

Internet working slowly
F.P. Report
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is grappling with ongoing issues related to internet connectivity, with users reporting consistently slow speeds and frequent disruptions, particularly in mobile data services. The situation has been exacerbated by a widespread outage of WhatsApp, a crucial communication tool for both citizens and businesses.



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Police baton-charge tourists
F.P. Report
MURREE: Police baton-charged tourists in Murree and arrested several of them for creating fuss on the occasion of Independence Day on Wednesday. As a result of baton-charge by the police, a number of tourists got injured. The Mall Road in Murree was presenting the picture of a battlefield during the lathi-charged by cops against tourists responsible for rowdyism.

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Good news on power prices coming soon

Prime Minister urges nation to support govt in making Pakistan stable, prosperous

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday, congratulating the nation on the 78th Pakistan Independence Day, urged the people especially the youth to support the government in its efforts to make the country, prosperous, stable and peaceful.

He said the youth were the bright future of the country who could play their role in the country's development. "The next few years are crucial for you and the country, so only focus on your studies and attaining skilled-based education, and do not indulge yourself in the negative agenda of the enemy who is out to target you and utilize your capabilities in anti-state activities," he asked the youth while addressing a ceremony held here in connection with the independence day celebrations.

Unfortunately, he said the enemy was now using digital terrorism tools to sabotage the country's development journey. On the occasion of the Independence Day, the prime minister extended his heartfelt felicitations to the people of Pakistan and paid homage to the immense sacrifices of forefathers and countless unsung heroes of the Pakistan Movement, who fought tirelessly for an independent country for millions in South Asia, where they could live according to their beliefs and values.

As envisioned by Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Pakistan emerged as an independent and sovereign state on the map of the world on 14th August 1947 through the unwavering and steadfast leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and unmatched sacrifices of our ancestors, he added. The prime minister highlighted that although during the past 77 years, the country's journey

had not been exemplary but it was also the fact that it managed to survive due to the resilience, its people had shown through natural disasters and economic and social challenges.

"We should learn from our past and move forward with the renewed pledge and resolve to take the country on the path of prosperity and development," he added. He said although, today, the people were much worried about inflation, electricity bills, unemployment and other issues, but he was very concerned about providing maximum relief to the people.

On the occasion, he also paid tribute to the people belonging to various sectors including sports, education, health, etc. He also saluted Olympic hero Arshad Nadeem who won a gold medal for Pakistan in Paris Olympics and was present in the ceremony along with his mother. The prime minister resolved that in order to fulfill the dream of Quid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, he would continue hard work for the country's development. He said that currently electricity bills was the biggest concern of everybody and without reducing the electricity tariffs, Pakistan's industry, agriculture, and exports could not grow. "The government is working day and night to resolve this issue," he said assuring that in few days the government will give the nation a good news of significant cut in electricity tariffs.

Furthermore, he said that he would address the nation in few days in which he would present a five-years economic plan of the country. PM Shehbaz Sharif, on the occasion, also condemned the ongoing Israeli barbarism on the Palestinians saying that the "massacre of thousands of innocent Palestinians has diminished our pleasures on the occasion of independence day".

Similarly, he also expressed the government's resolve to stand by the Kashmiri brothers and sisters until the resolution of the issue according to the will of the people of Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K).

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday thanked his UAE counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum for his warm greetings on Pakistan's Independence Day.

"I thank Your Highness and the entire leadership of UAE for always standing with Pakistan in our journey towards peace, progress and prosperity. I am confident that by working together, we can build a bright future for our peoples. Long live Pakistan-UAE brotherhood," the prime minister wrote on his official X account in response to the felicitation message by Prime Minister of United Arab Emirates (UAE) Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The UAE prime minister extending his felicitation to the leadership and people of Pakistan on the occasion of its Independence Day, reiterated his country's steadfast commitment to strengthening bilateral collaboration, exploring new opportunities for growth, and working together to build a future of prosperity and success.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also hoisted the national flag in a National Flag Hoisting Ceremony held at the Pakistan Monument in connection with 77th Pakistan Independence Day celebrations. The ceremony was also attended by national Olympic hero Arshad Nadeem and Chairman Senate Yusuf Raza Gilani. The prime minister laid a floral wreath at the Pakistan Monument to pay tribute to the country's founding fathers and national heroes.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif laying a floral wreath at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada in Pakistan Monument on the 78th Independence Day.

