthier lifestyles, reduce social issues, and create a sense of unity among the population. By supporting a wide array of

sports, the government can help build a more inclusive and vibrant sports culture in Pakistan.

Arshad's victory also brings attention to the need for corporate sponsorship and private sector involvement in sports. In many countries, private enterprises play a significant role in funding and promoting sports. In Pakistan, there is ample opportunity for businesses to step up and support athletes through sponsorships, scholarships, and partnerships. Such involvement can provide athletes with the necessary resources to train effectively and compete on the global stage.

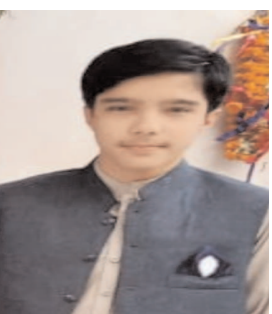
Moreover, media coverage and public recognition are vital for the growth of sports. Arshad's story should be highlighted not just as a one-time success but as an ongoing narrative of inspiration. Continuous media coverage can help keep the public engaged and maintain interest in various sports. Documentaries, interviews, and feature stories about athletes' journeys can provide the visibility they deserve and inspire future generations.

In schools and universities, sports programs need to be strengthened. Educational institutions should be breeding grounds for future athletes, offering them the necessary training and support from a young age. Integrating sports into the curriculum and encouraging participation in a variety of sports can help identify and nurture talent early on.

Arshad Nadeem's gold medal victory at the Paris Olympics is more than just a personal achievement; it is a national milestone. It calls for a paradigm shift in how we perceive and support sports in Pakistan. By broadening our focus beyond cricket, we can uncover and nurture a wealth of talent in other disciplines. This victory is a reminder that with the right support and infrastructure, Pakistani athletes can excel on the world stage.

Arshad Nadeem has not only won a gold medal but has also won the hearts of the entire nation. His victory is a testament to the incredible potential that lies within Pakistani athletes, waiting to be recognized and developed. It is a call to action for the government, private sector, and society at large to invest in and promote a diverse range of sports. By doing so, we can ensure that Arshad's victory is not an isolated event but the beginning of a new era in Pakistani sports.

# Saad, Amn Aziz shine in SSC exams



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Students of Allied School Gulberg Campus, Muhammad Saad Aziz secured 1059 marks in 10th class and Amn Aziz achieved 570 marks in 9th in the annual exams of SSC announced by the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Peshawar (BISEP).

Talking about his achievement, Muhammad Saad Aziz said that he is very fortunate to get 1059 marks in the SSC exams and also appreciated the encouragement from the parents and teachers to achieve his dream of clearing the exam with excellent marks.

"I will continue my hard work in the coming years to fulfill the dreams of my parents and family," he said. Similarly, Amn Aziz obtained 570 out of 600 marks in 9th class annual exam of SSC.

She credited her parents for the encouragement throughout the year which made it possible in the shape of achieving such excellent marks.

# Kaiwan secures 510 marks in 9th Grade



## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Muhammad Kaiwan Wadood has achieved remarkable success by scoring 510 marks in the 9th grade annual examination of the Peshawar Board.

A student at Forward Model High School Saeedabad, Peshawar, he attributes his success to the special grace of Allah, along with the dedicated efforts and prayers of his teachers and parents.

# Mahin excels in SSC exam

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Mahin



Haroone Daughter of Haroon Ur Rashid, a student of Peshawar Model Girls High school warsak Road has secured 1114 marks out of 1200 marks in her SSC examination. Mahin has attributed her success and distinction to her hardworking teachers and caring parents.

# Governor criticizes KP government for handling of local bodies system

PESHAWAR (APP): Faisal Karim Kundi, the Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Friday expressed concerns over the current state of the local government system, suggesting that issues faced by elected representatives are raising questions about its effectiveness and existence. He made these remarks during a meeting with a delegation of women village councilors and their representatives, led by PPP Deputy General Secretary Sher Shah Afridi.

Governor Kundi criticized the provincial government for failing to provide funds to local government representatives, labeling it as unfair. He emphasized that in developed countries, local issues are addressed through elected representatives, but the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party is undermining this system.

He praised the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) for advocating for the rights of local government representatives through their member Ahmed Karim Kundi in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly. Local institu-

tions and representatives, he stated, is vital for enhancing democracy and empowering the public. Faisal Kundi also highlighted the PPP's commitment to decentralization, noting that President Asif Ali Zardari set a precedent by granting more rights to provinces during his tenure. He assured that issues could be addressed through the Benazir Income Support Programme, with the Chairperson showing a keen interest in resolving women's issues.

Governor Kundi promised support from the Governor's House for providing technical training through the NEVTEC program, reinforcing the party's dedication to improving local governance and addressing community needs. Meanwhile, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, held a meeting with Principal Hadiya Afzal of Lahore Grammar School's Peshawar branch at the Governor's House.

During the meeting, Principal Hadiya Afzal provided details about Lahore Grammar School's efforts to offer state-of-the-art edu-

cation across major cities in Pakistan, including Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Peshawar, Multan, and Faisalabad.

Governor Kundi praised Lahore Grammar School and other private educational institutions for their contributions to education nationwide, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He emphasized the need for quality education, especially technical education, to equip the younger generation with skills necessary for modern challenges.

He reaffirmed his commitment to enhancing the capabilities of universities and educational institutions in the province, aiming to ensure that graduates can achieve recognition on the global stage.

Similarly, Chaudhry Shafiq, General Secretary of the Peace Jirga and a stalwart of the Pakistan Peoples Party, and Haji Abdur Rauf met with Governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi.

During the meeting, they discussed party matters, the political situation in Dera Ismail Khan, and other related issues.

# Scope of BISP being expanded on instructions of President: Rubina

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), has announced that the scope of the BISP is being expanded according to the instructions of the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari. She stated that the transparency of the BISP has been recognized by international organizations, including the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, and that 9.3 million deserving families are benefiting from the program. "Our aim is for women to receive their money with dignity and respect, without any deductions," she added. These remarks were made by Senator Rubina Khalid while speaking to media representatives during her visit to Mardan.

Senator Rubina Khalid further mentioned that BISP has introduced a new banking system to facilitate the payment of funds to deserving women. Under this system, the services of six banks are being procured to minimize human intervention, ensuring that beneficiaries receive their full amount.

During her visit to the BISP District Office in Mardan and the Takhtbhai Office, Senator Rubina Khalid interacted directly with deserving women, listened to their concerns, and reviewed the registration process. She directed the



staff to guide elderly women with dignity and respect. She also instructed the women to visit the office to collect their money only after receiving a message from 8171. Senator Rubina Khalid planted a sapling under the Benazir Plantation Campaign in the lawn of the District Office in Mardan and prayed for the prosperity of the country.

While addressing a public gathering at Gulli Bagh, Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized that the BISP provides educational stipends to the children of deserving families under the Benazir Taleemi Wazaif Program, with more scholarships allocated for girls' education. Under Benazir Nashonuma, pregnant women and infants are provided with cash grants and nutritious food.

Additionally, a unique skills program is being launched for deserving women and their family members to help reduce poverty among these families.

Senator Rubina Khalid also addressed the misconception that the program is creating dependency, stating that the BISP is providing additional financial support to alleviate the economic hardships of poor families.

In her address to a gathering of women, Senator Rubina Khalid highlighted that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto laid the foundation of this program for the economic empowerment of poor women in Pakistan while in exile in Dubai.

The program was implemented by President Asif Ali Zardari in 2008. She informed the women that there is no fee to participate in the BISP survey and that dynamic registry centers have been established in tehsil offices for enrollment in the program. She advised the women to ensure that they complete the necessary documentation to avoid any issues during the survey process.



PESHAWAR: Provincial President of Insaf Student Federation Ashfaq Marwat addressing a press conference at Peshawar Press Club.

# Pakistan Independence Day Peshawar turns green & white as printing industry thrives

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar, a historical city with nearly 3,000 years documented history, is turned green and white with national flags hoisting everywhere on occasion of the 77th independence day of Pakistan.

Looking festive, Peshawar's all bazaars, shops, markets and vehicles have been decorated artistically with white and green colours besides national flags hoisting on top of Govt and private buildings besides vehicles, witnessing great enthusiasm especially among youth and children.

Likewise, Peshawar's historic Qissa Khwani witnessed a substantial boom in printing of posters and national flags where businessmen were overbooked after receiving huge orders on the occasion of Jashin-e-Azadi celebrations.

Qissa Khwani's Mohalla Jhangi, the main

market of printing of posters, badges and national flags were overbooked.

Sitting on a revolving chair with focused eyes on a computer giving final touches to flags, posters and pamphlets' designs ordered by different schools and colleges in connection with Jashin-e-Azadi, the 25-years-old printer, Anees Ali was working against the time to meet the placed order.

Unaware of the Chapli Kabab and Peshawari Kahwa placed on right side of his computer table in two room office at City Tower of Mohallah Jhangi became cold, the motivated Karak born Khattak, who was busy like a honey bee told APP that Jashin-e-Azadi has brought smile on faces of hundred of thousands of printers, publishers, advertisers and graphic designers.

"Most of printers are overworked these days and

more orders were accepted only on big profit margins." Approximately 50,000 people including 4,000 printers, publishers and graphic designers are directly or indirectly associated with this business in Peshawar who started earning maximum capital," he said.

Graduated in BS Computer Science from University of Peshawar, he said, "the response of the general public especially youth and children on this Jashin Azadi was unprecedented. "We have engaged extra labourers, who worked till late night to meet people's demands."

"Many printers and publishers having a quality printing machines' setup and skilled labourers received heavy orders to the tune of Rs 5 million to Rs10 million that sparked patriotism among children."

He said that extra printing materials were import-

ed from China and Indonesia besides Lahore and Faisalabad to fulfill the customers pressing demands.

Jashin-e-Azadi fever had gripped KP where all bazaars, markets and shopping arcades flooded with national flags, banners, stickers, models of historical buildings and portraits of the heroes of Independence Movement.

"I came from Nowshera to paint my face with national flag by an expert artist to look different on Independence Day," Sidra Khan, a girl of Nowshera decorating her face and hands with green and white colours at Liaquat Bazar Peshawar Cantonment told APP. Accompanied by her father, she said that she purchased 500 badges, stickers and posters for brothers, sisters, relatives and school fellows to celebrate independence day with great pomp and show.





## In brief

### Commissioner visits Press Club F.P. Report

MARDAN: Commissioner Mardan and Deputy Commissioner visited Mardan Press Club, President MOC Bashir Adil, Vice President Faqir Hussain, General Secretary Akhunzada Fazal Haq, Joint Secretary Khurshed Wahab, Finance Secretary Pervez Shaheen and other members welcomed him and took him on a tour of various parts of the Press Club. Commissioner Mardan Division while speaking said that media is the fourth pillar of the state and its need and importance in the digital era is evident. He also talked about the prevention of fake news and the problems arising from it and said that journalists should play their positive role in preventing fake news. Commissioner Mardan said that the journalist community will play a joint role for the construction and development of Mardan. Commissioner Muhammad Ayaz Khan said that the implementation of the policy of the public agenda of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has started and the citizens will soon feel the change regarding the solution of the problems. The administration is on alert regarding monsoon rains. They are in touch with the Meteorological Department and the water flow in the Kalpani River is normal. They said that corruption mafia; lack of health facilities and negligence in other public factors will not be tolerated in any case. Believe in public service positive criticism of journalists will be welcomed. The Deputy Commissioner thanked the officials and members of the Mardan Press Club in his brief speech and said that all resources will be used for the development of the district.

### Chehlum discussed F.P. Report

LARKANA: Deputy Commissioner and Senior Superintendent of police held meeting regarding Chehlum preparation of Karbala martyrs, on Friday. According to details, wherein leaders of various parties of thought and officers of various institutions of Larkana district participated in the meeting. Thanks, were expressed by the various scholars for the security plan and cooperation arranged by the civil administration and the police, while the district administration issued instructions to various officers to arrange a plan to restore law and order. While in the meeting, the suggestions given by the participants were assured to be fully implemented.

### DPO for justice to people F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Police Officer (DPO) Toba Tek Singh said that providing justice to the people is my first priority because I am a servant of the people. It is my responsibility to listen and solve their problems. This he said while talking to media personnel and added that since I took charge as DPO in District Toba Tek Singh, I am trying to provide justice to the people and Inshallah action is being taken against the criminals. DPO ordered all SHO's of police stations in the district not to humiliate people in police stations, solve their problems immediately and report to me. In the end, DPO Ibadat Nisar said that the doors of my office are open all the time to provide justice to the people.



JAMRUD: Flour dealers holding a protest at Bab-e-Khyber for acceptance of their demands. — F.P. photo

## Dir intellectuals fear start of classes at TMC

Haleem Asad

LOWER DIR: Dir Think Tank (DTT), a group of intellectuals and researchers working for regional development through research and analysis, on Friday feared that due to the administrative hurdles and the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC)'s accreditation requirements, classes at the Timergara Medical College were unlikely to start from the upcoming academic session.

The issue was discussed in a Zoom meeting held here with the DTT founder Rahim Shah Akhunkhail in the chair. Taking part in the discussion, Dr Nadeem Sheikh, one of the DTT members, informed the participants that the Timergara Medical College (TMC), initially intended to be a Commerce College, was established before 2013 near the district headquarter. However, the college was later relocated to Thana Malakand district.

"The KP government assured the local community that a Medical College

would be inaugurated in this building and 3 inaugural sessions have been done by the PTI founder Imran Khan, the then chief ministers Parvez Khattak and Mahmood Khan, waiting for Ali Amin Gandapur now", Dr Nadeem Sheikh said, adding that despite the promise, unnecessary delays and administrative issues had prevented the college from starting its academic sessions.

The former director general health Dr Shaukat was appointed as the TMC Project Director who confidently claimed times and again that classes would commence in the next academic session since 2021. Talking about the current issues in the project, the DTT members said that so far no advertisement had been issued for the appointment of the Principal, a crucial step for the functioning of the college.

The meeting was informed that about 150 lower and upper-grade staff members including assistant professors, associate professors, superintendents and senior clerks were reg-

ularly receiving salaries without performing any duties, indicating a significant misuse of resources and lack of accountability.

The DTT founder Rahim Shah Akhunkhail informed the participants that he had filed a writ petition in the Honorable Peshawar High Court against the delay in the commencement of classes at the college.

Dr Nadeem said the dossier for obtaining the No Objection Certificate from the PMDC could only be initiated after the appointment of the Principal. He said the PMDC accreditation Process involved several meticulous steps including appointment of a Principal, NOC dossier submission, PMDC initial visit to the site, expert review, a follow-up visit and the granting of NOC to start classes. The DTT demanded an immediate advertisement for the Principal, accountability of the staff reportedly receiving salaries without duties and implementing strict resource management protocols to prevent misuse of funds.

## Secy Info inaugurates 'Awami agenda' program

F.P. Report

MINGORA: Secretary Information and Public Relations Arshad Khan inaugurated a special program on Pakhtunkhwa FM Radio Swat under the 'Awami Agenda' as per directives of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur, on Friday.

This program will be telecast live from Pakhtunkhwa Radio Swat every Wednesday from 4 pm to 5 pm in which top officials of all departments will be specially invited. The listeners of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Network across the province can ensure their participation in the public agenda of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Swat programs by calling 0946-729898 and can also submit their complaints and problems to the higher authorities and suggest their solutions.



The Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has set a public agenda for the welfare of the people in which steps will be taken on a priority basis to solve the problems of the people of the province. In a radio program in this regard, Secretary Information and Public Relations Arshad Khan said that all government officials will be present in their offices during official working hours to serve the public and any kind of harassment in this regard will not be tolerated. He said that the provincial government is taking seri-

ous steps for the improvement of the people of the province.

Secretary Information and Public Relations said that this is the most important program of Pakhtunkhwa Radio FM 98 Swat which has been started to raise awareness about the public agenda of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and this series is different from other radio stations of the radio network. will also be broadcasted so that people can be guided to solve their complaints and problems in a timely manner.

## IJT hold protest against MDCAT test fees

F.P. Report

BUNER: Islami Jamiat Tulaba (IJT) district nazim Farhatullah protested in front of Buner Press Club against the increase in Medical and Dental Colleges Admission Test (MDCAT) and other fees and warned that if the students come out on the streets, rulers will not even have a chance to escape.

The protestors had carried banners and placards with slogans against the increase in education fees especially

MDCAT, on Friday. The protestors warned the rulers, not to close the doors of education to the students. They shouted, they will stand up for students' rights. They asked rulers to top the oppression of the students. The students during the leader speech have also raised slogans like "Nazim Sab Ishara Kawa Bya Tamasha Kawa, (Point then watch)".

Nazim IJT during his speech has given a clear message to the rulers that

they should be aware and reduce fees in educational institutions for students and provide teaching staff furniture, electricity, water, canteen and transport facilities in all of educational institutions, otherwise, students all over Pakistan will come together for their rights and will make a revolution on the style of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan and then students will not let the rulers escape with a helicopter like Sheikh Hassana Wajid of Bangladesh.

## Daycare center inaugurated

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Deputy Commissioner Hafizabad Sundas Irshad has inaugurated newly established Day-Care Centre at District Public School Hafizabad for children of female staff of the school. ADCG Hammad Ullah, Principal

Muhammad Zaman Cheema, Vice-Principal Madum Gulnaz and staff of the school also present on this occasion.

DC reviewed different facilities provided in the Day-Care Centre for the children of the female teachers. She said that establishment of Day-Care Centres

for working women at their duty places is laudable steps of the CM Punjab Maryum.

DC said that all recreational facilities would be available to children of female teachers and female staff would perform their duties satisfactory because they would not worry about look after of their infants.

## Traders in Jamrud flay withholding tax on flour

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: The flour dealers in Jamrud disapproved the imposition of withholding tax on flour in a protest held at Bab-e-Khyber on Friday. Organized under the banner of Khyber flour dealers union, the rally was attended by scores of flour dealers, tribal elites and political workers.

Addressing on the occasion President of Atta (flour) Dealers Association, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Haji Abdul Wahid Khan, Vice-President Nisar Khan, district chief of the Association Haji Abdul Manan Mando Khel, Anjuman-e-Tajeran, Jamrud Bazaar head Kashif Afridi, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam local leader Said Kabir Afridi and others categorically condemned the Federal Government and Federal Bureau of Revenue (FBR) for implementing what they said tyrannous tax on edibles to deprive the poor of three time meals.

Inflicting of withholding tax on flour and other food items proved the anti-people policy of the government, they added and said it is not only the reason for price hiking of the commodity but multiplied miseries of the poor segments of the society.

They came hard on the provincial government of Punjab for banning inter-provincial movement of flour that would cause artificial scarcity of the item in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The participants threatened that if withholding tax and the ban on flour movement were not withdrawn then they would extend their protest against it to other parts of the province. Earlier, the protestors while carrying banners inscribed with statements in their favor took a rally from Jamrud Bazaar to Bab-e-Khyber, chanting slogans against the government.

## MPs visit Kurram

F.P. Report

KURRAM: In order to establish durable and lasting peace in Kurram district, a delegation of Parliamentarians and Ulema of Kohat, Hangu and Bannu districts led by former federal minister Shehryar Afridi visited the central Imambargah in Parachinar and Bushehra village and held meetings with all the stakeholders and discussed with them all issues pertaining to durable peace in detail. They also prayed for the eternal peace of those who died in the recent riots in the district.

While talking on this occasion, Shahryar Afridi MNA, Maulana Raja Nasir Abbas of Muttahida Wahdat al-Muslimeen, Sahibzada Hamid Chairman Sunni Ittehad Council, MNA Kurram Engineer Hameed Hussain, MNA Yusuf Jahan and Maulana Naseem Ali Shah appealed to all the parties to remain peaceful and refrain from petty differences in larger interests of the area. Referring to the land disputes between the locals, they said, in light of the directions of the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, all the land disputes will be resolved amicably through mutual understanding and through experienced revenue officers so that day-to-day land disputes will be resolved permanently and the riots can be stopped accordingly.