Nation celebrates Independence Day with zeal

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The nation celebrates the 77th Independence Day on Wednesday with traditional zeal and enthusiasm and with renewed resolve to work with the spirit of Pakistan Movement to make the country a true Islamic welfare state.

The day dawned with thirty-one gun salute in the federal capital and twenty-one gun salute in the provincial headquarters. Prayers were offered after Fajr for security and well-being of the people. It is a public holiday today. National flag has been hoisted at all important public and private buildings.

The country came into existence on Aug 14, 1947 after a long struggle of the All-India Muslim League under the visionary leadership of the founding father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The partition and creation of a sovereign Muslim state was the dream of millions of Muslims of the sub-continent. For the purpose of a separate homeland, the Muslims had rendered matchless sacrifices, faced hardships, migration, and left a long trail of heroic struggle for the generations to come.

The partition had also witnessed a huge migration in human history: Muslims from India to Pakistan and Hindus from Pakistan to India. The day will also be marked with celebratory events of flag-raising ceremonies, parades, change of guards, cultural events, award-winning ceremonies, patriotic songs, and the national anthem. The Pakistani diaspora and missions around the globe will also celebrate the day with patriotic zeal.

Flag hoisting ceremonies held at Armed Forces Headquarters: The Armed Forces of Pakistan, the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, and the Services Chiefs extend heartfelt felicitations to the nation on the Independence Day of Pakistan, a momentous occasion that commemorates the realization of a long-cherished dream of a separate homeland for Muslims.

COAS vows to defend country against threats

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir has reaffirmed commitment to safeguarding and defending the country against all internal and external threats.

He was addressing the Azadi Parade at Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) in Kakul last night on the occasion of the country's Independence Day. The Army chief emphatically stated that Pakistan stands ready to give swift and severe response to any aggression by the enemy.

He said the nation has consistently emerged stronger from challenges with mutual trust between the populace and the armed forces. He warned against disunity and fragmentation, which can undermine internal stability and pave the way for external aggression. The Army Chief assured that the unwavering trust of the nation on its armed forces remains the country's most valuable asset and impervious to any negative force.

The Army Chief said that the country was not merely created to exist, but to achieve prominence on

the global stage. He underscored the importance of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's call for collective nation-building and reiterated his respect and tribute to the leaders, martyrs, and veterans of Pakistan.

Chief of Army Staff lauded Pakistan's strategic position and its potential and attributed the nation's bright future to its abundant natural resources, hard-working populace, and determined youth. He also commended the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies for their successful counter-terrorism efforts and sacrifices.

Turning towards Pakistan's Army's counter-terrorism and peace efforts, the Army Chief expressed concern over the resurgence of terrorism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa due to extremist actions and reaffirmed the stance that those who reject both Islamic law and the Constitution of Pakistan cannot be considered Pakistanis. He praised the bravery and sacrifices of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and emphasized that their contributions are deeply valued by

the entire nation.

Talking about Balochistan, the Army Chief highlighted the importance of continued support for the people of Balochistan and the role of the Pakistan Army in ensuring the province's stability and development.

About regional countries, the Army Chief expressed gratitude to allied nations such as China, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Turkey for their unwavering support to Pakistan in every hour of difficulty.

In his concluding remarks, the Army Chief reminded the audience of the sacrifices made for freedom and reaffirmed support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for right to self-determination. General Asim Munir also condemned the ongoing atrocities of Israel in Gaza, and praised the Pakistan government's efforts for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. The Army Chief also praised the cadets at Pakistan Military Academy for their dedication, and affirmed that Pakistan's future remains bright and secure.

Four jawans martyred

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Fire exchange took place between the Security Forces and Khwarij in South Waziristan District. Resultantly, six Khwarij were sent to hell due to effective engagement by own troops.

However, during intense fire exchange, four brave sons of soil; Havildar Nisar Hussain (age: 34 years, resident of District Kurram), Naik Rashid Gul (age: 34 years, resident of District Kurram), Naik Irfan Ullah Khan (age: 30 years, resident of District Lakki Marwat) and Sep Usman Rafiqat (age: 21 years, resident of District Haripur), having fought gallantly embraced Shahadat.

Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Kharji found in the area as Security Forces of Pakistan are determined to wipe-out the menace of terrorism and such sacrifices of our brave soldiers further strengthen our resolve.

Head constable embrace martyrdom: A police head constable identified as Siasat Khan was martyred while a constable, Hazrat Nabi was injured when unidentified militants hurled a hand grenade on a police post at Paloso area of Mayar late on Tuesday night, police and residents said. They said the militants escaped when police retaliated with heavy firing.

US reaffirms support for Israel amid tensions with Iran

Ceasefire talks set for Thursday as America pushes for resolution in Middle East crisis

Jaail Afridi

WASHINGTON DC: In a press briefing held on Wednesday, US State Department Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel emphasized the United States' unwavering commitment to defending Israel against any threats posed by Iran or its affiliated groups. Patel stated, "We will defend Israel and our members from any attacks from Iran or its proxies," underscoring the gravity of the ongoing Middle East conflict.

The briefing also touched upon a recent trilateral meeting involving President Biden, the Emir of Qatar, and the President of Egypt. Discussions focused on the escalating crisis in Gaza, where Hamas, led by Yahya Sinwar, continues to be a central player. The US has expressed concerns over the humanitarian impact of the conflict, with Patel condemning Hamas for using civilians as human shields and misusing facilities such as hospitals and schools for military purposes.

Ceasefire talks, scheduled for Thursday, remain a focal point of international diplomatic efforts. Qatar's role in ensuring that Hamas representatives are part of these negotiations was highlighted, reflecting the complexities of brokering peace in the region.

The US reiterated its stance on a two-state solution as the path forward, stressing the importance of maintaining the status quo at holy sites and mourning the loss of innocent civilian lives. Patel affirmed, "Any number above zero is too many when an innocent civilian loses life."

On other fronts, Patel addressed the ongoing Ukraine conflict, firmly placing the blame on President Putin's invasion and reaffirming the US's commitment to ensuring Ukraine has the necessary resources to defend itself. Lastly, Patel dismissed allegations of US involvement in attempts to destabilize Bangladesh, calling such claims

"laughable."

Blinken postpones Middle East trip amid 'uncertainty,' approves \$20bn Israel weapons package: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken has postponed his trip to the Middle East, delaying his planned departure, Axios reported ahead of planned Gaza ceasefire talks this week. The top US diplomat's travel was delayed over "uncertainty about the situation," Axios said, citing two unnamed sources.

On Tuesday, Hamas fired two rockets aimed at Tel Aviv for the first time in months while Israel launched separate deadly airstrikes in Gaza. On Monday, US officials had said they expected Thursday's talks to continue as planned. Also on Tuesday, Blinken approved the possible sale to Israel of fighter jets and other military equipment worth over \$20 billion, the Pentagon said.

In a statement, the Pentagon said Blinken approved the possible sale of F-15 jets and equipment worth nearly \$19 billion. He also approved the possible sale of tank cartridges worth around \$774 million and army vehicles worth \$583 million, the Pentagon said. The tank rounds would be almost immediately available for delivery. The Boeing Co. F-15 fighter jets would take years to produce and deliver.

The US has staunchly supported Israel as its top Middle East ally prosecutes a war in the Gaza Strip that has devastated the Palestinian enclave. The war was set off by the militant group Hamas' Oct. 7 attack in southern Israel. While approving weapons to Israel, Washington has also tried to arrange a ceasefire deal in Gaza that would potentially stave off a wider Middle East war. Fears of a broader war have increased since the recent killings of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Iran and Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukr in Beirut. Both drew threats of retaliation against Israel.