## Three years old girl found murdered in Takht Bhai

Anees Takar

MARDAN: A three-year-old girl who went missing four days ago in Akram Pur, Sher Garh Circle Tehsil Takht Bhai within the jurisdiction of Kharki Police Station has been found dead with her body mutilated in a nearby mountain. The girl's father Yousaf Khan works as a stenographer in a civil court in Karachi while the girl was visiting her maternal grandmother's house with her mother and sisters for summer vacation.

Police launched an investigation after receiving a report from the girl's uncle Shakir Ullah and formed a special team under the supervision of DPO Mardan, Zahoar Babar Afridi. After an extensive search, police recovered the girl's body from the mountains and sent it for medical examination and post-mortem at Bacha Khan Medical College, Mardan.

Sources suggest that the minor girl was sexually assaulted before being brutally murdered. Police have taken several suspects into custody and are conducting further investigations at an undisclosed location.

Imran Takar, an activist for children's rights, stated that while sexual assault, it is a strong possibility, given the history of such cases. He highlighted that in the first six months of 2024, 1630 cases of child sexual abuse were reported across the country, including 94 cases involving children under the age of five.

Takar emphasized the need to focus on prevention and early intervention to eradicate sexual crimes against children, rather than just reacting after the incidents occur. He lamented that the response system is weak, making it difficult to bring perpetrators to justice which denies the affected families the justice they deserve.

**Billion tree plus campaign gains momentum in Mardan:** The Billion Tree Plus campaign is underway in Mardan district with great enthusiasm, in line with the nationwide initiative. On a recent day, Deputy Commissioner Mardan Mian Behzad Adil inaugurated the monsoon tree plantation campaign under the Billion Tree Plus initiative by planting a tree at the Deputy Commissioner's Office.

The event was attended by Assistant Commissioner Mardan Kamran Khan, Deputy Director NCHD, Lal Muhammad Toru, Additional Assistant Commissioner Mardan, Shagufta Sarwar, Chairperson Party Organization, Fiazul Islam, Saba Development Organization's Muhammad Arif, and Zumong Jazba Welfare Society's Muhammad Pervaz.

Lal Muhammad Toru, Deputy Director NCHD, handed over 3500 saplings to the civil society, while Chairperson Party Organization, Fiazul Islam, announced that 300 saplings have been planted in various areas and schools of Mardan under their organization. He emphasized the importance of planting more trees to combat the effects of climate change.

The district administration, in collaboration with NCHD, is focusing on planting as many trees as possible under the Billion Tree Plus campaign to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Planting more trees is considered the most effective way to address the challenges posed by climate change.

## National conference on Physics, Chemistry ends

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak successfully concluded its two-day National Conference titled "Explorations of Physics and Chemistry for the Uplifting of Local Industries" on Friday. The conference, jointly organized by the Departments of Physics, Chemistry, and the Office of Research, Innovation, and Commercialization (ORIC) at KKKUK. The Conference commenced on Thursday in the university's video conference room.

The closing ceremony was graced by the presence of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naseer Ud Din, who served as the chief guest. In his address, Prof. Dr. Naseer Ud Din emphasized the pivotal role universities play in generating research outputs globally.

He reaffirmed KKKUK's commitment to fostering a robust research culture and lauded the efforts of the conference organizers. The Vice Chancellor also praised Dr. Abdul Hakim Shah, Head of the Departments of Physics and



Chemistry, for his instrumental role in organizing the event.

Dr. Abdul Hakim Shah, in his concluding remarks, highlighted the collaborative efforts of the Physics and Chemistry Departments with other institutions aimed at advancing research activities. Earlier, the conference was inaugurated by Dr. Ghani Rehman, Registrar of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak.

The conference featured keynote addresses from distinguished speakers, including Dr. Mushtaq Ahmad from Comsats Islamabad, Dr. Abdul Manan from UST Bannu, Dr. Sajid Khan and Dr. Muslim Khan from KUST, and Dr. Haseeb Ullah from KKKUK. These experts

shared their insights on various aspects of physics and chemistry relevant to the development of local industries.

The event was attended by a diverse audience comprising faculty members, students from KKKUK, affiliated colleges, KUST, UST Bannu, and the University of Haripur, as well as key figures from the fields of Geology, Computer Science, and Botany.

The conference was well-received and provided a valuable platform for discussion and collaboration among academics and industry professionals. The Vice Chancellor distributed Certificates and Shields among the Key note speakers, Organisers and participants.

## Downpour victims obtained compensation

F.P. Report

TIMERGARA: Compensation cheques worth Rs 1 million each were distributed among the rains and flood hit victims in the Lower Dir district during a function held at the deputy commissioner's office in Timergara. The chairman district development advisory committee (DDAC) Lower Dir MPA Ubaid ur Rehman was chief guest on the occasion. The purpose of the event was to distribute financial assistance to the families of those who died or injured due to house collapse at Miskini Dara, Sadbar Kalay of property due to the recent rains and flood water.

During the ceremony, financial assistance of Rs.1 million was distributed among the families of the martyrs of Maskini, Sadbar Kalay and other affected areas. Similarly, the injured persons were also given financial assistance on behalf of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government.

Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan, newly posted district police officer Salim Abbas Kulachi, assistant commissioner Jandol Suhail Khan and others were also present. The lawmaker and the officials expressed sympathy with the victim families and appreciated the efforts of the provincial government for their rehabilitation.

tion.

Speaking on the occasion, DDAC chairman said that the government was taking all possible measures to rehabilitate the victims. He said that the financial assistance was aimed to reduce the difficulties of the victim families and help them to return to routine life.

Symposium on breastfeeding held: The World Food Programme, UNICEF and district nutrition programme jointly arranged a seminar and an awareness walk regarding the importance of breastfeeding at the district council hall. The lady health supervisors, lady health visitors, government officials and local citizens attended the events. The acting district health officer Lower Dir Dr Jehan Zeb, DDHO Dr Wali, representative of the WFP Mushammad Haris Khan, Afaq Adil, nutrition officer Zarin Bakht and others highlighted the importance of breastfeeding and asked mothers to breastfeed their children. They said that breastfeeding had no match.

The speakers said that formula milk could not compete with mother milk. They asked ulema, teachers and social activists to raise awareness among masses regarding the importance of breastfeeding. Later the participants held an awareness walk and marched on

the road for some time.

**Girls secured top positions in SSC exams:** Girl students excelled in the secondary school certificate (SSC) examination conducted by the board of intermediate and secondary education (BISE) Malakand as the top three positions went to them.

According to the board's results, Saman Gul of the Hira High School Almas Ushera Dar got first position by securing 1162 marks, Aisha Israr of the Malakand Public School Dargai stood second with 1156 marks while Aisha Iqbal of the Swat Public School Batkhela campus got third position by bagging 1155 marks. A total of 50883 students appeared in grade 10th science group out of which 48583 were declared successful and the result remained 95 percent.

Similarly, a total of 6058 students appeared in grade 10th humanities group out of which 5251 were declared successful and the result remained 86.68 percent. Ms Sadaqat Noor of the Jamia Muhsanat Academy Sangolai Lower Dir bagged 1075 marks and stood first in the humanities group. A private candidate Shaukat Khan stood second in humanities by securing 1071 marks while Ms Hina Shahzad of the Jamia Muhsanat Academy Sangolai Lower Dir stood third with 1068 marks.





NAIROBI: A police officer fires tear gas during a protest in Kenya.

## Kenya police tear-gas protesters as cabinet sworn in

NAIROBI (BBC): Kenyan police have fired tear gas to disperse small groups of anti-government protesters in the capital, Nairobi, demanding better governance as a new cabinet was sworn in. Businesses in the city were closed and public transport paralysed as police mounted road-blocks on major roads to bar protesters from accessing the central business district.

The demonstrations are a continuation of months-long anti-tax protests that have since morphed into calls for President William Ruto to resign. The youth-led protests have already forced the president to withdraw planned additional taxes and dissolve his cabinet. Mr Ruto has appointed senior opposition officials to his cabinet, in a move to quell growing public anger against his government. He gave four posts to the opposition - including the powerful finance and energy ministries. The new cabinet was sworn in amid a heavy security deployment at the president's official residence, State House, which protesters had threatened to storm. During the ceremony, Mr Ruto said the new cabinet "cannot and must not fail Kenyans". He described his new

team as an "alliance of rivals" in a nation that had long suffered "factional and sectarian competition". "More than ever, it is clear that we are fully united by a shared devotion to secure a prosperous Kenya that serves us all," Mr Ruto added. About half of the ministers were in his previous cabinet, a move that has further angered protesters, who are demanding a complete break with the past.

They had rejected the new cabinet, saying it merely perpetuates deal-making among Kenya's political elite. Riot police patrolled Nairobi's streets from but only a few dozen demonstrators turned out compared to previous protests such as the one when parliament was set ablaze. Several people have been arrested as police dispersed small groups of youth who tried to congregate for the protest - dubbed "Nane Nane March" - meaning "8 August March" in Swahili. Nairobi's streets appeared largely quiet, with a few people going about their normal business. Major towns and cities, including the lakeside city of Kisumu - an opposition stronghold - and Eldoret - Mr Ruto's hometown - that previously witnessed protests were calm. Acting

police chief Gilbert Masengeli had warned that "criminals" intended to infiltrate the demonstrations and urged people to avoid "protected areas" such as the main international airport and State House. More than 50 people have died since the demonstrations started in June, according to the state-funded Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. Former police chief Japhet Koome, who had been accused of employing brutal tactics in dealing with the demonstrators, resigned last month. This did not appease protesters seeking justice for those who had died - and they have vowed to continue demonstrating until the president steps down.

Mr Ruto rose to the presidency promising on the campaign trail to improve the lives of Kenya's poor - especially young people known as "hustlers" - after defeating his main rival Raila Odinga by a narrow margin in the 2022 election. But he is now caught between the demands of the "hustlers", who are struggling with a cost-of-living crisis, and international lenders demanding his government meets payments for its massive national debt.

## Russia must feel war consequences, says Zelensky

KYIV (BBC): Three days into Ukraine's cross-border attack on Russia's Kursk region, Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky has said Moscow must "feel" the consequences for its invasion of Ukraine. "Russia brought the war to our land and should feel what it has done", Mr Zelensky said in his address, without directly referencing the Ukrainian offensive.

"Ukrainians know how to achieve their goals. And we did not choose to achieve our goals in the war," he added. Russia says at least 1,000 Ukrainian troops, supported by tanks and armoured vehicles, entered its territory - in what appears to be one of the largest assaults on Russian soil since the war began. Russian President Vladimir Putin earlier accused Ukraine of a "major provocation". Ukrainian officials have been largely silent on the offensive. The exact situation on the ground is hard to determine, with few specific details released by either side.

"Everyone can see that

the Ukrainian army knows how to surprise [and] achieve results," the Ukrainian president said, without directly referencing the assault. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said it was monitoring Kursk's nuclear plant, according to state-owned Russian news agency RIA-Novosti. Russia's defence ministry said that its troops were "continuing to destroy" armed Ukrainian units with air strikes, rockets and artillery fire. The ministry said Russian reserves had been rushed to the region. The Institute for the Study of War, a well-respected think tank, said geo-located footage showed Ukrainian armoured vehicles had advanced to positions 10km (6.2 miles) into the Kursk region in the first two days of the incursion. Russia's military leadership is under severe scrutiny domestically, as some popular and generally well-informed pro-war Telegram channels have said the situation on the ground is not as stable as the Kremlin has suggested.

The influential pro-war Rybar Telegram channel strongly criticised the highest ranks of the Russian military, saying that "for two months the full information was sent to the useless headquarters", adding that there was enough time "to make an appropriate decision". Local leaders in regions adjacent to Kursk, in both Russia and Ukraine, have told residents to leave for their safety. The head of the Ukrainian region of Sumy, Volodymyr Artyukh, ordered the evacuation of areas bordering Kursk. In the Russian region of Belgorod, governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said that settlements across his province had been attacked by Ukrainian forces over the past 24 hours. Ukraine's key allies seemed surprised by the offensive - with White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre saying the US was reaching out to Ukraine to better understand what it hoped to achieve. This is not the first incursion into Russia by fighters based in Ukraine. Some groups of anti-Kremlin Russians launched raids last year, which were

repelled. The forces crossed into the Belgorod and Kursk regions again in March, where they engaged in clashes with Russian security forces. Ukrainian MP Oleksiy Honcharenko said the Ukrainian army had established control over the Sudzha gas hub, a major facility involved in the transit of natural gas from Russia to the EU via Ukraine, which has continued despite the war. It is the only point of entry for Russian gas into the EU. Gas was reportedly still flowing from Sudzha. Russia's National Guard said it had reinforced security around Kursk's nuclear power station, which lies some 70km north-east of Sudzha. For the past few months Russia has made incremental gains in eastern Ukraine, as many of Kyiv's ground forces have faced relentless attacks in the eastern Donbas region.

In a recent interview, Ukraine's head of defence intelligence, Kyrylo Budanov, said the main offensive by Russian forces "is expected to be over in a month and a half to two months".

## Harris adviser denies support for cutting off weapons transfers to Israel

WASHINGTON: Advisers close to Vice President Kamala Harris have denied that she expressed openness to cutting off arms transfers to Israel, a key demand of pro-Palestine groups looking for a sharp departure from the United States' policy of support for Israel's war in Gaza. In a social media post, Harris's national security adviser Phil Gordon disputed reports that the Democratic presidential candidate was receptive to calls for a weapons embargo.

"@VP has been clear: she will always ensure Israel is able to defend itself against Iran and Iran-backed terrorist groups. She does not support an arms embargo on Israel. She will continue to work to protect civilians in Gaza and to uphold international humanitarian law," Gordon said. The

episode is the latest to raise questions over the extent to which Harris could break with President Joe Biden over the war in Gaza, with pro-Palestinian activists pushing for changes beyond a greater rhetorical focus on the suffering of Palestinians. Rumours that Harris would consider an arms embargo emerged after she spoke briefly with activists from the Uncommitted Movement, a pro-Palestine group sharply critical of US policy on Gaza. In a video posted to social media, Layla Elabed, co-founder of the Uncommitted Movement, said that Harris indicated she would be willing to meet with the group to discuss their demand for an end to US arms transfers to Israel. "I meet with community members [in Michigan] who are losing

tens and hundreds of family members in Gaza. I asked [Harris], 'Will you meet with us to talk about an arms embargo?'" Elabed said. "And Kamala Harris nodded. She agreed. 'Yes, we will meet.'"

Harris has sought to portray herself as empathetic to the plight of civilians in Gaza, where Israel's campaign has killed nearly 40,000 people and been accused of abuses such as torture by rights groups. "The images of dead children and desperate, hungry people fleeing for safety - sometimes displaced for the second, third or fourth time - we cannot look away in the face of these tragedies," Harris said after a meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. "We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the suffering, and I will not be

silent." But pro-Palestine activists, some of whom have numerous relatives who have been killed in Gaza, say a change in tone is not the same as ending the robust diplomatic and military support that has been central to Israel's war effort. "It's exactly because the current White House policy allows bombs to flow to Netanyahu unconditionally that he has been emboldened to kill tens of thousands of civilians," the Uncommitted Movement said in a statement responding to Gordon. "We found hope in Vice President Harris expressing an openness to meeting about an arms embargo, and we are eager to continue engaging because people we love are being killed with American bombs," the statement adds. — Aljazeera

### Farmers' blockade of Mexico's highway

MEXICO CITY (AP): Business groups in Mexico warned of economic damage to companies and thousands of regular citizens as a protest blockade of Mexico's main east-west highway reached its second full day.

Farmers blockaded the highway between Mexico City and Puebla. Some truckers and drivers had spent almost two full days without water or food, unable to move. While protesters briefly allowed some vehicles to move, they quickly re-closed the highway. The farmers are demanding payment for land expropriated to build the highway decades ago. The federal government has refused to move the protesters back, claiming that would violate their rights. The administration of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador has often taken a non-confrontational approach to protests, and even to drug cartels.

"We cannot repress people," López Obrador said. "It's better to persuade people, to convince them." But stranded truckers and motorists say their rights are being violated, and patience is wearing thin.

"The frequent occurrence of these blockades is affecting thousands of people, and also has a long-term effect on investor confidence and our country's competitiveness," the Mexican Employers' Federation said in a statement. Rubén Furlong, the leader of the federation in Puebla, just east of Mexico City, wrote on social media that the government's response was inadequate. "Actions like the highway blockade ... put them (businesses) on the ropes, while the government just says they will not engage in repression," Furlong wrote.

Video of the scene showed miles-long lines of trucks and cars trapped behind the protest blockade. While other, less-travelled highways exist, most Mexicans use the Mexico-Puebla road to reach the Gulf coast, the states of Oaxaca, Chiapas and other points in Mexico's south-east. Authorities acknowledge the farmers' land was taken, and have agreed to pay them, but the two sides cannot agree on how much they are due. While López Obrador has refused to break up protests that clog key transport links, he has used soldiers and National Guard to clear protesters who blocked his pet railway projects.

### Police hunt Catalan ex-leader

MADRID (AFP): Police launched a manhunt for Carles Puigdemont -- the Catalonia leader who fled over his role in a failed 2017 independence bid -- after he returned to Spain to address supporters before vanishing into the crowd.

His party unsuccessfully requested the postponement of a vote in the regional parliament, but Salvador Illa of Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez's Socialists was elected as Catalonia's first head not from the pro-independence movement since 2010. Roadblocks were set up in Barcelona and across Catalonia to find the 61-year-old, for whom there is still an arrest warrant, after he delivered a short speech to thousands gathered near the Catalan regional parliament in Barcelona.

"Long live a free Catalonia!" he shouted after climbing onto the stage, under the watch of dozens of police officers who made no attempt to detain him. "I have come here to remind you that we are still here," he said as many in the crowd waved red, yellow and blue Catalan independence flags. He then disappeared. Puigdemont had been expected to try to enter the parliament building for the investiture vote, which began without him. Catalonia's regional police said it had arrested one officer who owns the car used by Puigdemont to leave the scene. It later confirmed a second officer had been detained. In a statement, the force denied there had been "any agreement or previous conversation" with Puigdemont's entourage.

## Qatar, Egypt, US invite Israel, Hamas to resume talks

DOHA: Qatar, Egypt and the United States have called on Israel and Hamas to resume talks to reach a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, as Israel's continued bombardment of the territory has killed nearly 40,000 Palestinians and raised fears of further regional escalation.

In a joint statement, the three countries urged Israel and Hamas "to resume urgent discussion" on August 15 in Doha or Cairo "to close all remaining gaps and commence implementation of the deal without further delay". "It is the time to conclude a ceasefire agreement and release hostages and prisoners," they said.

"We have worked for months to reach framework agreement and it is now on the table, with only details of implementation missing," Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's office quickly responded to the call, saying in a statement that Israel would send a delegation to attend talks next week "in order to finalise the details and implement the framework agreement". Hamas, the Palestinian political faction that governs Gaza, has yet to respond. The joint statement comes amid months of failed attempts to reach a ceasefire in Gaza, where Israel's military assault has killed at least 39,699 Palestinians and injured 91,722 others since early October. The recent killing of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in the Iranian capital of Tehran - widely believed to have been carried out by Israel - also spurred questions about the prospect of continued ceasefire negotiations. The assassination of Haniyeh - who had been a key figure in the talks - was seen by many as an effort

by Netanyahu's government to scuttle efforts to negotiate an end to the war. Reporting from Amman, Jordan, Al Jazeera correspondent Hamdah Salhut said the circumstances of Haniyeh's death will add to the complexity of any future negotiations. "There are a lot of moving parts here," she said, pointing to the risk of a "retaliatory attack" from Iran or one of its proxies.

"Additionally, we have to remember that the Israelis are now going to be negotiating with Yahya Sinwar, who is the new political leader of Hamas," Salhut added, referring to Haniyeh's replacement. "He's considered a hardliner. Benjamin Netanyahu is considered a hardliner. He's gone into these negotiations previously with several non-negotiables and has added to that list." Still, in statement, Qatar, Egypt and the US said it is "time to bring immediate relief both to the long-suffering people of Gaza as well as the long-suffering hostages and their families". "There is no further time to waste nor excuses from any party for further delay," the countries said.

The statement was undersigned by US President Joe Biden, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and Qatar's Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. Marwan Bishara, Al Jazeera's senior political analyst, said the statement shows the mediating nations are running out of patience. "The US is being pushed to exert greater pressure due to the threat of a wider regional war," Bishara explained. "I think the idea here is that they're going to go back to the table, come August 15, and both Hamas and Israel would be looking at ham-

mering the details," he said. Bishara said many details are still unclear, including which Palestinian prisoners and captives held in Gaza would be released in the first phase of the deal - and how many.

But said the mediating nations believe they "have a good framework agreement now for a three-stage ceasefire agreement". "I think this is more or less a call for action, a call for urgency - to act quicker than before." Ariel Gold, executive director of the Fellowship of Reconciliation, a US-based non-violence group, said statement is not yet cause for celebration. "We have in many ways been here before," Gold told Al Jazeera, noting that President Biden's administration has "many times [said] that we are at the final stretch" of negotiations.

Gold said Biden, who has provided staunch military and diplomatic support to Israel amid the war, should make it clear to Netanyahu that there will be "a real, definitive consequence for refusing this ceasefire deal". For months, Palestinian rights advocates in the US have urged Biden to stop sending weapons to Israel as the war drags on.

Rami Khouri, a professor at the American University of Beirut, said the timing of the statement is likely a reflection of the pressures Biden is facing. "Why the 15th?" Khouri asked, referencing the date in the joint statement to restart negotiations. "I think it's because the two most desperate people in the world now for a ceasefire, other than the Palestinians, are Kamala Harris and Genocide Joe Biden, as he is well known in the US." — Aljazeera

## Brazil expels Nicaraguan ambassador in retaliation

SAO PAULO (AP): Brazil's government kicked out Nicaragua's ambassador in retaliation for a similar move by the Central American country's President Daniel Ortega. Brazil's foreign ministry said it had decided to expel Nicaraguan Ambassador Fulvia Patricia Castro Matu in "application of the principle of reciprocity to the measure adopted by the Nicaraguan government about the Brazilian ambassador in Managua." The ministry's statement said Brazil's Ambassador Breno da Costa has already left the country.

Nicaragua's government said both the Nicaraguan and the Brazilian ambassadors have left their positions, but did not mention that Ortega's government arbitrarily arrested at least 119 people, including Roman Catholic bishop Rolando Alvarez for alleged conspiracy and dissemination of false information. Brazil has frozen relations with the Central American country. That means no visits or meetings between leaders and diplomats of the two countries. Leticia Bessa, an administrative assistant at the Nicaraguan embassy in Brazil's capital, said Matu left the country before Brazil's foreign min-

istry finalized its decision. Later, Brazil's foreign ministry added that da Costa is expected to leave Nicaragua at the end of the day. It also clarified that the exit of its ambassador does not represent a total break of diplomatic relations with Managua. Nicaragua's Vice President Rosario Murillo, who is also first lady and the government's main spokesperson, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment about the diplomatic spat. During a news conference with international news agencies in Brasilia on July 22, Lula told reporters that Ortega was not answering his phone calls. Benjamin Gedan, director of the Wilson Center's Latin America program, said the incident makes Ortega even more of a "pariah with few friends in the region."

"Lula is a leftist icon, but he does not blindly support all fellow travelers," Gedan said. "Two years ago, following Ortega's latest sham reelection, practically no leaders from the region showed up in Managua for his inauguration. The collapse of democracy in Nicaragua and Venezuela has offered the Latin American left an opportunity to prioritize democracy over ideology."

## Veteran human rights advocate freed in swap

BERLIN (AP): A human rights activist since the 1980s, Oleg Orlov thought Russia had turned a corner when the Soviet Union collapsed and a democratically elected president became leader. But then Vladimir Putin rose to power, crushing dissent and launching a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Finally, the 71-year-old Orlov was himself thrown in prison for opposing the war. Freed last week in the largest East-West prisoner swap since the Cold War, he was forced into exile -- just like the Soviet dissidents of his youth.

In an interview with The Associated Press in Berlin, Orlov decried the scale and severity of repressions

under Putin, with people imprisoned for merely criticizing the authorities, something unseen since the days of dictator Josef Stalin. And he's vowing to continue his work to free the many political prisoners in Russia and keep their names in the spotlight. "We're sliding somewhere into Stalin times," said Orlov, who at times showed signs of fatigue from a hectic schedule of media interviews in the week since his release.

He was sentenced to 2½ years in prison in February for writing an anti-war article. When he was unexpectedly moved last month from a jail in central Russia for what eventually led to the Aug. 1 prisoner swap, he was waiting to be trans-

ferred to a penal colony after losing an appeal. The move came as a complete surprise, he told AP. First, he was told to write a request for clemency addressed to Putin -- something he said he flatly refused. Days later, he was put in a van and driven, to his astonishment, to an airport in Samara and flown to Moscow. "To find yourself on a plane, among free people, straight from a prison - a very weird feeling," Orlov said.

Three more days followed in Moscow's notorious Lefortovo Prison, isolated in his cell, where he wrote a complaint that he was denied access to his lawyer. Then, he was shown a document saying he had been pardoned.



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## British migrant dream is thriving

WHEN London erupted in the summer of 2011, we heard from sociologists, economists and politicians all trying to make sense of the senseless. They tended to use the riots as vindication of whatever theory they had always been advocating - from a fatherlessness epidemic to nascent class war. Mick Jagger was in the city at the time and offered a rather different analysis "There's no warning," he said. "But it's a regular feature of English urban life, if you think about it. Every ten years, you get some riots." The Jagger theory - that it's hard to assign politics or logic to rare moments of fury - makes more sense than the Britain-at-war narrative peddled by social media and spreading world over.

Elon Musk has been promoting Twitter users who talk of "Muslim patrols" versus "British patriots". Others speak of ethnic minority communities, intimidated and bullied by the far-Right. With arsonists targeting migrant hotels, as happened in Sweden years ago, some see Britain heading in the same direction: towards a two-tier society with a criminal subculture. But Sweden has the world's worst record of merging immigrants into the economy. Britain does far better. The riots take place not against a backdrop of racial tension but in a country where, polls show, people are more positive about immigrants than almost anyone else in Europe.

Not so long ago Britain had a Hindu prime minister, a Buddhist home secretary, a Muslim mayor of London, a Muslim first minister of Scotland and a black first minister of Wales. This tends not to happen in countries where skin colour is a serious impediment to progress. Having a government led by someone called Rishi Sunak is entirely consistent with a country where those of Indian heritage are twice as likely to have six-figure incomes as whites. Kemi Badenoch caused uproar when she said that Britain is the best country in the world to be black, but there is plenty of evidence to support her case. Race riots often come when an ethnic minority has been forced to the margins of society. That's not really Britain's story.

One of Keir Starmer's big mistakes was to try to hitch himself to the Black Lives Matter bandwagon and release a photo of him "taking the knee". The problem with importing the American theories of "white privilege" is that it's hard, in Britain, to suggest that "people of colour" are at a serious disadvantage. Here, non-whites are more likely to be in top jobs than whites and there is plenty of evidence of what Michael Howard famously called the "British dream". The UK's highest earners are Indians, then the Chinese, then "white other". Take GCSE results, due next week. Passing at least five of the tougher subjects is now called the "English baccalaureate".

Some 62 per cent of Chinese pupils took this challenge last year, as did 51 per cent of Asians and 47 per cent of blacks. White pupils finished quite a bit behind at 35 per cent. If you adjust for wealth, by looking at pupils eligible for free school meals, the picture worsens. Some 45 per cent of Asian pupils on free school meals achieve decent grades (grade 5 or higher) in English and Maths as do 40 per cent of black pupils. But just 25 per cent of the white kids do so. In no other ethnic group does poverty seem to have such an impact on academic attainment. At the last count, 76 per cent of teenage girls with a Bangladeshi background went to university, as did 71 per cent of poor black African girls. But it was just 15 per cent for poor white boys, of whom only 22 per cent went to a top university. (Some 42 per cent of poor Chinese girls did so.) What is it about our social and education model that produces such staggering racial disparities? Why do working-class white boys do so much worse? And why is no one really interested in discussing it?

Letting go of vogueish theories about disadvantage can be difficult - but vital, if today's problems are to be addressed. When Rachel Reeves became Chancellor she said it should encourage all girls to shoot for the top. Where, precisely, does she see a lack of young female ambition? Girls are now far more likely to apply to university: it's the boys she needs to worry about. The gender gap for uni applications is now almost as big as that between rich and poor. Instead of American critical race theory, Starmer should look at the work of Angus Deaton, a Nobel laureate who has highlighted what he calls "deaths of despair" in white Americans.

This phenomenon shows those with low education turning to drink and drugs - and leading to deaths from overdose, liver disease or suicide. They don't riot. But they shouldn't need to, surely, to be taken seriously. Similar trends can be found in Britain, for those who take the trouble to look. Let's take those who appeared in the dock of Teesside Magistrates' Court after the Middlesbrough riot. Each gave their address, from which you can work out neighbourhood deprivation. In the communities the accused came from, some 26 per cent were on out-of-work benefits, on average. More than twice the UK norm. Stacey Vint, accused of trying to ram police with a blazing wheelie bin, is from a Middlesbrough neighbourhood where almost half are on benefits. Quite something, in the middle of a worker-shortage crisis.

The British dream is working for a great many of those who came here to seek it - and we can be proud of that. But the British dream is not working so well for working-class whites and we should be deeply disturbed by that. Now and again, politicians summon up the courage to talk about this - as Theresa May did when, on the steps of No.10, she spoke of the plight of white working-class boys. But nothing was done. Nothing ever seems to be done.

After the 1981 Toxteth riots, Michael Heseltine famously declared that the inner cities were in urgent need of regeneration and an agenda was born. The 2024 riots may not yield hard conclusions. But as we search for the truth behind claims of British racial tension and inequality, we do see the problem of left-behind whites slowly becoming a crisis. If Starmer wants to pick an agenda from the wreckage of the last few days, he needs look no further.

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## Russia's war in Ukraine

Zaur Shiriyev

IN early July, fish began dying en masse off Azerbaijan's coast, sparking speculation that Russia's increasingly frequent cruise missile strikes against Ukraine, launched from its Caspian Flotilla, could be to blame. The deaths coincided with a significant Russian missile attack on Ukraine, allegedly using Kalibr cruise missiles also launched from the Caspian Sea.

Governments in the region, wary of angering Moscow, are reluctant to investigate the veracity of speculation made on unofficial social media accounts. Azerbaijan's biodiversity agency attributed the deaths to warmer water and lower oxygen levels. But military activity is known to cause pollution and disrupt marine life, and numerous earlier media reports had raised fears of damage to the marine ecosystem from Russia's Caspian Sea military operations, which have multiplied since its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

In March-May 2022, just after the invasion, dead seals were found on the coast of Kazakhstan's Mangistau region on a scale not previously seen. That November, about 170 seal carcasses were found on Kazakhstan's Caspian shores. Just one month later, thousands more seals died on Russia's Dagestan coast-the largest die-off in years-while hundreds more dead seals washed up on the other side of the sea on Turkmenistan's island of Gyzylsuw.

Various explanations were given for these mass deaths. Russia claimed the mammals in Dagestan had died of natural causes. However, Kazakhstan's final investigation in February 2023 attributed its seal deaths to pneumonia following decreased immunity and burgeoning viral infections due to environmental pollution, and acknowledged that no studies had been conducted to determine whether that pollution was linked to rocket fuel.

Pollution has traditionally been blamed on oil and gas extracting and prospecting around the inland sea, but Russia's extensive use of its Caspian Sea flotilla in a supporting role in the war in Ukraine has renewed claims that

toxic substances from missile fuel could be adding to the problem.

Such fears date back to 2022, when a Russian journalist claimed that Caspian fauna were dying due to poisonous substances from Soviet-era Kh-55 and other missiles fired by Tu-160 and Tu-95 bombers flying over the Caspian Sea. Since old missiles are often used, some fail and crash into the sea. These defective missiles leak substances like detsilin, a toxic fuel whose ingredients suppress central nervous systems. Such substances can poison creatures, build up in the food chain, and disrupt crucial habitats. The extent of any damage is difficult to verify in an area already suffering environmental degradation. The launch and detonation of missiles clearly introduces pollutants into the sea, including other chemicals and debris, as well as fuel. Additionally, the noise and shock from missile launches and military exercises can alter migration patterns, breeding, and feeding habits, further stressing already vulnerable marine populations.

Disquiet over Russia's use of the Caspian Sea to wage war is growing, with concerns going beyond possible environmental problems. Some view it as a violation of the 2018 Caspian Convention, ratified by all littoral states except Iran, which states that the sea should be used for peaceful purposes only, though it lacks provisions on the demilitarization of the sea.

Caspian states are reluctant to press the issue or publicly express displeasure, fearing Russian ire. Some argue that the convention hasn't been violated. Kamal Makili-Aliyev, a lawyer and senior lecturer at Sweden's Gothenburg University, says that the "zone of peace" provision of the Caspian Convention can be interpreted either restrictively (to mean that the parties should not further militarize the Caspian Sea by increasing their armed forces there) or broadly (that the Caspian Sea can only be used for peace, regardless of the context). This latter interpretation is less convincing because it could also imply that countries should not have militaries based on the

sea at all.

However, environmental harm would more likely violate the Framework Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Caspian Sea, also known as the Tehran Convention. Evidence would be needed that Russia's military activities are causing significant damage. That would need to be formalized as a complaint by at least one party, leading initially to consultations with Russia, followed by arbitration by an international body if no settlement were reached.

It's unlikely that any Caspian state will complain publicly about pollution, but they are more vocal about falling water levels. The sea gets four fifths of its water from Russia's Volga River, an inflow that has been shrinking annually for some years now and has recently reached a critical stage.

Azerbaijan says this is not just due to climate change, but also to dams on the Volga diverting water. Here, too, the war may play a role. Western sanctions have led to intensified agricultural exploitation and water use in the region as Russia seeks to compensate for lost imports. Ali Salajegheh, head of Iran's Environment Department, attributed the decline in Caspian Sea levels in 2023 to Russia intentionally reducing the Volga inflow. While that has not been denied, some link the decline to natural variation, worsened by climate change.

Lower river water levels would restrict inland water transport, which Russia relies on for trade-and increasingly for military purposes, another knock-on effect of the war in Ukraine. The Volga-Don Canal has allowed the Caspian Flotilla to travel to the Sea of Azov and Black Sea to reinforce the navy there, a crucial role since Türkiye closed the Black Sea straits to military vessels from countries involved in the conflict, invoking the Montreux Convention.

In the Caspian Sea, falling water levels and an advancing coastline significantly challenge shipping by reducing carrying capacity, increasing grounding risks, and necessitating

more frequent dredging to keep channels navigable, thereby disrupting port operations.

This affects not only Russia but also routes from Central Asia to Europe through Azerbaijan. The Trans-Caspian International Transport Route, also known as the Middle Corridor, passes through Central Asia, the Caspian Sea, and the South Caucasus, and is crucial for trade between China and Europe. Officials in Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, increasingly alarmed by the shrinking Caspian, say the issue is critical. Falling water levels impact every aspect of life, the maritime industry, and the region's ecology, threatening the efficacy and economic potential of the Middle Corridor.

Russia's use of the Caspian Sea for military purposes and its reduction of water flow from the Volga are damaging the sea's ecology and maritime activities. The only viable solution appears to be multilateral cooperation among littoral states that have collaborated on environmental protocols and regulations under the Tehran Convention. That convention mandates regular meetings where they have received-and could continue to receive-financing for monitoring environmental issues, along with support from international environmental organizations.

Caspian state Azerbaijan will host the COP29 international climate change conference in November 2024, and could use it to bring attention to this issue and foster greater regional cooperation. The conference will attract global attention, providing an opportunity to highlight the region's problems and mobilize international support for monitoring and mitigating the environmental impact on the Caspian Sea.

Still, while COP29 could highlight the Caspian issue globally, international actors are unlikely to reach an agreement on establishing and funding steps to address the sea's problems. Since Russia shows no intention of stopping its military use of the Caspian or of ending the war, and the West has halted any cooperation with Russia, geopolitics appears to stand in the way of implementing effective solutions.

## Integration propeller

Antone Roger Lokongo

LAST year marked the 10th anniversary of the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative. The initiative, which aims at boosting connectivity, trade and cultural exchanges among the Belt and Road countries, was inspired by the ancient Silk Road of over 2,000 years ago, that linked China with Europe, up to the shores of the Mediterranean Sea.

President Xi Jinping gave the ancient Silk Road routes a new lease on life when he proposed the building of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road in 2013. All countries are welcome to participate in the realization of this grand vision of connectivity. The aim is to boost connectivity in order to promote modern development in multiple fields, including: manufacturing, new technologies (such as batteries), renewable energy, trade-enabling infrastructure (including pipelines and roads), the information, communication and technology (data centers, for instance), resource-backed deals (for example mining, oil and gas), and high visibility or strategic projects (among them railways), as listed by the Green Finance and Development Center, a Fudan University-based independent think tank. Since then, the BRI has become a flagship program of international development cooperation.

Sub-Saharan Africa is one of the fastest growing areas for BRI engagement, making it a good example of South-South cooperation. The BRI has no hidden agenda in its bilateral and multilateral implementation in Africa. Unlike the West with its Cold War mentality, the initiative does not seek to carve a "zone of influence" in which "other competitors have to be driven out". China only comes in as a partner, not a colonial master. The BRI only fits in or aligns itself with the agenda Africa itself has already laid out or with strategies African countries have already formulated themselves.

For instance, Africa, through its continental organization, the African Union, has formulated the "African Union Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want". This project stipulates the aspirations of Africans and its implementation mechanisms to realize them, which includes integrating Africa by solving the infrastructure deficit. As the BRI has embraced Africa as partner and African Union's Agenda 2063 takes integration as the means for the African renaissance, there are some common elements between these two grand initiatives. The alignment of the BRI with African Union's Agenda 2063 will bring more vitality to African development.

Take another case: the African Continental Free Trade Area, which is one of the flagship projects of the African Union's Agenda 2063. The AfCFTA is the world's largest free trade area creating a single, continent-wide market that unites 54 countries with a combined GDP of \$3.4 trillion. The aim is to enable the free flow of goods and

services across the continent and boost the trading position of Africa in the global market. Since you can't have an integrated continental market without an integrated continental infrastructure network, China's proposed but not imposed BRI offers itself as a solution that leads to Africa's political and economic integration. As we know, Africa is still divided into French-speaking Africa, English-speaking Africa and Portuguese-speaking Africa, which is a legacy of Western colonialism.

And this legacy is the main factor behind or the root cause of the most deadly conflicts in Africa. Some African countries still jump on the bait that Western powers throw at them as part of their efforts to "divide and rule", a tenacious neocolonial practice that still proves effective for some African countries today. The proxy wars which Western powers wage in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and for the control of strategic minerals needed for a new high-tech and green economy speak for themselves.

Ten years on, every African who takes an objective view cannot fail to see that China's BRI is offering a way out for Africa to free itself from this kind of neocolonial stranglehold. After supporting the liberation struggle in Africa, China, through such initiatives as the BRI is supporting Africa's economic liberation, proposing a win-win partnership to achieve shared development and common prosperity.