Performance award.

Mian Aziz Ahmed, Haneed Lakhani, Sana Hashwani and Safinaz Munir will be given Sitara-i-Imtiaz while Arshad Aziz Malik, Bakhtiar Ahmed and Barrister Zafarullah will receive Tamgha-i-Imtiaz.

Fareeha Pervaz, Hamid Rana, Sheeba Arshad and Naveed Ahmed Bhatti will be honoured with Pride of Performance award. In the field of literature, Javed Jabbar will be given Hilal-i-Imtiaz while Salman Awan, Zafar Waqar Taj and Muneeza Shamsi will be awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Syad Jawad Hussain Jafari will be honoured with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz while Anbreen Haseeb will be given Presidential Pride of Performance award. In the field of sports, Maqsood Ahmed, Imad Shakeel Butt, Rehman Ishfaq and Mir Nadir Khan Magi were awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz while Amir Ashfaq will receive Pride of

with Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Syed Shakeel Shah, Ashhad Jawad, Rabab Sikandar, Muhammad Yusuf Khan, Cardinal Joseph Coutts, Rehman Mehtab Chawla, Rear Admiral Tanveer and Aamir Mehmood Lakhani will be awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz. In recognition of bravery, Sub-Inspector Taimur Shehzad Shaheed, Sepoy Muhammad Asif Shaheed, SP Muhammad Ejaz Khan Shaheed, DSP Sardar Hussain Shaheed, DSP Allama Iqbal Shaheed, LHC Muhammad Farooq Shaheed, Additional SHO Adnan Afridi Shaheed, Allah Kheu Nandwani, Constable Jahanzeb and Constable Irshad Ali Shaheed will be awarded Hilal-i-Shujaat posthumously.

Malik Sabz Ali Shaheed and Captain Retired Hamza Anjum will also be honored with Sitara-i-Shujaat. Tamgha-i-Shujaat was

approved for Malik Mehmood Jan Shaheed, Saeed Khan, Samiullah Khan Shaheed, Sahib Khan and Dr Shafi Muhammad Bizenjo. Approval of giving Hilal Pakistan to Prince Abdul Aziz bin Salman Al Saud Foo Chi Hung and Mohammad Saif Al Suwaidi will be awarded Hilal-i-Quaid-e-Azam.

Dr Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasbi and Engineer Abdullah Al-Sawaha will be awarded Sitar-i-Pakistan. Approval of awarding Sitara-i-Quaid-e-Azam was given to Heydar Gurbanov and Dr Christine Schmutzer. Tamgha-i-Pakistan will be awarded to Lukas Vior, Dr Oror Didier, Prof Valeria Fiorani Pia Santini and Augustino da Polenza. Chang Bao Chung and Shin Min Liu will be awarded Quaid-e-Azam medal. The President also approved awarding of Tamgha-i-Khidmat to Diana MacArthur.

President confers national awards on 104 Pakistanis, foreigners

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday approved conferring national awards upon 104 Pakistanis and foreigners in recognition of their services for Pakistan on the occasion of Independence Day.

The awards will be handed over at a special award distribution ceremony to be held on March 23, 2025. The president accorded approval to award Nishan-i-Pakistan to PPP founder and former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed in recognition of his outstanding performance in the field of public service.

He also approved awarding Hilal-i-Imtiaz to Arshad Nadeem and Sitara-i-Imtiaz to Murad Sadpara in the field of sports. Approval of posthumous award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz was given to late Nasir Kazmi in the field of literature. In recogni-

tion of his services to Pakistan, Prince Abdul Aziz bin Salman Al Saud will also receive Hilal-i-Pakistan.

In the field of science and technology, Hilal-i-Imtiaz was given to Aamir Hafeez Ibrahim, Sitara-i-Imtiaz to Dr Ghulam Muhammad Ali and Sardar Muhammad Aftab Ahmad Khan Wattoo, and Tamgha-i-Imtiaz to Dr Sara Qureshi, Dr Rafiuddin and Prof Dr Usman Qamar. In the field of education, Hilal-i-Imtiaz was announced for Sadia Rashid, Sitara-i-Imtiaz for Zia-ul-Haq, Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin and Syed Azhar Hussain Abidi and Barkat Shah, Abdur Rashid Kakar and Aniqua Bano will be decorated with Pride of Performance award.