Africa needs unity, peace and development. To achieve this, Africans need to beat their swords into ploughshares by turning the colonial borders inherited from colonialism into highways and railways. And China is very good and very efficient at building such things. The Tanzania-Zambia Railway, China's first flagship free-loan infrastructure project in Africa, built from 1970 to 1975, was built with this in mind. It alleviated the isolation in which the British colonizers left the region and opened it up to trade.

Moreover, the BRI's implementation in Africa is very inclusive. It does not just target areas rich in natural resources in the continent. It is in the framework of the BRI that naturally resourceless countries such as Ethiopia have had their national infrastructures highly modernized. In contrast, if you consider for instance the decision of the United States and the European Union to finance the reconstruction of the Lobito Atlantic Railway Corridor, which stretches across Angola to link the Katanga mining regions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Zambian province of Copperbelt, it is in order "to challenge China's dominance in key African trade corridor". That is clearly not paving the way toward shared development and common prosperity. This kind of the resurgence of Cold War mentality, bloc confrontation, politicization and weaponization of economic and trade relations should be rejected. We must all uphold win-win cooperation which initiatives such as the BRI stand for.

all its forms, until we see accountability for those inciting hate and spreading lies, and until we address institutional racism, the danger of far-right extremism will not be suppressed. It will continue to drip-feed from the top down and manifest in ugliness on our streets and in our society, negatively affecting all British lives.

We each have a role to play: politicians, the media, leaders, philanthropists and all members of local communities have the agency to define the political climate through the power of togetherness, through truth-telling, through investment and the celebration of diversity in every field. How long the scars of this violence will last, and how more organised or underground these extreme groups will become, remains to be seen. But challenging the discourse, and protecting and building a society where everyone feels they belong, is a continual process that we can all lend our hands to.

The Guardian

## A week of riots across UK

Remona Aly

were being undermined. Even the dead couldn't lie in peace: Muslim graves in Burnley were daubed with paint, and I felt it could have been my own father's grave that was desecrated. When a black care worker's car was torched, it was all frighteningly close to home.

It's not as if I, or others like me, haven't faced instances of racism before. I was first called a "Paki" at the age of five, as a teen told to "go back to your own country", and as an adult was taunted while riding a London bus by an intoxicated passenger: "You Muslims, I'm going to kill you." But I could brush these off as isolated, even innocuous, incidents in a largely peaceful life. Through the years, I have learned to scoff at the occasional passive-aggressive look from strangers to remind me of my "otherness". But nothing has shaken me as much as the levels of violence seen during

these terrifying riots; scenes that for many people older than me will trigger unsettling memories of the racist attacks of the 1970s and 80s.

I am not alone by any means. It's not only minorities that feel this way: everyone is scared to some degree, everyone feels attacked because, and I cannot stress this enough, far-right extremism is a threat to us all. A threat to our way of life, our peace and safety, and to the thriving diversity that I still believe Britain is the beacon of - despite the divisive forces that seek to destroy it.

The fascists have done one constructive thing: an abundance of goodwill and solidarity has come to the fore as different communities have united to defy their racism and thuggery. In Southport, the mess they left brought people on to the streets to clean up after the attack on a mosque; in Liverpool, an imam launched

a crowdfunder to help repair the local library and buildings damaged by riots; and people are now willing to unite to fight against racism even more tenaciously.

I was moved to tears by the beautiful solidarity on display across the country as thousands of people voiced their unity against hate in large anti-racism demonstrations on Wednesday evening. Gathering to protect their local communities and places rumoured to be targeted by the far right - who were barely to be seen - they held aloft placards that read "Nans Against Nazis", "Refugees welcome" and "This is what community looks like". The people of Britain sent a clear and strong message - there is no place for fascism in our country.

Such demonstrations are a testament to a resilient community spirit. Yet until we see a marked change in public and political discourse that challenges the insidious rhetoric of division and racism in



# Nixon’s resignation needs a new legacy

ON August 9, 1974, President Richard Nixon deviated from his usual health-conscious breakfast of wheat germ, cottage cheese and fruit and instead ordered up an unctuous spread of corned beef hash with a poached egg. Beary-eyed from lack of sleep - he had spent the night calling old friends and fine-tuning his farewell speech - he decided to indulge one final time. Then he traded his fork for a pen and signed his last document as president, a one-line note that read, "I hereby resign the office of President of the United States."

After farewell remarks to his staff and an incongruous victory salute to the nation, he ducked into Marine One, then boarded Air Force One. The plane's call sign changed somewhere over Missouri, signaling that the man aboard was no longer president.

In resigning from the presidency 50 years ago this week, Nixon did more than make history - he created a template for presidential scandal that has stuck in the American mind. Corrupt deeds unfolding in secret and exposed by dogged journalists, "smoking-gun" evidence revealed in dramatic courtroom scenes, bipartisan agreement that the president must go. In the aftermath of Watergate, this became the framework for understanding presidential malfeasance - one that has left the country especially ill-equipped for the presidential wrongdoing that has followed.

It's easy for many to forget this, but Nixon's resignation marked the end of a remarkable series of resignations in US politics. Under pressure from repeated investigations into his finances, Supreme Court Justice Abe Fortas resigned in 1969. Four years later, Vice President Spiro Agnew submitted his letter of resignation before heading to a Baltimore courthouse to plead no contest to felony tax

Nicole Hemmer

evasion. Nixon stepped down less than a year later. This trio of high-profile resignations seemed to signal a new age of accountability - and a new model for how that accountability was supposed to work. Once their bad deeds had been revealed and their support had disappeared, corrupt officials would bow to public pressure and voluntarily step down, with the threat of impeachment and even incarceration hastening their departures.

But what became the Watergate model should be better understood as the Watergate exception. A decade after Nixon's resignation, another major scandal was brewing in the White House, as President Ronald Reagan's administration began a series of secret arms deals in violation of their own embargo, funneling the proceeds to the contras in Nicaragua despite an explicit ban enacted by Congress. As the Iran-Contra scheme came to light, one of its architects, Oliver North, jammed his office shredders trying to destroy as much evidence as possible.

North admitted some of his crimes in front of Congress in nationally televised hearings. An independent counsel appointed ultimately indicted 14 people, including Reagan's Secretary of Defense, two of his National Security Advisors, and an Assistant Secretary of State, securing 11 convictions. But Iran-Contra is not a story of accountability: neither Reagan nor his successor were fully investigated, and President George H.W. Bush issued a series of pardons at the end of his presidency to six Iran-Contra conspirators, including some still awaiting trial. North would go on to have a long career in right-wing activism, including a talk radio show where he regularly "shredded" callers he disagreed

with. Destruction of evidence had become a punchline.

In the 1990s, the tools of accountability that seemed so valuable post-Watergate - especially impeachment and the independent counsel - became weapons against Democratic President Bill Clinton. Despite investigations into Clinton's financial dealings that went nowhere, leading Republicans found the tools of accountability to be useful cudgels against a president they were determined to remove from office. Clinton survived the investigation and impeachment, but the legitimacy of both impeachment and the independent counsel role were badly damaged.

Yet even as the tools of accountability weakened, Americans' attachment to the Watergate model remained strong. When Donald Trump became president, references to Nixon and Watergate abounded. And those Americans who sensed early on Trump's propensity for criminality remained alert for the signs: the exposé, the smoking gun, the bipartisan opposition.

But even before Trump entered office there were signs that the Watergate model wouldn't hold. The release of the Access Hollywood tape - a secret recording, smoking-gun evidence of Trump's attitude toward sexual assault, condemnations that crossed party lines. But Trump did not step aside and the party, remaining faithful, ultimately rallied around him, growing only more devoted after he won the presidency. So it should have come as no surprise that he relied on the same dynamics when he was accused of abuses of power while in office. Though both the Ukraine scandal and the insurrection had all the ingredients necessary for Watergate-style accountability, neither impeachment effort

forced him out of office, and Republicans remained slavishly loyal to him.

Trump, however, was not the person who broke the system of accountability established by Nixon's resignation. He was the beneficiary of a generation of right-wing activists who worked steadily to ensure that such a system wouldn't work the next time around. Which is why, on the 50th anniversary of Nixon's resignation, the best thing to do would be to embrace Watergate-era accountability as the exception, and do the hard work of building new systems of political accountability to serve Americans in the future.

That work will require creativity. There were, after all, a raft of new laws put in place after Watergate to provide more accountability for government officials. But since the immediate aftermath of Watergate, there have also been concerted efforts to weaken those channels of accountability; consider, for instance, the expansion of forms of qualified immunity for police and other government agents, the end of the independent counsel statute, the dramatic narrowing of the definition of bribery and now most recently, the creation of broad immunity from criminal prosecution for presidents.

These examples spotlight our current reality, where a special class of government officers can exist largely beyond the reach of accountability - a perverse inversion of the idea of equality before the law. As US voters confront an upcoming election and seek to build American institutions suitable for a multiracial democracy, a new vision of accountability must be a key part of the process. To get there, Americans must redefine their understanding of Nixon's resignation and the legacy it did - and did not - leave for the country he governed.

CNN

# Igniting the African dream

SINCE Africa's first Workshop - a platform for hands-on learning and technical skills development - was launched in Djibouti in March 2019, China has built 12 such workshops in Africa, with the aim to help Africa realize the development and innovation of vocational education through localized vocational training.

In the meantime, thanks to strong financial support from the Chinese government and Chinese enterprises, more and more African youth are coming to China to study and further their education, taking innovative practices such as e-commerce for poverty alleviation, digital economy and green development back to Africa. The African Union's Agenda 2063 clearly lists industrialization as one of the seven development goals. The constantly upgrading China-Africa cooperation in vocational education is becoming an important driver of Africa's industrialization, helping Africa break through the talent bottleneck that restricts its industrialization.

In recent years, China and Africa have strengthened cooperation in the field of vocational education and achieved noticeable outcomes.

On the one hand, under the framework of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, the Chinese government has trained African talents that Africa urgently needs so as to help Africa develop its economy and improve its people's living standards. In January, the China-aided vocational skill training center in Angola was launched, aiming to provide stronger talent support for the sustainable development of Angola. On the other hand, when investing in Africa, Chinese enterprises attach top priority to training local talents to help Africa turn its demographic dividend into a developmental advantage.

For example, since 2014, AVIC International Holding Corporation, a subsidiary of the Aviation Industry Corporation of China, Ltd, has co-hosted the Africa Tech Challenge with the Kenyan Ministry of Education. Since its launch, more than 1,300 competitors have been trained and participated in the competition, and nine local vocational schools have been receiving funds from the AVIC.

So far, 24 students have studied in China thanks to support from the AVIC and nearly 100 trainees have been recruited by local Chinese enterprises.

China's CITIC Construction has established the CITIC Centenary Vocational School in Angola to help African youth, especially women, improve their skills for employability. The project aims at supporting Africa's industrialization and women's empowerment while meeting the company's own employment needs.

However, given the laggard development of industrialization in Africa and Africa's economic downturn caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, China-Africa vocational education cooperation also faces multiple challenges. To start with, there still exists a funding gap for vocational education assistance to African countries.

At present, China's education and training assistance for Africa is still mainly short-term technical training programs supported by the government, which is not enough to meet the talent needs of Africa's industrialization. More support is needed for the establishment of vocational education and training colleges and bases in Africa. In the meantime, the construction of a pool of experts dispatched to Africa to carry out vocational training should be strengthened. All this requires greater support in the form of grants. Second, a coordination mechanism should be established among the Chinese government, enterprises and vocational training schools. Some Chinese enterprises have been exploring the African market for many years, and they can provide tailored training to African youth based on their own employment needs. China's local vocational education and training schools have the know-how for combining theory and practice in education. How to comprehensively leverage these advantages is a challenge for the Chinese government.

Third, there is a sharp increase in the demand for vocational training in Africa due to the rising youth unemployment rate. Africa has a large young population. However, many African youth lack career guidance and do not have the skills needed in today's changing job market, leading to a surge in the unemployment rate. Take Kenya, the third-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, as an example. A lack of necessary vocational skills among the country's large young population has

resulted in a very high unemployment rate in Kenya, second only to South Sudan and Rwanda among East African Community members. According to Afrobarometer's Pan-Africa Profile 2023, employment, economic development and healthcare are the top issues that Africa's youth want their governments to address. Across 39 African countries surveyed in 2021-23, to change the unemployment is the top policy concern of 18- to 35-year-olds. In the future, the advancement of China-Africa cooperation in vocational education requires the concerted efforts of all parties.

First, financial support should be increased. China should beef up its vocational education assistance to Africa, and encourage African countries to cooperate well in vocational education, so as to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of China's grants.

Second, a communication and collaboration mechanism between the government and enterprises needs to be established. Cooperation between enterprises and the government should be strengthened to improve China's vocational education assistance for Africa. The government can provide financial support for enterprises and enterprises can undertake the construction of training bases. Together, they can build integrated learning, internship and employment platforms for African students to learn professional skills and achieve sustainable development of vocational education in Africa.

Third, China should provide more career guidance for African youth in accordance with Africa's development strategies. Young people are an important force driving Africa's industrialization. We should not only provide vocational education and training assistance for Africa, but also help them better adapt to changes in the job market after they return home.

Closer vocational education cooperation between China and Africa will help further align the Belt and Road Initiative with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the development strategies of African countries, thereby consolidating the talent foundation for Africa's development and injecting sustained impetus into Africa's industrialization and modernization.

The China Daily

# Kremlin is coming for a dissident near you

THE recent news that the Kremlin could establish a database of Russians who have left the country suggests Moscow is strengthening the infrastructure for its repressive network beyond the country's borders. The proposed database would include all Russians who left the country to "participate in extremist organizations" and study "broad in "unfriendly states" as a part of Russia's new anti-extremism strategy.

It would be one thing if "extremist organizations" in Russia meant groups like ISIS or the Taliban. But the provocative label is used willy-nilly to eliminate any and all organizations that Kremlin bureaucrats don't like. Sometimes the Kremlin even designates non-existent organizations such as the "international LGBT movement" or "anti-Russian separatist movement" just so that it can crack down on them. One could imagine that partaking in queer activism, say, a pride parade, could then be interpreted as being a part of an extremist group.

These proposed lists highlight the two currents in the Kremlin's policies. One is a decoupling from the West and Western institutions. Second, it is continuing transnational repression to stifle dissent at home as well as abroad. The split from the West is easy to explain. The Kremlin has been methodically destroying institutions that for decades enabled the people-to-people communications between Russia and the West, which it rou-

tinely proclaims to be its chief adversary. Even before the full-scale invasion, the Kremlin designated Bard College, which ran a fruitful partnership with the St. Petersburg State University since 1997, "undesirable," which criminalized any association with the organization. More recently, in March, the Kremlin branded the massive US Fulbright fellowship program as "undesirable" as well, placing Russian Fulbright scholars in legal jeopardy.

These moves are forcibly turning Russian youth and intellectuals further away from the West, making person-to-person contact increasingly difficult. The proposed list of Russian emigres has the potential to become a dark precursor to further surveillance and targeted repression. Russia possesses plenty of influence around the world through its embassies, spies and other networks - all levers of pressure that could benefit from detailed lists of exiles.

Transnational repression is a beloved tactic of regimes all over the world, as it sends a powerful message: that the enemies of the state are never safe. This has a naturally chilling effect on dissidents at home and abroad. China, Saudi Arabia and Belarus are just three states that have hunted their enemies across the world. The most obvious option the Kremlin uses to pursue its enemies abroad is old-fashioned spycraft.

Owing to the legacy of a well-resourced and highly efficient Soviet espionage network, Russia still has the capacity to strike targets in national capitals like Berlin and sleepy towns like Salisbury. Their tactics are deadly, but sometimes unsuccessful. For instance, we know of at least three poisonings of journalists, two in Germany and another in Georgia where the intended victims survived.

Kremlin covert intelligence also includes cyber attacks. Their documented use of Pegasus - an Israeli-produced software beloved by authoritarians of all stripes - is particularly worrying. It has reportedly been used by Azerbaijan and Belarus. There have also been cases from Istanbul and Tbilisi where Russian agents have infiltrated exiled communities. Then, Moscow can leverage diplomatic pressure through local officials willing to enforce the Kremlin's wishes.

There are known examples of at least three deportations from Vietnam, as well as the deportation and jailing of activists in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Local governments in Thailand and the United Arab Emirates came under Kremlin pressure to fine anti-war artists. In Thailand, the Bi-2 band was not only fined but nearly deported to Russia, even though some of the musicians had never even held Russian passports. The botched extradition was brokered by Kremlin representatives in

Thailand.

Moscow can officially request that members of its Collective Security Treaty Organization pursue anti-war exiles within their borders. But, interestingly, local policymakers are able to eke out room for maneuvering. For instance, while the Armenian police have detained targeted dissidents, the authorities are seemingly unwilling to put real pressure on activists or extradite them. Armenia here might serve as an inspiration for some Western nations. Even though the small Caucasian state is geopolitically and economically heavily dependent on the Kremlin, the government is still willing to let Russian exiles live in Armenia. Moscow might have been building a global machine for repression, but even states caught in Russia's orbit have found ways to resist.

The lesson Western policymakers and the public take from the Kremlin's relentless drive to punish dissidents outside of its borders should be that the safety of Russian exiles must be a real concern for governments that purport to oppose the Kremlin's authoritarianism. By demonstrating to the Kremlin that pro-democracy activists can still find shelter and platform outside of Russia, Western governments would undermine Moscow's attempts to derail people to carry out its extra-territorial repressions and cut Russia off from the rest of the world.

The Moscow Times

# Institutional opening-up for global integration

CHINA was the world's largest exporter and second-largest recipient of foreign direct investment in 2023, marking a milestone in its opening-up policy. To further integrate into the global economy and contribute more meaningfully to global development, the recent third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China outlined five key areas for the next phase of opening-up: steadily expanding institutional opening-up, deepening foreign trade structural reform, further reforming the management systems for inward and outward investment, optimizing the layout for regional opening-up, and refining the mechanisms for high-quality cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative.

Institutional opening-up means a higher level of opening-up. It aims to align domestic institutional frameworks with international trade and economic rules, and break down systemic and regulatory barriers to enable the free flow and efficient allocation of resources between domestic and international markets.

First, institutional opening-up is set to become a driver of high-quality development. As global trade rules evolve, traditional models of opening-up are no longer sufficient to promote foreign trade. Institutional opening-up focuses on the alignment and coordination of rules, standards, and systems, helping optimize the domestic business environment, improve economic efficiency, and provide robust institutional support for China's

foreign trade, investment and economic cooperation. This will facilitate the shift from high-speed growth to high-quality development.

Second, institutional opening-up will enhance the stability and prosperity of the global supply chains. As the world's largest manufacturing country and the second-largest economy, China plays a critical role in the global supply chains. By deepening institutional opening-up, China can strengthen cooperation with other countries, and help integrate and optimize the global supply chains, contributing to global economic stability and fostering shared prosperity.

Third, institutional opening-up will also help reform the global economic governance system. China has always advocated for a multilateral trading system centered on the World Trade Organization, promoted regional trade agreements such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, and sought the membership of free trade agreements like the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement. By deepening institutional opening-up, China aims to influence global economic governance and contribute to the creation of a fairer international economic order.

China is now a leading player in international trade. In 2023, its exports reached \$3.38 trillion, much higher than the second-largest exporter, the United States.

Cai Rong

According to the WTO, China has become a major trading partner of more than 120 countries and regions, maintaining its position as the world's largest goods trading country for several years.

Besides, China's trade network continues to expand. By the end of 2023, China had signed 22 free trade agreements with 29 countries and regions, which account for about one-third of its total foreign trade. The trade volume under the framework of the RCEP reached 12.6 trillion yuan (\$1.73 trillion) in 2023, a 5.3 percent increase from the year before the agreement came into effect in 2022. China's exports to the other RCEP member states grew by 16.6 percent, 4.6 percent-age points higher than its overall export growth during the same period.

China is also a major international investor. In 2023, the country ranked second globally in direct investment destination (after the United States) and third in direct investment sources (after the US and Japan). Despite a notable decline in global cross-border investment, China's share of both FDI and ODI has significantly increased.

In the financial sector, China has gradually eased market access restrictions for foreign investment, including removing limits on foreign ownership in banking and insurance institutions. By the end of last year, foreign banks and insurance firms had established many branches in China, significantly increasing their total assets and market share.

JAPAN this week restated its aim to rid the world of atomic weapons as it marks the 79th anniversary of the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - even as the Japanese government seeks assurances the United States would be willing to use its own nuclear arsenal to protect Japan.

At 8:15 a.m. Tuesday - the time that the atomic bomb exploded 600 meters (1,969 feet) above Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 - people across Japan marked a minute's silence to remember the horrors visited on the city. "It is the mission of Japan, the only country to have suffered nuclear war, to pass on the reality of the atomic bombings to future generations," Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida told delegates gathered in Hiroshima.

The manner of Japan's defeat in World War II changed the country, driving an aversion to war and military power that lasted for generations. However, after decades of pacifism, the country is undergoing profound changes in its attitude to military power amid multiple regional threats, said Yee Kuang Heng, a professor of international relations at the University of Tokyo.

"The DPRK's [North Korea's] nuclear missile programs; Chinese military assertiveness and territorial claims in the East China Sea; Russia's closer military cooperation with China in the past couple of years.

Henry Ridgwell

These are underlying drivers that have been around for the past couple of years," Heng told VOA. "There is Prime Minister Kishida's oft-quoted fear that Ukraine today could be East Asia tomorrow, especially with potential flash-points close to Japan, such as Taiwan."

Those threats prompted Japan to last year announce a doubling of defense spending to 2% of gross domestic product by 2027. Last week, the United States, Japan's closest ally, announced a major upgrade of its military command in the country. During the visit by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, Tokyo again sought assurances from the US that it would be prepared to use "extended deterrence" - that is, nuclear weapons - to defend Japan. "They have always had doubts about the American commitment to use all their might to defend them. And that includes nuclear weapons, which gives you some idea of just how somewhat paradoxical Japan's supposed nuclear allergy is," said Grant Newsham, a senior fellow at the Washington-based Center for Security Policy and a former US Marines colonel who served in Japan.

For decades, anger among Asian neighbors over Japan's actions in World War II prevented closer regional cooperation. That's also changing, said analyst Heng. "Countries like the Philippines, they've

recently signed very important defense agreements with Japan, such as the Reciprocal Access Agreement, actually the first Asian country to do so with Japan," he said. "South Korea, notably under President Yoon [Suk Yeol], has talked up a more forward-looking relationship with Japan."

But 79 years after the trauma of defeat - the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki - are the Japanese people ready to become a military power once more? "There's a sea change also in the public opinion in my country as well," said Kunihiro Miyake of Japan's Canon Institute for Global Studies.

"We are not rabbits. We are tortoises. We are probably slow, but we always go ahead, and one step forward at a time," Miyake added. "Maybe this time, two or three steps forward."

China has reacted with anger to the rapid changes in Japan's military posture. "During World War II, Japan invaded and colonized some Southeast Asian countries, including the Philippines, and committed serious historical crimes. Japan needs to seriously reflect on its history of aggression and act prudently in the field of military security," said Lin Jian, a spokesperson for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, during a press conference last month. At the same time, say analysts, Japan must secure itself against multiple threats - not least from China itself.

VOA





## Over 6.138 million tons of meat to be produced in FY 2024-25

ISLAMABAD (APP): The government has set a target to produce about 6.138 million tons of meat during the current financial year (2024-25) to fulfill the local requirements as well as for exporting.

The meat output during the last financial year was recorded at 4.35 million metric tons, said an official in the Ministry of National Food Security and Research.

Talking to APP here on Friday, he said that beef output targets during the

period under review were fixed at 2.719 million metric tons and meat at 835,000 metric tons respectively.

During the last financial year over 1.973 metric tons of beef were locally produced against the set targets of 2.630 million metric tons, whereas mutton production was recorded at 613,000 tons against the set targets of 817,000 tons, he added.

During the current financial year poultry

production targets were fixed at 2.583 million metric tons as against the output of 1.772 million metric tons of the same period of last year, he added.

It is worth mentioning here that over 123,516 metric tons of meat and meat preparations valued at \$511.688 million were exported during the financial year ended on June 30, 2024, as compared to the exports of 99,892 metric tons worth \$425.605 million.

The exports of meat and meat production witnessed about 20.23 per cent growth during the period under review as compared to the exports of the corresponding period of the last year.

Meanwhile, the country earned \$3410.286 million by exporting 200,709 metric tons of fish and fish preparations during the last financial year, which was recorded at 214,542 metric tons valued at \$496.565 million during the year 2022-23.

## Turkiye's CG invites multi-sectoral delegation for trade, cooperation



F.P. Report

KARACHI: Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, has apprised the entire business, industry and trade community of Pakistan that H. E. Mr. Cemal Sangu, Consul General of Türkiye in Karachi, has invited a multi-sectoral business delegation from the apex platform of FPCCI to explore the avenues for trade and economic cooperation.

The two countries have an evident bilateral trade potential of \$5 billion; but, at present, we are only at \$1 billion per year, he added.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, Acting President FPCCI, reiterated that both sides have agreed

that we should take tangible steps to realize the trade potential – whereas, Pakistan stands to gain tremendous foreign earnings through exports of value-added textiles; leather goods; processed foods; IT & IT-enabled services; sports goods and surgical equipment.

Mr. Asif Sakhi, VP FPCCI, reiterated that Türkiye has world-class expertise in manufacturing and engineering products; specifically, electric vehicles (EVs); renewable energy (RE); avionics & drones; robotics & machine learning; artificial intelligence (AI); space sciences and agriculture & food technologies.

Pakistan should go for industrial collaborations

with Türkiye through offering its land coupled with a huge pool of young but cheap labor, he added.

Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman of FPCCI's Policy Advisory Board (FPCCI-PAB), maintained that Pak – Türkiye Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) is a very positive development as Pakistan achieved a bilateral trade surplus of over \$100 million in 2023 – underscoring the strengthening economic partnership and mutual benefits fostered by this agreement.

Mr. Salman Tufail, Chairman of FPCCI's Pakistan – Türkiye Joint Business Council (PTJBC), highlighted that agricultural, technology and entertainment indus-

tries should be prioritized as Türkiye is very advanced in agritech; at par with European standards in hi-tech products and has a great entertainment industry ecosystem. We should invite investments and JVs from Türkiye in various segments of entertainment industry, i.e. film & television studios; cinemas & theatres; sports complexes and theme & recreational parks, he added.

H. E. Mr. Cemal Sangu, Consul General of Türkiye in Karachi, called for action in economic, commercial and trade domain as Pakistan and Türkiye have enormous potential for each other as they have populations of 250 million and 85 million respectively.

H. E. Mr. Cemal Sangu outlined areas of potential cooperation as: (i) agricultural land acquisition for cultivation from Turkish investors as they are doing in Africa (ii) importing hi-tech engineering equipment and machinery from Türkiye on cheaper rates but at par with European standards as most of Turkish exports are to Europe (iii) synchronizing rail system of Pakistan with Türkiye & Iran to enable land-based transportation of goods (iv) forging B2B and chamber-to-chamber alliances between the two countries on a sectoral basis to enhance trade in multiple sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb in a meeting with Charge D'affaires Mr. Shi Yuanqiang and other officials of the Embassy of People's Republic of China.

## Saudi Arabia's Aramco reports lower half-year profits

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP): Saudi oil giant Aramco reported half-year profits Tuesday of \$56.3 billion, down from the year before amid worries about a slowing global economy.

Aramco, formally known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co., said its overall revenue for the half-year was \$220.7 billion, up from \$218.6 billion the year before. Profits in 2023 were \$61.9 billion, nearly \$5 billion higher.

Despite the turmoil in the global economy, Aramco remains bullish on the future with a projected increase in demand from the aviation industry and from China.

"Growth in global oil demand is strong, reaching a record 103.2 million barrels a day in the first half of 2024, despite some headwinds," Aramco CEO and President Amin H. Nasser told analysts on a conference call. "We expect further demand growth in the second half of the year."

Aramco will pay dividends of \$20.3 billion for the second quarter and a performance-linked dividend of \$10.8 billion, the company said. It hopes its overall dividend for the year will be over \$124 billion.

While a sliver of Aramco trades on the Tadawul, the vast majority of the firm is held by Saudi Arabia's government, fueling its expenditure and providing wealth to its Al Saud royal family.

Saudi Arabia, a leader in the OPEC cartel, has allied with Russia and others outside of the group to try to keep production down to boost global oil prices. Benchmark Brent crude traded around \$77 a barrel on Tuesday after Japan's Nikkei stock market plunged 12.4% Monday in its worst single-day decline since 1987.

It marked the latest in a global sell-off that began the previous week. A report Friday showed U.S. employers slowed their hiring in July by much more than economists expected. That was the latest piece of data on the United States economy to come in weaker than expected. It's all raised fear the Federal Reserve has pressed the brakes on the U.S. economy by too much for too long through high interest rates in hopes of stifling inflation.

The Nikkei bounced back Tuesday morning, nearly recouping those losses.

Crude oil prices collapsed in the pandemic but rose again in 2022 on the back of Russia's war on Ukraine, going as high as nearly \$140. That sparked tension between the Biden administration and Saudi Arabia, but prices have since come down to a six-month low over concerns over the wider global economy. That's made the price at the pump less of an issue ahead of the November election between former U.S. President Donald Trump and Vice President Kamala Harris.

## Quantum Cloud, AI enter into partnership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Quantum Cloud and Artificial intelligence (AI) Tech entered into a partnership with Dell Technologies to bring technological shift to Pakistan's corporate and government sectors.

Together they will work to provide scalable and secure solutions that will empower various industries within the country, said a news release.

Quantum Cloud & AI brings extensive international exposure of cloud and AI expertise based on their experience in UK and USA, whereas Dell brings its AI-enabled edge and

quantum computing that can help address complex problems in areas such as energy optimization, predictive maintenance and will optimize operations, foster real-time data processing, and enhance computational efficiencies for businesses.

Mansoor Bin Saeed – CEO Quantum Cloud & AI, while speaking to the members of the press, said, "Forming an alliance with Dell Technologies enables Quantum Cloud & AI to serve Pakistani businesses in the sectors of health, education, energy, agriculture and financial industry."

Naveed Khan – Regional Director Dell Technologies speaking at the occasion highlighted Dell's commitment to delivering transformative technology to drive innovation to different sectors of Pakistan's economy.

As part of this alliance, extensive investments will be brought to Pakistan by Quantum Cloud & AI Limited to establish and expand cloud and AI infrastructure.

This will bring a transformative shift to increase business intelligence and enhance data security ensuring that Pakistani businesses step into the new era of technological revolution.

## Retail investors still buyers of US equities

NEW YORK (Reuters): Retail investors were buyers during much of the recent rollercoaster in U.S. stock markets, taking advantage of a sharp fall in popular tech shares, according to various research reports, although they also showed signs of caution.

While individual investors may have been swept up in the giant global stock market selloff on Monday triggered by a wave of anxiety about economic data and earnings news and exacerbated by the unwind of yen-funded trades, many continued to buy even as indexes plunged anywhere from 2.6% to 3.4% in heavy trading.

Vanda Research, a New York-based market research and analysis firm, found that individual investors caught up in the market storm remained net buyers of shares of companies like Nvidia (NVDA.O), opens new tab, Intel (INTC.O), opens new tab and Advanced Micro Devices (AMD.O), opens new tab. They also directed more buying to an exchange-traded fund tracking 20-year Treasury bonds.

"There was no retail capitulation," said Marco Iachini, senior vice president of research at Vanda, who said the data captures

the activity of self-directed individual investors -- those who don't turn to a big brokerage firm, financial adviser or private bank to handle their trading activity.

"Retail investors continue in their dip-buying spree," Iachini said. Robinhood Markets (HOOD.O), opens new tab received \$1 billion of new cash from retail investor clients in the first week of August, a spokesman said, citing data provided by the company's founder, Vladimir Tenev. Of that, \$500 million was deposited to client accounts during Monday's selloff, he said, compared with a second-quarter daily average of less than \$350 million.

However, the firm's clients were unable to execute orders on Robinhood during overnight sessions, as Blue Ocean ATS, which executes those trades, couldn't handle the "extreme demand" from clients, Tenev told analysts on Robinhood's earnings call on Thursday.

Blue Ocean didn't respond to requests for comment.

A separate report published by analysts at JP Morgan said that retail investors were "aggressive net sellers" on Monday, with most of the selling pressure hitting the market in the first hour of trading.

The bank didn't respond to requests for comment.

Both Vanda and JPMorgan said retail investors were resolute buyers during the market's recovery on Tuesday and Wednesday. But Vanda noted on Thursday that retail investors' interest in the iShares 20+ Year Treasury Bond ETF (TLT.O), opens new tab soared during the recovery, making the ETF the second-most-actively purchased security after Nvidia shares by Thursday morning.

Iachini said that may indicate "mom-and-pop-traders" are growing more anxious about the outlook for stocks and looking for a safe haven for some of their holdings.

Alight Solutions, which tracks trading activity in some 2 million 401(k) retirement accounts, found that those investors it tracks were actively moving assets out of stock funds and into money markets and fixed-income products, said Rob Austin, head of research at the firm.

"Trading was about eight times average," Austin said, although still small in absolute terms, with only 0.1% of the \$200 billion in assets the firm tracks shifted from one investment strategy to another.



## Jazz, associated companies report 27.7% YoY revenue growth

ISLAMABAD (APP): Jazz, JazzCash, Mobilink Microfinance Bank, and digital services as VEON Group concerns in Pakistan reported an impressive 27.7% year-over-year revenue growth in USD terms for the second quarter of 2024.

This significant growth underscores the success of its recently announced ServiceCo structure, enabling a focused and agile response to the evolving needs of customers in fintech, cloud and data centers, software, IT services, and connectivity said a news release.

VEON, a global digital operator, which provides converged connectivity and digital services to nearly 160 million customers across six dynamic markets, representing 7% of the world's population.

The contributions from Pakistan, including Jazz, JazzCash, and Mobilink Microfinance Bank, accounted for nearly one-third of the Group's USD 1.9 billion revenue in the first half of 2024.

As of Q2 2024, Jazz

serves 71.4 million cellular subscribers and 63.3 million monthly active users of digital services, nearly a quarter of whom are non-Jazz users. Jazz maintains a dominant 45% revenue market share in the cellular services market, with a 17% CAGR in revenue growth from 2021 to 2023.

The topline growth for the reporting period is primarily driven by the increasing popularity of its fintech platform JazzCash, Mobilink Microfinance Bank, digital entertainment platform Tamasha, and cloud service Garaj.

Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of Jazz and head of all VEON businesses in Pakistan, commented, "As a key partner in driving the government's digital transformation agenda for socioeconomic growth, we are heavily investing in developing robust digital infrastructure that extends beyond connectivity.

The growing engagement across all our services demonstrates our ability to swiftly meet evolving customer needs in fintech,

cloud, data centers, software, IT services, and connectivity.

Consequently, we closed the first half of the year with a revenue of USD 668 million, reflecting the positive impact of our initiatives amid early signs of macroeconomic recovery."

The performance of Jazz's digital services during the quarter solidified its position as the country's leading digital operator. Boasting a customer base of 44 million, including 30% women, Pakistan's leading fintech JazzCash achieved an 83% YoY service revenue surge driven by a Gross Transaction Value of PKR 7.4 trillion in Q2 2024.

JazzCash's extensive network, comprising 252,000 registered agents and over 357,000 merchants, facilitated considerable digitalization of society and payment/loan services, effectively transforming Pakistan's financial landscape.

Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited continues to serve the underserved

demographic, driving financial inclusion with a service revenue growth of over 73% YoY in Q2 2024.

Pakistan's leading entertainment platform, Tamasha, reached 18 million MAUs, with revenue increasing 7.7x YoY, bolstered by AdTech during ICC cricket matches. In tandem, Jazz's cloud platform, Garaj, effectively meets the needs of Pakistani enterprises and supports the nation's data sovereignty vision while driving digitalization.

In just two years, the enterprise vertical has rapidly become a thriving business, serving 98 out of the top 100 PSX-listed companies. Moreover, the self-care and lifestyle app SIMOSA (formerly JazzWorld) increased to 15.2 million MAUs.

VEON's sustained investment in Jazz, JazzCash, Mobilink Microfinance Bank, and other digital services continues to strengthen its leadership position in Pakistan, fostering socioeconomic development and innovation.

## Wall St edges lower as volatile week draws to a close

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Wall Street's main indexes were set to clock weekly losses on Friday, capping off a tumultuous week where global markets were rattled by a sharp appreciation in the low-yielding yen and fears of a recession in the world's biggest economy.

Megacap and growth stocks were mixed, with Alphabet (GOOGL.O), opens new tab down over 1%

and Amazon.com (AMZN.O), opens new tab was up 0.6%.

In the previous session, U.S. stocks had jumped after jobless claims last week fell more than expected, easing worries of a prolonged slowdown in the United States that were spurred after July's dooms day data.

The CBOE Volatility Index (VIX), opens new tab, Wall Street's "fear gauge", stood at 24.07

points, far below the 65.73 at the start of the week, which witnessed a global stocks rout triggered by a surge in yen as a surprise rate hike by the Bank of Japan resulted in unwinding of currency carry trades.

But all major indexes were set for weekly losses, with both the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab and the Nasdaq (.IXIC), opens new tab headed for a fourth straight week of

fall. "In general, we're still in this environment where the economy is slowing if not grinding to a halt, inflation is coming down, which is not suggestive at all of recession. We're still growing, just not as much," said Christopher Jackson, senior vice president at UBS Wealth Management.

Fed policymakers said on Thursday they

were confident that inflation was cooling enough to allow interest-rate cuts ahead, and will take their cues on the size and timing of those cuts from the economic data.

Money markets are now evenly split between the Fed cutting rates by 50-basis points and 25-basis points in September, according to CME's FedWatch Tool.

Investors are now

focusing on next week's readings on the consumer prices and retail sales for July, which could provide fresh evidence on chances of a soft landing for the American economy.

At 09:35 a.m. ET, the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJI), opens new tab fell 133.28 points, or 0.34%, to 39,313.21, the S&P 500 (.SPX), opens new tab lost 6.27 points, or 0.12%,

to 5,313.04 and the Nasdaq Composite (.IXIC), opens new tab lost 15.13 points, or 0.09%, to 16,644.89

Nine of the 11 major S&P sectors were trading lower, with utilities (.SPLR-CU), opens new tab and communication services (.SPLRCL), opens new tab leading the losses.

Among individual stocks, Elf Beauty (ELFN), opens new tab fell 14.5% after it

### CHANGE IN NAME

I/Alimud Sho Muhammad /amir No House no. 1040/1 SW5/Charbagh, Jungle Khel, Kohat kpk do hereby solemnly affirm and declare as under: That I was registered with FBISE at SSC Level under Registration No. 08441111KKE and passed the SSC Annual Examination under Roll No. 715675-2. That I have decided to change/partially change my name from Alimud to Muhammad Alimud which is/was written as Alimud in Bonda documents/record. Hence the same may be changed.







In brief

Legacy FC, Karachi City shine in Women's Club C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Legacy FC and Karachi City FC have secured their spots in the final of the National Women's Football Club Championship 2024, following their impressive performances in the semi-final matches held here at Jinnah Stadium of the Pakistan Sports Complex on Friday. In the first semi-final, Legacy FC showcased their dominance on the field with a resounding 6-0 victory over Karachi United. Eman Mustafa was the star of the match, delivering an outstanding performance with four goals. Kayanat Bukhari also contributed significantly, scoring a brace to secure the win for Legacy FC. The second semi-final saw Karachi City FC display their prowess, overwhelming Hazara Quetta with an 8-0 triumph. Zahmena Malik and Suha Hirani each scored a brace, while Nadia, Zulfia, Sanah and Aliza added a goal each, ensuring Karachi City FC's place in the final. Karachi City FC will face Legacy FC in the final on August 10, 2024, at 8:30pm at the Jinnah Football Stadium, Islamabad.

Match officials announced for Test series

LAHORE (INP): Sri Lanka's Ranjan Madugalle, who is a member of the ICC Elite Panel of Match Referees, will lead the playing control teams for the two ICC World Test Championship 2023-25 fixtures between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both teams are scheduled to play first Test match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Rawalpindi from 21 to 25 August. The second Test match between the two sides will be played at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi from 30 August to 3 September. For the Test series, three umpires will be from the ICC Elite Panel of Umpires and two umpires are from the ICC International Panel of Umpires. For the Rawalpindi Test, England's Richard Kettleborough will be the on-field umpire alongside South Africa's Adrian Holdstock. England's Michael Gough will be the third umpire, while Rashid Riaz of Pakistan will act as a fourth umpire. In Karachi, Michael Gough and Adrian Holdstock will perform the duties of an on-field umpires, while Richard Kettleborough will serve as a third umpire. Asif Yaqoob from Pakistan will be available as fourth umpire in the Test match.

ID Sports Gala begins in Charsadda

PESHAWAR (APP): The Independence Sports organized by Gala District Sports Office, got underway at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Charsadda here Friday. Jashan Azadi Sports Gala organized by District Sports Office Charsadda in which more than two hundred athletes participated in four different events for men and women. District Sports Officer (DSO) Mishaal Malik, (DSO) Irshad Khan, former DSO Tahsinullah, President of District Football Association Sikandar Shah, General Secretary Anwar Ali, Syed Amil Shah, Syed Nasir Shah and other important personalities were present on the occasion. On the opening day of the event, Tangi Football Club defeated Sardhero Football Club by 5-1 in the first football match. In the second match, Mazhar Football Club defeated Shabqadar Football Club by 1-0.

## Pakistan to tour New Zealand for white-ball series in 2025

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan men's cricket team is set to tour New Zealand in March 2025 to play the T20I and ODI series, confirmed by the New Zealand Cricket (NZC).

The cricket board revealed their complete schedule for the 2024-25 home season, where they will host England, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. They will play a total of three Test matches, six ODIs, and eight T20I matches during the period from November 2024 to April 2025.

The season will start with a three-match Test series against England in November-December 2024, followed by a white-ball series against Sri Lanka.

New Zealand and Sri Lanka will play three T20Is and three ODIs from late December to mid-January.

Following the Sri Lanka series, New Zealand will

tour Pakistan for a tri-series with South Africa, scheduled in Multan from 8-14 February. The Kiwis will then participate in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, also scheduled in Pakistan.

The Green Shirts will tour New Zealand after the Champions Trophy to play a five-match T20I series, followed by three ODIs in March-April.

Pakistan last toured New Zealand in January earlier this year for a five-match T20I series under Shaheen Afridi. The home side won the series 4-1.

Schedule of New Zealand's Home 2024-25 Home Season

**Test series v England**

First Test: Nov 28-Dec 2, Christchurch

Second Test: Dec 6-10, Wellington

Third Test: Dec 14-18, Hamilton

**T20I series v Sri Lanka**

First T20I: Dec 28, Tauranga

Second T20I: Dec 30, Tauranga

Third T20I: Jan 2, Nelson

**ODI series v Sri Lanka**

First ODI: Jan 5, Wellington

Second ODI: Jan 8, Hamilton

Third ODI: Jan 11, Auckland

**T20I series v Pakistan**

First T20I: March 16, Christchurch

Second T20I: March 18, Dunedin

Third T20I: March 21, Auckland

Fourth T20I: March 23, Tauranga

Fifth T20I: March 26, Wellington

**ODI series v Pakistan**

First ODI: March 29, Napier

Second ODI: April 2, Hamilton

Third ODI: April 5, Tauranga.

## Ma Long makes Chinese history with sixth Olympic gold

PARIS (AFP): Ma Long made Chinese Olympic history with the sixth gold of his career on Friday in the men's team event in Paris to embellish his reputation as the best table tennis player ever.

The 35-year-old played his part in a 3-0 victory over Sweden that put China on the verge of a clean sweep in the French capital, although the matches were closer than the result suggests.

Ma's sixth gold took him past divers Wu Minxia and Chen Ruolin, and gymnast Zou Kai, with the most golds of any Chinese athlete in Olympic history.

As well as his record haul of Olympic golds, Ma has also won an astonishing 14 world titles and was China's male flag-bearer at the opening ceremony.

With a wealth of options at their disposal, China controversially overlooked Ma for the singles in Paris, denying him the chance to win a third gold in a row in that event. In his absence, Fan Zhendong won gold instead. In the first match of the final, Ma paired up with Wang Chuqin, who had his bat accidentally broken by



an overeager photographer earlier at the Games.

The Chinese duo raced into a 6-1 lead in the opening game, only for Anton Kallberg and Kristian Karlsson to fight back and take the game 11-8. The South Paris Arena was full to capacity, and the overwhelming majority was supporting China, many of them decked out in the country's red. They

willed Ma and Wang to victory in the next game, but with little to decide between the two pairs, they went to a deciding fifth game.

Fittingly, Ma hit the winning shot with a howitzer of a forehand down the middle to put China 1-0 up in the final and on their way to another gold. It is unclear

how much longer Ma will play for. At last year's Asian Games on home soil, having won team gold to add to his haul, he said that "this could well be my last edition of the Asian Games".

China, the unrivalled superpower of table tennis, have now won mixed doubles, women's singles, men's singles and men's team events in Paris.

In the last final, on Saturday, China play Japan for the women's team crown. China arrived in Paris having won 32 of the 37 available golds since it became an Olympic sport in 1988. The only other countries to have won gold are South Korea (three), and Japan and Sweden (both one).

## Argentina claim Olympic women's hockey bronze

PARIS (AFP): Sofia Cairo fired Argentina to women's Olympic hockey bronze as they beat Belgium 3-1 in a shootout after a gripping 2-2 draw on Friday.

The fired-up Belgians made the breakthrough in the eighth minute when Emma Puvrez pounced on a rebound after Cristina Cosentino pushed away Stephanie Vanden Borre's penalty corner strike.

Belgian goalkeeper Aisling D'Hooghe was in superb form, denying Agustina Gorzelany from Argentina's first penalty corner at the end of the first quarter. But she could do little to prevent Gorzelany's lethal equaliser in the 22nd minute following another penalty corner.

Two goals in the space of a minute cranked up the temperature. As soon as Agustina Albertarrio nudged Argentina into the lead, Belgium won a penalty corner at the other end and in the ensuing melee Justine Rasir found the net.

A cagey third quarter led into a helter-skelter fourth as both sides searched des-



perately for the winner.

A brilliant double save from D'Hooghe from a penalty corner in the dying seconds sent the game into a shootout. The pressure was immediately on Belgium as they failed with their first two attempts.

When Cosentino saved Belgium's fourth attempt from Vanden Borre, it was left to Cairo to seal the bronze medal. "This is a team that made lots of effort. I don't want to call them sacrifices, because that's what they do," said Argentina coach Fernando Ferrara. "But the girls work hard, they left their contracts in Europe, their jobs in Europe, left their families, and came to Buenos

Aires to train every day.

"This is the greatest prize they can receive, to get on the Olympic podium and live this great experience." It is the third time Argentina have taken Olympic bronze to add to their three silver medals.

But it was a tough defeat for Belgium, who had also lost their semifinal to China in a shootout and still await their first Olympic medal in women's hockey.

The Netherlands take on China in the gold medal match at the Yves du Manoir Stadium in Colombes, northwest of Paris, at 1800 GMT. The Dutch are looking to double up after their men's side took gold on Thursday.

## Arshad Nadeem receives gold medal for making history at Paris Olympics



PARIS (Web Desk): Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who made history at the Olympics last night, received a gold medal in a special ceremony held at the Athletics Stadium in Paris on Friday.

Nadeem's victory marks a significant milestone for Pakistan, as he is the first athlete from the country to win an individual gold medal at the Olympics in 40 years.

He set a new Olympic record in javelin throw by launching the spear a distance of 92.97 meters.

Arshad Nadeem's historic victory at the Paris Olympics has etched his name in the annals of sports history, as he became Pakistan's first-ever Olympic gold medalist in an individual event.

With a stunning throw of 92.97 meters in the men's javelin final, Nadeem not only secured the gold but also set a new Olympic record, surpassing the previous mark of 90.57 meters established in 2008.

This monumental achievement comes 40

years after Pakistan last claimed an Olympic gold medal, which was in field hockey in 1984.

Nadeem's triumph is particularly significant as it marks a turning point for Pakistan in athletics, inspiring a new generation of athletes and bringing national pride to a country that has long awaited success on the global stage.

His emotional reaction, wrapped in the national flag and celebrating with his coach, resonated deeply with fans back home, symbolising hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

What is this award given to athletes on the podium at the same time as their medals?

During the ceremonies for the Olympic winners at the Paris 2024 Olympics, the athletes on the podium are presented with their medals. During this ceremony, they are also presented with another gift, one that many find mysterious. It was a box measuring around forty centimetres containing the official poster for the event. The poster, designed by Ugo Gattoni, was not the only gift given to the medalists.

After the ceremony (and not on the podium), they also receive a gold, silver or bronze medal-winning mascot. They are made in France at the DouDou & Compagnie factory in La Guerche-de-Bretagne. Gold, silver or bronze medals are represented by the medal emblem sewn onto the mascot's belly, by the colour of the trainers and by the text "Bravo" in French on the back of the Phryge.

All of these gifts are being given by 515 Paris 2024 volunteers.

### Basit wants Babar to relinquish white-ball captaincy

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan cricketer Basit Ali sparked a debate with his remarks about Babar Azam's performance with the bat, suggesting the latter to step down as white-ball captain to excel as a player.

Babar has been far from his bat in international cricket as the right-handed batter last scored a century in 2023 which came against Nepal during the Asia Cup. Basit Ali termed the upcoming two-match home series against Bangladesh a pivotal opportunity for Babar Azam to prove his mettle.

He, however, suggested Babar relinquish the national men's team's captaincy to focus more on his batting. "Babar Azam has made the last century against Nepal in the Asia Cup. It is a great chance for him to prove himself. To come back in the Test Rankings," said Basit.

"And he is not the captain. It is a very good thing. And he should quit the white-ball captaincy as well. He should focus on his batting. He is a premium batsman of Pakistan. So, he should perform well," he added.

Basit Ali then went on to advise the current national Test team captain Shan Masood, urging him to make bold decisions and prioritize team over individual preferences.

"In the last 2-3 years, we have played a lot of talkative cricket. We will win the World Cup. We will win the Asia Cup. We will play in the finals in India. It was all talkative cricket. Now, it is time to deliver. Shan Masood becomes the Test captain again after the Australia series, so he will now have to make his own decisions," he said.

"He should not think like that if he is a premium batter or a premium bowler, then I will give him a soft corner. No. He must take decisions that are good for Pakistan. Not out of fear. Out of bravery. Then the cricket will look good, and they will perform better."

## Egypt wrestler arrested in Paris for sexual assault

PARIS (Agencies): Egyptian Olympic wrestler Mohamed 'Kesho' Ibrahim has been arrested in Paris for an alleged sexual assault.

The Paris prosecutor's office released a statement saying: "On August 9 around 5am, a man born in March 1998 in Egypt who was a wrestler in the Olympic delegation was arrested in front of the Oz cafe."

It is understood he was arrested for allegedly touching the buttocks of another customer at the cafe.

The Egyptian Olympic Committee (EOC) named Kesho, who won a bronze medal at the Tokyo 2020 Games, as the team member who had been arrested.

The EOC added he will be investigated by its ethics



committee and could face a life ban from competition.

"If the allegations are substantiated, the wrestler will face permanent suspension and will be barred from participating in both domestic and international competitions," it said.

Kesho was beaten by

Azerbaijan's Hasrat Jafarov in the first round of the men's 67kg Greco-Roman wrestling on Wednesday.

The EOC said he had been given permission to leave the Egyptian camp to watch the final of his weight category but failed to return and turned off his phone.

## Tsitsipas parts ways with father as coach

MONTREAL (AFP): Stefanos Tsitsipas ended his long-time coaching collaboration with his father on Friday, announcing the decision on social media.

"It is with a heavy heart that I inform you that my collaboration with my father as a coach has come to an end. I prefer to keep my father in his role as a father, and only as a father," the world number 11 from Greece posted.

Tsitsipas dropped a huge hint of the split on Thursday after losing 6-4, 6-4 to Japan's Kei Nishikori in the ATP Montreal Masters second round.

The 25-year-old, who once stood third in the world, complained in defeat that his father Apostolos was not listening to him and was not providing the proper coaching motivation and input.

"Philosophy teaches us that wisdom comes through understanding our limits and acknowledging our mistakes," the younger Tsitsipas posted.

"In my case, I realised that I was wrong to talk to my father the way I did. Tennis is not just a match, a hit or a performance of a few seconds. It is a long journey full of emotions, pressure and expectations.

"In that moment of frustration, there were many mistakes and errors on the part of my coach and father.

"As an introvert, I tend to hold in my emotions and build them up until I reach a bursting point. I consider myself patient, so the fact that I reacted this way left me shocked."

Tsitsipas brought in another coach in 2023, staying under the wing of former Wimbledon and US Open finalist Mark Philippoussis for a few months before parting and returning to his father as mentor.

The Greek has just one title this season, repeating as Monte Carlo champion for a third time.

He added that while he has yet to select a replacement coach, his father will remain part of his team off the court.

## Johnson-Thompson to race for gold in thrilling finish



PARIS (Agencies): Team GB's Katarina Johnson-Thompson will race for Olympic heptathlon gold in the 800m on Friday night after finishing the morning session in second place, 121 points behind Nafissatou Thiam.

Belgium's Thiam tops the standings with 5,924 points, followed by Johnson-Thompson with 5,803 and Switzerland's Anna Kaelin on 5,694.

It means Johnson-Thompson, who has never won an Olympic medal, will have to run roughly eight seconds quicker than the defending champion to win.

The world champion began the day with a 48-point lead but knew it would be tough with Thiam's best event - the javelin - yet to come in Paris. She registered 6.40m in the long jump, enough to keep her ahead of Thiam, who could only cut her lead by three points.

Johnson-Thompson then threw a season's best 45.49m in the javelin - comparatively one of her weaker events - but

it was not enough to stop Thiam replacing her at the top of the standings. Thiam's huge throw of 54.04m helped her take the lead from Johnson-Thompson and set up a thrilling finale. The 800m takes place at 19:25 BST, with live coverage across BBC platforms.

How close to gold is Johnson-Thompson?

It will be a tough, tough ask for Johnson-Thompson under the lights - she will, ultimately, need the race of her life to claim gold. There are just 103 points between Johnson-Thompson and Thiam's personal bests in the 800m. Johnson-Thompson's best time is two minutes 05.63 seconds, while Thiam's is 2:11.79.

That would earn Johnson-

Thompson 1,064 points, and Thiam 961. However, the Briton has given herself a chance, having produced some of her best performances over the past two days. On Thursday, she registered a season's best performance in the 100m hurdles, logged her best mark for five years in the high jump and finished with a career-best throw in the shot put to top the standings.

But Thiam was always going to respond on Friday in the events she has historically been stronger in. The Belgian is the two-time defending Olympic champion and has won multiple world and European golds.

Burgin through to 800m final but Pattison out

Britain's Max Burgin qualified for Saturday's men's 800m final, but world bronze medalist Ben Pattison missed out.

Burgin was the third-fastest qualifier, running a personal best one minute 43.50 seconds, but compatriots Pattison and Elliot Giles both exited. Cindy Sember failed to qualify for the women's 100m hurdles final after stumbling in her semi-finals.

Great Britain's quartet of Yemi Mary John, Hannah Kelly, Jodie Williams and Lina Nielsen qualified for the women's 4x400m final with a season's best three minutes 24.72 seconds. They were second fastest in their heat, behind only the United States, with Ireland also advancing to Saturday's final.





## In brief

### Alarming increase in transgender beggars

ISLAMABAD (APP): The civil society has shown serious concern over the alarming increase of transgender beggars and alms seekers to manifold in the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad. When the people tried to ignore them, they cursed or abused the people and escaped, they said. Ghazanfar Abbas, a civil society activist has said that they have arrested 22 professional beggars from F-7, Blue Area, Nadra Office, D-Watson, and nearby localities so far. Dr Zara, a social activist explained that people do not have trust on them to recruit for jobs so they are forced for bagging. He further added, at every traffic signal in capital, transgender woman dressed in a traditional tunic and pants with scarf, holds up a smartphone with a QR code on it as the signal flashes crimson and vehicles come to a stop. Deputy Commissioner should initiate an operation to curb professional beggars in the federal capital, another Civil Society activist Dr Bashir Shah demanded. When inquired an official of ICT, he said that the ICT administration continuously conducted raids against the transgender's begging.

### IRSA releases 502,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 502,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 549,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tabela Dam was 1540.00 feet and was 142.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1.398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 322,100 cusecs and 294,400 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1208.35 feet, which was 160.35 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 29,800 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 388,300, 439,200, 346,100 and 273,300 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 88,900 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 91,200 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### AIOU gears up celebrations of independence day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has completed its preparations for the nation's Independence Day celebrations. According to the AIOU, following the guidance of Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the campus has been decorated with national flags and illuminated buildings, creating a festive atmosphere. Visitors, including families and youth, have been flocking to the university in the evenings to enjoy the decorations, sparking patriotic enthusiasm. It is worth mentioning that Allama Iqbal Open University regularly celebrates Independence Day with great enthusiasm every year. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, had instructed that this year, we should celebrate Independence Day in such a way that it becomes an example for educational institutions across the country. AIOU is among the first institutions to finalize its preparations, setting a high standard for other educational institutions. Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, commended Estate Officer Rao Zia Ur Rehman for his efforts in decorating the university and congratulated the entire Estate Office team for their diligent execution of duties.

# NA Speaker welcomes Imam Masjid-e-Nabwi; commends his presence as matter of great pride

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker, National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday cordially welcomed the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH), Sheikh Dr Salah Bin Muhammad Al Budair at the Parliament House with the delegation accompanied by the Ambassador of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Nawaf Bin Saeed Al Malaki.

The fifth meeting of the 8th session of the National Assembly commenced with the calming voice of Imam Sheikh Dr Salah Al Budair who recited the glorious verses of the Holy Quran advocating the commandments of Allah Almighty for the Muslims to keep unity intact among all their ranks to seek the blessings of their Lord. Deputy

Speaker, National Assembly Syed Mir Ghulam Mustafa Shah was also present on this occasion.

The Speaker National Assembly, before the proceedings, announced that the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi was present in the House. "The National Assembly warmly welcomes His Excellency, the Imam and his presence is a moment of great pride and spiritual peace for us," Imam Sheikh Dr Salah Bin Muhammad Al-Budair along with his delegation witnessed the proceedings of the National Assembly.

On the occasion, the Speaker said the Masjid-e-Nabawi has a special status in the hearts of all Muslim nations. "The House desires to benefit from your

knowledge and teachings. May Almighty Allah bless all of us to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet PBUH," Ayaz Sadiq said.

He also appreciated the Ambassador of KSA for being a staunch ambassador of Pakistan in the Kingdom. The Speaker National Assembly also congratulated Arshad Nadeem on winning a gold medal in the javelin throw event of Paris Olympics 2024.

"Arshad Nadeem is a talented and distinguished athlete. Arshad Nadeem has won a gold medal by demonstrating hard work, aching skills and struggle. Arshad Nadeem's services for the promotion of javelin throw in Pakistan are commendable. Arshad Nadeem has made Pakistan famous all over the

world by throwing the longest throw in the history of the Olympics javelin throw," Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said.

The whole nation is proud of Arshad Nadeem, he said after winning the gold medal in the javelin throw final and brought glory to the country and the nation. "Arshad Nadeem has created a new history in the sport of Olympics. He is an example for the youth of the nation that he has achieved the impossible through extreme hard work and struggle," he added. On the occasion, Minister for Defence, and Defence Production and Aviation, Khawaja Muhammad Asif said the Imam of Masjid-e-Nabawi's presence in the House was a moment of great pride and

honour. He also appreciated the Saudi Ambassador for his services and role as an ambassador of Pakistan in the Kingdom.

He also felicitated Athlete Arshad Nadeem for winning a gold medal and making the country proud. "Arshad Nadeem in Paris has raised the head of the nation with pride and honour as after three decades' hiatus he brought a medal in Olympics for the country," he said.

The minister said the national athletes used to prepare for games in great neglect and dilapidation without the patronage of the government and resources. "All the sports federations including javelin have no performance and patronage of the government except the Pakistan

Cricket Board (PCB) that only looks after cricket. There is only politics in all the federations of the country including football, hockey, and the Olympics federation etc.," Khawaja Asif said.

He derided the previous Presidents of the Olympic Association of Pakistan who stuck to their positions for decades but failed to achieve any convincing performance or betterment in the games. Khawaja Asif mentioned that all the sports federations had no structures but rather parallel forums were operating along with them. "This House also has this role and government has the prime duty taking the responsibility to cleanse the sports federations from politics," he added.

## Govt committed to bringing reforms in power sector: Awais

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman National Task Force and Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday said the government is committed to bring comprehensive reforms in the power sector to enhance its efficiency.

Talking to the media after chairing the meeting of National Task Force on Implementation of Structural Reforms in the Power Sector, the minister said that the Task Force reviewed the stock of all Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and their generation capacity. The Task Force also discussed various issues confronted by the energy sector of the

country, he added.

He said that the National Task Force strongly objected to propaganda about an increase in power tariff. Intentionally, persistent propaganda was being propagated that prices of electricity were being increased, he added.

The minister said that practically, the power tariff witnessed a 77 paisa decrease while unfortunately impression was given by various newspapers and television channels that the tariff has been increased. He said that yesterday, the power regulator-the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) issued a notification into fuel adjustment

cost (FCA) for June.

The adjustment for the billing month of August stood at Rs 2.56 per unit as compared to Rs 3.33 for July, thus the consumer would get relief of 77 paisa per unit, he said. Awais said that the government is making all-out efforts to address issues of the power sector adding that we would work with the same spirit to provide relief to the masses. He said that the people would hear good news within the next few weeks in this regard.

He said efforts would also be made to provide a true picture to the people through an effective communication strategy with the collaboration of all concerned departments.

## Work on world-class facilities for tourists in Murree underway

RAWALPINDI (APP): Provincial Minister of Communication and Works, Malik Sohaib Ahmed Bherath on Friday said that work was in progress to provide world-class facilities to the tourists in Murree.

He said that the construction and repair of fourteen highways of Murree including Hall Road, View Forth Road, Bank Road, Jhika Gully and Lower Topa Road has been completed. Moreover, model washrooms are being established for the convenience of tourists, he said.

The minister remarked on these views during a review briefing regarding ongoing projects under the government's grand Murree Development Plan. Provincial Transport Minister, Bilal Akbar Khan was also with him.

Malik Sohaib said that parking problems would be solved with the modern parking system in Murree.

"Chief Minister Punjab is paying special attention to the Murree Development Plan", he said and added that special focus is being given to the quality of the infrastructure materials to

be built under the Murree Development Plan. "All the projects will be completed on time", he said.

Transport Minister, Bilal Ahmad Khan said that the transport system was being improved to maintain a continuous flow of traffic in Murree.

It is worth mentioning here that the visit was conducted on instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Earlier, DC Murree, Agha Zaheer Shirazi briefed the provincial ministers on various projects of Murree development.

## Minister reviews Himat Card registration process

RAWALPINDI (APP): On the instructions of CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz, Provincial Minister for Social Welfare Sohail Shaukat Butt visited Murree to review the Himat Card registration process, on Friday.

The minister visited Trait, Sambli Tajal and Ghora Galli where he inquired about the registration of Himat Card from the disabled persons Talking on the occasion, Sohail Shaukat said that CM Maryam Nawaz was the voice of the oppressed class.

"According to the directions of the Punjab Chief Minister, the process of Himat card registration has

spread to the Union Council level" he said adding that the government would take additional steps for the welfare of special persons in accordance with the vision of the chief minister.

The provincial minister said that 400,00 disabled persons, 150,000 were those who cannot write. "Himat card is going to be launched for the welfare of people with disabilities" he said.

Sohail informed that monthly financial assistance of 10,500 rupees would be available to persons with disabilities through Himat card, after the completion of the record compiling. He told

that he was visiting various Himat card registration points of Punjab in order to maintain the standard of transparency.

Sohail informed that the registration for Himat Card registration can be done during office hours at Social Welfare Department offices, and also through helpline 1312.

"People are not only satisfied with the transparency of himat card registration, but are actively participating in the registration process", he concluded.

Director Social Welfare Rawalpindi Rana Shahid and other officers also accompanied him.

## ICT seal 11 plaza basements in E-11 sector

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad experienced a heavy downpour that caused rainwater to enter in the basements of several houses, prompting a swift response from the district administration and CDA teams. According to spokesman of ICT administration, as the city battles monsoon challenges, authorities urge residents to take precautions to ensure their safety.

He said the district administration, along with CDA teams, quickly initiated the de-watering process to address the situation.

He said that the multiple complaints were received about water seeping into the basements of various homes. Upon receiving these reports, sanitation teams were immediately dispatched to the affected

areas. The process of draining water from these houses was carried out using de-watering pumps and was successfully completed.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz, advised residents to avoid sleeping in their basements during the monsoon season.

He also suggested that if sleeping in the basement is necessary, residents should keep an alert system activated to ensure prompt evacuation in case of an emergency. The DC urged residents to report any emergency situations by calling 16.

The DC also appealed to residents in low-lying areas not to park their vehicles on the streets during heavy rains, as there was a risk of water flooding the roads when the nullah overflows.

He further advised resi-

dents to limit their movement during the monsoon rains to avoid accidents, especially involving children leaving their homes alone.

Meanwhile, in E-11 sector, water stagnation was observed in the basements of several plazas. As a preventive measure, the administration sealed the basements of 11 plazas. Notices were also issued to all residential and commercial buildings, instructing them to vacate their basements as a precaution.

Additionally, the Assistant Commissioner (AC) Shalimar held a meeting with representatives of various societies to discuss the situation. The meeting covered rescue operations, the deployment of de-watering sets, and the availability of life jackets and evacuation protocols.



ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Session starts with recitation of Imam Masjid Al-Nabvi (S.A.W) Sheikh Dr. Salah Mohammad M Al- Budair at Parliament House. —APP Photo

## Pakistan to host APFFD forum on 'Gender Empowerment & Green Economy'

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Coordinator for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Romina Khurshid Alam on Friday announced that Pakistan would host the two-day international Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (APFFD) on 'Gender Empowerment and Green Economy' that would convene regional female parliamentarians from 22 states.

Addressing a curtain-raiser press conference regarding a two-day meeting of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (APFFD) on 'Gender Empowerment and Green Economy' starting from Monday (August 11th), she said Pakistan would hold an international population and climate change conference under the auspices of the APFFD standing committee on Gender Empowerment.

Romina Khurshid Alam said that 22 states' female parliamentarians' as delegates would convene to discuss the impacts of climate change on women and their role in the green economy. She added that these parliamentarians would gather to share personal experiences, and knowledge, and mull over regional solutions for the challenges like population and climate change that have posed formidable threats to human security in the region.

In 1982, she said Pakistan was the founding member of this forum, whereas

in the 1994 APFFD Conference, the then Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had actively participated in the global moot.

The PM's aide underlined that Pakistan has a great opportunity to host the APFFD two-day international conference from August 12-13. The outcomes of the two-day global conference would be shared with the media in an exclusive briefing to be held under the patronage of the Prime Minister later, he added.

The conference, she said would specifically focus on green sectors, knowledge exchange, and best practices sharing among developing countries. Climate diplomacy was an important tool to address global warming and environmental degradation, necessary to promote stronger and durable collaborations for enhancing climate resilience for a sustainable future for all, she added.

Romina Khurshid Alam said that Pakistan would play a pivotal role in this conference and would take the lead role in engaging female parliamentarians of the member states in working out fruitful recommendations. "Climate change is a global issue and it has connected entire humanity. PM Shehbaz Sharif always gives priority to climate change, gender and peace," she said.

The APFFD comprises of 30 member states whereas delegates from 23 states have confirmed whereas the delegates from Cambodia,

Japan, China, Vietnam, Magnolia, Thailand and other regional countries are participating in the forum.

Responding to a query, Romina said the 23 delegates participating in the conference also included Japan's Minister of State for Education and Culture along with parliamentarians having strong leadership roles in their respective parliaments.

Overall, 300 international participants would attend the two-day international conference whereas organisations like UNFPA, Path Finders and others were collaborating with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination to make the conference a success, she added. Replying to an APP's query, the PM's aide informed that the APFFD office had sent invites to all member states whereas the participation of India was subject to its own decision. "Pakistan is welcoming all with open arms. However, India is not a member of the standing committee of the APFFD," she added.

She informed that all ministerial sectors were united in holding the conference which was also part of the COP29 preparatory process involving pre-COP lobbying. The ministry would share separate details on COP29, she said. The Prime Minister has formulated an inter-ministerial committee on the COP29 and climate change-related negotiations for well-coordinated efforts and preparations, she said.

## Educational institutes lead tree plantation drive

ISLAMABAD (APP): Capital Development Authority (CDA) on Friday engaged educational institutions in tree plantation drive at Margalla Hills National Park.

The drive aims to promote afforestation and beautify the city. Quaid-e-Azam University students and alumni joined Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa in planting saplings, earmarked for afforestation as Quaiden Enclave. The CDA is working closely with the Ministry of Climate Change and involving educational institutions, the corporate sector, and civil society to make the campaign a success.

Chairman Randhawa emphasized the importance of collective efforts to make the city beautiful and announced the launch of a mobile app, "Track a Tree," to monitor the planted trees. He also proposed awarding honorary marks to students who excel in the plantation campaign.

The CDA has strictly prohibited tree cutting in Islamabad, and FIRs will be lodged against those who violate this rule.



RAWALPINDI: A labourer on the way pulling a heavily loaded handcart to deliver the stuff to shops at Liaquat Bagh. —APP Photo

## ANF seizes 81 kg drugs in four operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting four operations managed to recover 81 kg drugs and arrested six accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He said, 12 kg opium and 21.6 kg hashish were

recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Kala Shah Kaku Toll Plaza Sheikhupura and an accused was arrested.

In two separate operations conducted in Sialkot, 26.4 kg hashish and 10.6 kg opium were recovered from the possession of

three suspects. In fourth operation, 1.4 kg hashish was recovered from an accused near F-7 Islamabad. Cases under the

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



**50 Quran memorizers graduate from religious school in Kabul**

KABUL (TOLONews): Fifty individuals, including girls, have graduated from a religious school in Kabul. Some of the girls who have graduated from this school emphasized the importance of acquiring modern sciences in addition to religious studies. Hasiba, a memorizer of the Quran, said: "The path of religious sciences is open, but the paths to modern sciences are closed. Our request to the Islamic Emirate is that, to open those paths."

**Taliban condemns Iran's treatment of Afghan refugee**

KABUL (Amu TV): Taliban on Friday condemned the treatment of an Afghan refugee in Iran following reports of an Iranian police officer beating an Afghan teenager, describing the incident as "concerning" and urging Iran to exercise "patience and tolerance" in its handling of migrants. In a statement, the Taliban-run Ministry of Refugees called on Iran to adhere to the "principles of migration and good neighborliness" in its treatment of Afghan refugees.

## Continued mistreatment will disrupt Kabul-Tehran relations: Ministry

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, in response to the mistreatment of Afghan refugees by Iranian police, has said in a statement that the continuation of this trend will disrupt relations between Kabul and Tehran.

In a statement, the ministry described the forced deportation and mistreatment of Afghan refugees as contrary to international laws and the principles of neighborliness and called on the Iranian government to allow Afghans the opportunity to voluntarily return to their country.

The statement reads: "Recently, reports of mistreatment of Afghans in Iran have been published, and distressing images have been circulated on social media, which have greatly concerned us. Just as the Islamic Emirate seeks good

relations with all neighboring countries, we ask them to refrain from actions that harm bilateral relations or provide grounds for false propaganda."

"The caretaker government should summon the Iranian ambassador in Kabul and start serious discussions with that country's officials to find a diplomatic solution to the challenges faced by Afghan migrants in Iran," said Bahram Behnam, a migrant rights activist.

At the same time, the leader of the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement also reacted to the mistreatment of Afghan refugees in Iran, calling on the government of that country not to oppress Afghan refugees.

Meanwhile, several Afghan migrants have complained about the continued mistreatment by Iranian police and have

called on the caretaker government to take action to address this issue.

"Afghan migrants in Iran are facing many problems, and they are being harassed, beaten, and extorted by the government," said Sharifullah Dost, an Afghan migrant in Iran.

"For the past few weeks, the situation for Afghan migrants in Iran has really deteriorated, and the Afghan government has not paid any attention to this issue," said Omid Hassani, another Afghan migrant in Iran.

This comes as the assistant to the Iranian Foreign Minister has stated that the Iranian government does not recognize any anti-migrant institution and considers it against the tradition of Islamic brotherhood and hospitality, calling anti-immigrant sentiment a foreign project.

## Maulvi Kabir: Islamic system inclusive, belongs to all Afghans



KABUL (Pajhwok): Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs Maulvi Abdul Kabir emphasised that the Islamic system is inclusive and belongs to all Afghans, with a commitment to safeguarding the rights of every individual without discrimination.

Maulvi Kabir made these remarks during separate meetings with tribal leaders from Nangarhar, Parwan, and Kapisa provinces at Sapidar Palace on Thursday, according to a statement from the Presidential Palace.

Tribal leaders from Nangarhar expressed pride in living under the Islamic

system and pledged their full cooperation. They also discussed the challenges they face, offering suggestions for improvement, particularly from Spinghar district.

Meanwhile, tribal elders and influential figures from Parwan and Kapisa viewed the Deputy Prime Minister's visits to Iran and Qatar as crucial for enhancing the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) international relations. They highlighted the importance of Afghanistan's independent Islamic system in conducting both domestic and foreign policies based on national interests.

These leaders also urged the IEA to focus on building essential infrastructure in their areas, including water supply networks, health centers, and schools. They called for the initiation of projects that would address these needs.

Maulvi Kabir welcomed the input from the tribal elders and reiterated that the Islamic system is not confined to any one tribe or group but is a shared framework for all Afghans. He assured the leaders that their concerns would be communicated to the appropriate authorities for resolution.

## Kabul residents complain of drinking water shortages

KABUL (TOLONews): A number of residents from various parts of the capital are complaining about the shortage of drinking water. They state that water is available through their taps only once a month and are urging officials to solve this problem by drilling deep wells.

Tofan, a resident of the eleventh district, said: "The water problems in this area are severe because the tap water only comes once a month. Sometimes we have to buy water, and other times we fetch it from

higher places."

Some residents of the 315 area of Kabul also complain about the poor quality of drinking water provided by certain private companies. Delawar Khan, a resident of the area, said: "We face many water problems; tap water comes only once a month."

Jamshid, a resident of the Khwaja Bughra area, said: "We brought water barrels, but I don't know when it will be my turn to fill them."

Meanwhile, the Kabul Water Supply Authority

says it has plans to address the water shortage in the capital.

Shafiuallah Zahidi, the head of the Kabul Water Supply Authority, said: "To address the water shortage in Kabul, we have three types of plans: short-term, medium-term, and long-term."

Previously, some residents of the capital had also complained about the shortage of drinking water and repeatedly asked the interim government to seriously address their challenges.

## Former district chief commits suicide

PAKTIKA (Khaama Press): Local sources in Paktika province report that a former district governor under the previous Afghan government attempted suicide after being tortured by the Taliban.

Sourced said on Thursday, August 8th, that the former governor, Nader Khan Suleimankhel, threw himself into a well and is now hospitalized.

According to the report, the Taliban arrested Suleimankhel, accusing him of possessing weapons. They tortured him during interrogation, demanding that he reveal the location of his weapons.

Sources revealed that during the interrogation, the Taliban demanded weapons from Suleimankhel. After severe torture, Suleimankhel told them that his weapons were hidden in a 40-meter-deep well at his home.

However, his relatives stated that Suleimankhel did not have any weapons at his residence.

Following his statement about hiding weapons, Taliban members escorted Suleimankhel and a local elder to his home. Upon entering the courtyard of his house, Suleimankhel kissed his children and asked the people around him to take care of them. He then threw himself into the well in an attempt to commit suicide.

Relatives reported that Suleimankhel sustained serious injuries, including broken arms, legs, and back, and is currently being treated at a hospital in Gardez.

His relatives said that after his suicide attempt, Suleimankhel confessed to the Taliban that they did not believe his oaths about not having weapons and forced him to lead them to the supposed hiding place through torture.

Suleimankhel reportedly stated, "After severe torture, I realized that they [the Taliban] do not believe in my oaths or the Quran and only trust forced confessions. So, I intended to commit suicide by leading them to the well in my home, where I planned to throw myself."

During the Taliban's rule, the group has arrested Suleimankhel several times, releasing him only after guarantees from local elders.

After the Taliban's takeover, Suleimankhel settled in a village in Khairkot district, where he opened a small shop next to his house.

According to several human rights organizations, in the past three years, over 87 people have died due to torture in Taliban intelligence prisons.

Human rights organizations, including the United Nations, have noted that despite the Taliban's declaration of a "general amnesty," the group continues to carry out arbitrary arrests, torture, and killings of former military personnel and government employees.

Meanwhile, Suleimankhel's tragic case underscores the ongoing persecution and human rights violations under Taliban rule, despite their claims of amnesty. The plight of former government officials and security personnel remains a pressing concern as they continue to face extreme violence and injustice.

## Arg: UK seeks to enhance diplomatic relations with Islamic Emirate

KABUL (TOLONews): Robert Chatterton Dickson, Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan, said that he is striving to improve political relations and positive interactions between Kabul and London.

The Presidential Palace (Arg) in a statement said that Dickson, in a meeting with Mawlawi Zakir, head of the political deputy PM's office, said that his country is cooperating in developing global relations with the Islamic Emirate.

The statement from Arg reads: "Robert Dickson said that he is working to repair political relations and foster positive engagement between the Islamic Emirate and Britain. He considered the meeting of the Political Deputy of the Prime Minister with foreign diplomats in Doha to be positive, and according to him, many issues were clarified, and concerns were addressed."

"If the UK genuinely desires, it can steer Afghanistan's relations with the world and the world's relations with Afghanistan towards compatibility," said Edris Mohammadi Zazai, a political analyst.

The Arg statement also said that Mawlawi Zakir, in this meeting, described positive relations with the world as the priority of the Islamic Emirate's foreign policy and added that a high-level governmental commission has been established in the



fight against narcotics.

He added that the restrictions imposed on the Islamic Emirate are not a solution to the current challenges.

The press release from Arg added: "He stated that the restrictions imposed on Afghanistan are not a solution and that their significant harm is directed at the people. The General Director of the Office of the Political Deputy of the Prime Minister called for the immediate implementation of the commitments made during the third Doha meeting and added that the Islamic Emirate remains committed to its promises,

and to effectively combat narcotics, a high-level Emirati commission has been established, demonstrating the Islamic Emirate's commitment."

"In this meeting, discussions were held on what the international community had pledged and committed to during the third Doha meeting, which includes alternative livelihoods and humanitarian aid," said Samiullah Ahmadzai, a political analyst.

Earlier, the Political Deputy of the Prime Minister, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, asked foreign diplomats in Qatar to reopen their political missions in Kabul.

## Mujahid's trial continues in Taliban court without clear charges



KABUL (Khaama Press): Reports indicate that the trial of Allah-Gul Mujahid, a former member of the Afghan Parliament, by the Taliban is ongoing, with no final verdict issued yet.

Allah-Gul Mujahid returned to Kabul in July of

last year and was subsequently arrested and imprisoned. According to reports, Mujahid stated that the Taliban arrested him with "political motives."

On May 13, the Taliban's police command spokesperson announced that Mujahid is suspected

of killing a person named "Qari Saeedullah" and will remain in custody.

Despite the statements from the Taliban's police spokesperson, sources close to Mujahid said that the charges against him are unclear and that he was arrested "without reason and with political motives."

Taliban members in Kabul controversially arrested Mujahid in November 2021 and later left Afghanistan. At that time, a video of Mujahid's arrest by the Taliban was circulated, which many described as "humiliating."

Allah-Gul Mujahid had returned to Afghanistan at the invitation of the

Taliban's Commission for Contact with Political Figures. The ongoing trial of Allah-Gul Mujahid, marked by political tension and uncertainty, reflects the complex and often opaque legal processes under the Taliban's rule.

The lack of a clear verdict and the accusations of political motivation behind his arrest have raised concerns about the fairness and transparency of the judicial proceedings in Afghanistan.

As Mujahid remains in custody, the situation highlights broader issues of political repression and the targeting of former political figures by the Taliban.

## Baradar: Turkmenistan FM pledged readiness for TAPI project

KABUL (TOLONews): The Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan, in a virtual meeting with Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, deputy prime minister for economic affairs, said that Turkmenistan is ready to begin work on the TAPI project in Afghanistan with the aim of developing political and economic relations.

According to a press release from the Deputy Prime Minister's Office for Economic Affairs, the virtual meeting also discussed economic, transit, trade, and political cooperation between the two countries.

The press release further mentioned that the Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan requested Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar visit Turkmenistan at an appropriate time.

Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar said in the meeting that the Islamic Emirate, with a focus on an economy-centered foreign policy, is primarily focused on regional connectivity and needs Turkmenistan's cooperation to achieve this goal.

Abdul Latif Nazari, the Deputy Minister of Economy, told TOLONews about this virtual meeting: "The Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs discussed the expansion of railways, energy development, and the TAPI project with the Foreign



Minister of Turkmenistan, and it was also decided to increase economic, trade, and transit cooperation between the two countries."

Some economic experts said the start of the TAPI project and the expansion of relations between Kabul and Ashgabat are important for the economic growth of both countries.

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic expert, told TOLONews: "The TAPI project can undoubtedly bring many economic benefits to Afghanistan, provided that the implementation of this project proceeds correctly. TAPI can provide employ-

ment opportunities for the people of Afghanistan to some extent."

"Afghanistan is an untapped country, and any project can positively impact Afghanistan, including the TAPI project, which has its own effectiveness since Afghanistan will earn 400 million dollars annually in transit fees," said Mir Shekib Mir, an economic analyst.

Previously, the Turkmenistan ambassador in Kabul also discussed his country's investments in Afghanistan's mines and the start of the TAPI project in the near future during a meeting with the acting minister of Mines and Petroleum.

KABUL (Khaama Press): UN experts have called on the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to support Afghan women athletes and provide them with resources.

On Friday, UN experts, including Richard Bennett, the organization's human rights reporter for Afghanistan, said in a statement that the Taliban's actions against women's and girls' sports are part of the group's discriminatory and

repressive measures against women, which could amount to crimes against humanity.

For nearly three years, women and girls in Afghanistan under Taliban control have been deprived of many of their rights, including the right to work and education, participation in sports, visiting parks, and travelling without a male guardian from their family.

They urged sports organizations to take action against the

Taliban's bans on women's participation in sports.

UN experts stated that the Taliban's prohibition on women engaging in sports is an unacceptable violation of their rights, and no other country has taken such action.

In this year's Olympics in Paris, three female athletes and three male athletes represented Afghanistan. However, the Taliban announced that it does not recognize the participation

of these Afghan women athletes in the Olympic Games.

They also stated that the horrific deprivation of Afghan women and girls from their rights and dignity, including in sports, must end. The statement emphasized that "culture should not be used as an excuse to violate human rights, including cultural rights such as the right to participate in sports."

UN experts said that international sports organizations have

a responsibility to fight against the Taliban's repressive policies and to support Afghan women athletes everywhere.

They welcomed the International Olympic Committee's support for the participation of Afghan women athletes in these games but emphasized that more support is needed.

These experts further insisted that international sports organizations should refrain from any actions that might be interpreted as

complicity with the Taliban's discriminatory and illegal policies.

In the face of the ongoing oppression faced by Afghan women, it is imperative that the global community stands in solidarity to uphold the fundamental rights of all individuals, irrespective of gender.

The exclusion of women from sports not only undermines their personal freedoms but also weakens the broader human rights framework that

the international community has worked to establish.

The continued advocacy and pressure from international bodies such as the UN and IOC are crucial in challenging the Taliban's repressive measures.

It is through persistent and unified global efforts that the voices of Afghan women can be amplified, ensuring that their rights are not just acknowledged but actively protected and promoted.

## UN experts urge IOC to counter Taliban's ban by supporting Afghan women athletes





ISLAMABAD: Imam Masjid Al-Nabawi, Sheikh Salah bin Mohammad Al-Budair reciting before starting of National Assembly session.

## KP CM reviews progress on Peshawar Valley plan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sardar Ali Amin Gandapur, has instructed the relevant authorities to accelerate the development of the New Peshawar Valley Housing Project. This directive was issued during an important meeting held at CM House, Peshawar, where the Chief Minister reviewed the progress of this pivotal initiative aimed at improving the standard of living for the people of Peshawar.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Peshawar Division, Riaz Khan Mahsud, Director General Peshawar Development Authority, Khalid Mahmood, and other senior officials. The Chief Minister stressed the need for the project to adhere to international standards in urban planning and construction, ensuring that it meets the evolving needs of the region's population. Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also emphasized the importance of integrating urban forestry into the housing project, advocating for the introduction of mini forests within the development.

Meanwhile, the Chief

Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the quarters concerned to propose necessary amendments in the relevant legal frameworks for making Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Public Services Commission and Right to Information Commission more effective, strong and stable, adding that it is imperative to further improve the relevant legal framework as per public expectations so that the vision behind establishing these Institutions can be materialized in real sense.

These directives, he issued while chairing two separate meetings of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Right to Services (RTS) and Right to Information (RTI) Commissions held here at Chief Minister's House on Friday.

Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Amjad Ali Khan, Chief Commissioner RTI Farah Hamid Khan, Commissioners RTS Zakir Hussain, Muhammad Asim Imam and other relevant officials attended the meetings. The participants were thoroughly briefed about the background, mandates, legal frameworks, perform-

ance and other related matters of both the commissions.

The chief minister has also directed the authorities for immediate appointment of Chief Commissioner in the Right to Services Commission and two Commissioners in the Right to Information Commission. He further directed authorities to take steps for wide awareness of general public about the services being provided by the commissions, so that the citizens can approach them for the adjudication of their complaints. We need special public awareness campaign at large scale across the province to this effect, he remarked and directed that representatives of Right to Services Commission should also attend the "Khuli Kachahries" organised by the Deputy Commissioners for this purpose.

He said that people's confidence in the institutions always depends on timely redressal of their grievances. We have to encourage the citizens and give them full confidence so that they feel free to approach the institutions for solving their problems, he concluded.

## Armed Forces greet Arshad Nadeem

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the Services Chiefs extend their warmest felicitations to the nation on this momentous occasion, as Arshad Nadeem etches his name in history by becoming the first Pakistani athlete to secure an individual gold medal for Pakistan at the World Olympics.

This remarkable achievement is a testament to Arshad Nadeem's unwavering dedication, unrelenting perseverance, and exemplary hard work, serving as a beacon of inspiration for the entire nation. His triumph is a resounding affirmation of Pakistani talent and determination, showcasing the country's potential to excel on the global stage.

By clinching the first ever individual gold medal in Javelin throw at the World Olympics, Arshad Nadeem has brought immense pride and joy to the people of Pakistan, cementing his status as a national hero and an iconic symbol of sporting excellence.

## Govt to bring reforms in power sector

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of National Task Force and Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari on Friday said the government is committed to bring comprehensive reforms in the power sector to enhance its efficiency.

Talking to the media after chairing the meeting of National Task Force on Implementation of Structural Reforms in the Power Sector, the minister said that the Task Force reviewed the stock of all Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and their generation capacity. The Task Force also discussed various issues confronted by the energy sector of the country, he added.

He said that the National Task Force strongly objected to propaganda about an increase in power tariff. Intentionally, persistent propaganda was being propagated that prices of electricity were being increased, he added. The minister said that practically, the power tariff witnessed a 77 paise decrease while unfortunately impression was given by various newspapers and television channels that the tariff has been increased. He said that yesterday, the power regulator- the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) issued a notification into fuel adjustment cost (FCA) for June. The adjustment for the billing month of August stood at Rs 2.56 per unit as compared to Rs 3.33 for July, thus the consumer would get relief of 77 paise per unit, he said.

# CASS discusses ongoing crisis in Jammu and Kashmir

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, conducted a special session under its Catalyst Conversation Series on 'Chinars in Chains: India's Siege of Jammu and Kashmir' with Mr Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations, to discuss the current situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Air Marshal Farooq Habib (Retd), Senior Director at CASS, set the stage for the discussion and highlighted that the full integration of IIOJK into the Indian Union has been a central element of the BJP and RSS's Hindutva agenda. He noted that abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A on 5th August 2019 by the Modi government were followed by severe security measures including curfews and communication blackouts in the disputed territory. Air Marshal Habib also observed that the Indian Supreme Court supported the government's actions, which included the enactment of laws aimed at changing the region's demographics by allowing an influx of non-Kashmiris. He shared that five years on, the Muslim majority in IIOJK continues to face marginalisation and repression, with the international community largely remaining silent on these issues.

In his Keynote Address, the Distinguished Speaker Mr Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman, Kashmir Institute of International Relations, discussed the considerable socio-political and economic upheavals in Jammu & Kashmir since the revocation of Article 370 and 35A, marking five years of continued distress and despair. Mr Wani highlighted that Jammu & Kashmir remains under direct control from New Delhi, lacking an elected government, which he described as a severe democratic deficit. He noted that the region operates akin to a 'police state', with heightened levels of incarceration and constant surveillance.

About 19,000 people, including political and human rights activists, were detained, impacting over 8 million Kashmiris who faced shortages of essentials and medical supplies due to the lockdown. He further pointed out the economic turmoil



within the region, stating that businesses have suffered immense losses while poverty, hunger, and unemployment have risen, starkly contradicting claims made by the Modi government.

Mr Wani observed that in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the electorate in IIOJK expressed their dissatisfaction through their votes. Despite the BJP's carrot and stick policy, it failed to secure a candidate for the three constituencies in the occupied Kashmir Valley, and their proxy candidates were also defeated, indicating that the Kashmiris' support lies with those who champion their rights.

Mr Wani was of the view that significant settler-colonial policies are in place, including land acquisitions by non-local industrialists which disrupt the local Muslim demography. He underscored the issuance of over 500,000 new domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris as an intentional act to alter the demographic makeup of the region. Regarding human rights, Mr Wani detailed numerous violations under the enforced draconian laws such as the Public Safety Act and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. These laws, he said, have facilitated a surge in extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and a general misuse of anti-terrorism legislation.

He lamented the international community's response, noting that despite criticisms from UN Special Rapporteurs about the incompatibility of India's actions with international human rights standards, there remains a lack of accountability for these abuses. Mr Wani also criticised the severe restrictions on media freedom and the suppression of dissent,

which he said significantly curtails the flow of information and silences human rights defenders in the region. However, he also highlighted that the youth of IIOJK have become pivotal in conveying the ground realities of suppression. In the absence of external support, this younger generation has not only been a source of information but also a source of strength. They have successfully established a support base beyond the international press, a feat that eluded the previous generation.

In his Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks, Air Marshal Javid Ahmed (Retd), President CASS-Islamabad, reflected on the strategic and diplomatic approaches necessary for addressing the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He discussed the limitations of strategic patience or a defensive posture in dealings with India, asserting that such approaches are unlikely to bring about a resolution. He advocated for the proactive use of modern communication tools.

The active employment of social media, along with cultural productions such as dramas, movies, and songs about the occupied territory, and leveraging influencers in these mediums, are critical strategies for shaping international perceptions and garnering global support for Jammu & Kashmir, he noted. President CASS also stressed the importance of developing Azad Kashmir as a model for future governance and development strategies in the region. 'We must critically assess our development achievements in Azad Kashmir; it should serve as a benchmark for envisioning the future of Kashmir,' he concluded.

## PHC restrains govt from actions against employees

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: A two-member bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Ijaz Khan Sabi has restrained the federal government from taking any adverse actions against the petitioners and issued a notice to the government for response in a writ petition filed against the cancellation of the recruitment process of employees in the Postal Services from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which was initiated 15 months ago, on Friday.

The counsel Sultan Muhammad Khan and

Babar Khan Yousufzai advocates argued that the petitioners were appointed in 2023 after completing all the requirements and passing the relevant tests. They stated that the recruitment process was transparent and merit-based, and that the employees were appointed after a thorough scrutiny of their documents.

The lawyers argued that some elements, due to personal likes and dislikes, initiated an inquiry into the recruitment process and recommended cancellation of the appointments. They stated that the inquiry was conducted without giving the petitioners an opportunity to be heard and without

pointing out any deficiencies in their documents.

The lawyers further argued that the Peshawar High Court had previously ruled in a similar case that transparency is essential in any department, and that a screening test is necessary to ensure merit. They stated that the test conducted by the Postal Services was lawful and in accordance with the rules.

PHC restrained the federal government from taking any action against the petitioners and issued a notice to the government, seeking a response after hearing arguments while adjourned further hearings.



ISLAMABAD: Police officials trying to stop activists of Sunni Ulema Council during a protest in favour of their demands.

## Israeli strike kills senior Hamas figure

BEIRUT (Reuters): An Israeli airstrike on a car deep inside Lebanon killed a senior figure from Palestinian armed group Hamas on Friday evening, a Hamas source and two other security sources told Reuters.

The strike, on the southern edges of the Lebanese port city of Sidon some 60 kilometers (nearly 40 miles) from the frontier, killed Samer Al-Hajj, a Hamas security official who works in the nearby refugee camp for Palestinians, Ain Al-Hilweh. His bodyguard was critically wounded, the three sources said. The Israeli military has been carrying out strikes against members of Hamas, allied Lebanese armed group Hezbollah and other factions in Lebanon over the last 10 months, in parallel with the Gaza war.

Those armed groups have launched rockets, drones and artillery attacks across the border into northern Israel. While most of the hostilities have been limited to the strip of border between Israel and Lebanon, Israeli strikes targeting senior figures in Hezbollah, Hamas and other groups have taken place further north.

An Israeli strike on the outskirts of Beirut in January killed Hamas's deputy chief Saleh Arouri. Another Israeli strike on the same area last week killed Hezbollah's top military commander Fuad Shukur. Hours after Shukur was killed, Hamas chief Ismail Haniyeh was assassinated in Tehran. Iran and its allies in the region, including Hezbollah and Hamas, have blamed Israel and vowed retaliation.

(Continued from Page 1)

He said that ever since coming into power, the present government, many steps have been taken for growth of agriculture sector and referred the project to solarise 28,000 tube wells in Balochistan to provide the farmers with cheap electricity. Shehbaz Sharif said that Pakistan will send 1,000 agricultural graduate to China to get higher education and training in agriculture and food sector. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed confidence that "nothing is impossible, if we all put our best efforts".

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also congratulated the Pakistani Athlete Arshad Nadeem for winning Gold medal and setting new Olympic record in javelin throw in the Paris Olympic-2024 and said that this is the victory for the whole country and we all should celebrate. Earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif along with other dignitaries presented awards to top three exporters including rice, fruit and vegetable and meat

sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Federal Commerce, Minister Jam Kamal said that the support of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the agriculture sector is exemplary and very encouraging for the entire community. He said that the Pakistan's Food sector is mature and the last year for the sector of Food and Agriculture remained excellent and achievements in the sector were manifestation of government's policies.

He appreciated the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) for organizing the FoodAG-24 and said around 300 companies and 600 delegates are expected to attend the event. Earlier, in his address, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of TDAP Zubair Motiwala said that around 29 different types of fruits are being exported from the country world over. We are also conducting various events like seminar and workshop with a view to further

increase our exports, he added.

Zubair Motiwala said that our next exhibition will be organized in Lahore in December this year. Trade Minister of Türkiye Prof. Dr. Omer Bolat, Federal Commerce, Minister Jam Kamal, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Atta Tarrat, Sindh Governor, Kamran Khan Tessori, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah and other notables were also present on the occasion.

**PM reiterates determination for complete eradication of polio from Pakistan:** Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif reiterated the determination for the complete eradication of polio from the country with the joint efforts of the federal, provincial governments and Gilgit-Baltistan and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments.

The prime minister said this while presiding over an important review meeting on anti-polio during his visit

to Karachi. Gates Foundation Chairman Bill Gates and Global Development President Dr. Chris Elias participated in the meeting through the video link. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, four provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan and the Azad Jammu and Kashmir governments committed to complete eradication of polio from the country. All federal units also agreed to joint efforts for polio eradication.

While talking to the participants of the meeting, the prime minister reiterated the determination for the complete eradication of polio. He thanked the Bill Gates Foundation for its extraordinary support and assistance to the health care system in Pakistan, especially polio prevention.

The prime minister also thanked the other partners of the government regarding anti-polio. He said that a

whole-of-government approach has been adopted to eradicate polio. He further said, "we are doing our best to eradicate this deadly virus by 2025".

The prime minister directed that all the resources of the state should be utilized for the complete elimination of polio from the country. He directed that multiple doses of vaccine should be given to every child in Pakistan. He emphasized that provision of the polio vaccine should be ensured to every child in areas where there are security challenges.

The prime minister said that with the dedication of frontline workers, the determination of the Government of Pakistan and the support of partners, Pakistan has made significant progress against polio; The emergence of new polio cases is worrisome, but with the support of provincial governments and partners, polio will be defeated.

Chairman of the Gates Foundation, Bill Gates while appre-

ciating the government's anti-polio initiatives, expressed satisfaction over the increase in the rate of children receiving anti-polio vaccine drops in the southern districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said that it is gratifying that the government of Pakistan has planned to give inactivated poliovirus vaccine (IPV) to 4 million children.

The meeting was briefed on the anti-polio strategy. The meeting was informed that recently one polio case has been reported from Qila Abdullah district and Chakwal district. The meeting was told that currently, Quetta and Karachi divisions are major centers of polio virus spread. The meeting was informed that the anti-polio monitoring system has been improved; positive progress has been made in terms of increasing ties and coordination between Pakistan and Afghanistan in preventing the spread of the polio virus. The meeting was informed that a nationwide polio vaccine campaign will be conducted in September, October and December 2024.