In the field of medicine, Professor Dr Shehryar and Dr Zaryab Setna will receive Hilal-i-Imtiaz and Dr Akifullah Khan, Dr Syed Abid Mehdi Kazmi and Ikramullah Khan will get

Tamgha-i-Imtiaz. In the field of arts, Colin David will be given Sitara-i-Imtiaz while Arshad Aziz Malik, Bakhtiar Ahmed and Barrister Zafarullah will receive Tamgha-i-Imtiaz.

Fareeha Pervaz, Hamid Rana, Sheeba Arshad and Naveed Ahmed Bhatti will be honoured with Pride of Performance award. In the field of literature, Javed Jabbar will be given Hilal-i-Imtiaz while Salman Awan, Zafar Waqar Taj and Muneeza Shamsi will be awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz.

Syad Jawad Hussain Jafari will be honoured with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz while Anbreen Haseeb will be given Presidential Pride of Performance award. In the field of sports, Maqsood Ahmed, Imad Shakeel Butt, Rehman Ishfaq and Mir Nadir Khan Magi were awarded Tamgha-i-Imtiaz while Amir Ashfaq will receive Pride of

Lahore celebrates 78th I’ Day with fervor

LAHORE (APP): The 78th Independence Day was being celebrated across the provincial capital on Wednesday with great enthusiasm and fervor, mirroring the spirit seen throughout the country. The day began on a solemn and patriotic note, marked by a 21-gun salute at the Lahore Garrison, symbolizing the nation's pride and unity.

Following the early morning Fajr prayers, special prayers were offered in mosques across the city, where the faithful prayed for the progress, prosperity, longevity and security of Pakistan. The city has donned a festive look, with streets, government and private buildings adorned with national flags and colorful green and white bunting.

Residents of Lahore, young and old alike, was participating in various activities, including flag hoisting ceremonies, cultural performances and parades, reflecting their deep love for the motherland.

Independence Day celebrated

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 77th Independence Day of Pakistan was celebrated in the institution organized by Pakistan National Shipping Corporation. The ceremony started with recitation of Holy Quran.

The executive directors of the institution hoisted the national flag, read the national anthem and sang national songs along with the officers, officials and students of Government Boys/Girls Secondary School Orangi Town and also distributed gifts among these students.

On this occasion, a tree planting campaign was started in the premises of PNSC building in collaboration with Murad Sahib's organization Community Policing Karachi. At the end of the event, sweets were distributed among the participants.

Adopt a Plant, Haripur

F.P. Report

HARIPUR: In an effort to bolster environmental sustainability, the Assistant Commissioner Haripur Muhammad Hamza Abbas on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Haripur Shauzab Abbas collaborated with WWF Pakistan to initiate the afforestation of indigenous species in Haripur under a campaign titled "Adopt a Plant."

This initiative seeks to restore and promote the local ecosystem through the plantation of native species such as Chir (Pinus roxburghii), Shesham (Dalbergia sissoo), and Phulai (Acacia modesta).

Under this campaign, afforestation of 12000 plants saplings has been carried out across 11 hectares in various educational institutions and government buildings in Haripur.

Specifically, 3.53 hectares have been afforested at Pak Austria F a c h o c h s c h u l e University, 2 hectares at Khubaib College, 2.79 hectares across male schools and colleges, 1.7 hectares in female educational institutions, and 1 hectare within government buildings.

This initiative underscores the importance of indigenous species in environmental preservation through individual care and efforts as has been depicted in the name i.e "Adopt a Plant". By engaging various sectors of society, the campaign aims to ensure a greener and more sustainable future for Haripur.

This campaign not only contributes to the national forest policy but also the international Sustainable Development Goals-SDG.

Correction in Name

My correct name is Abdul Basit Khan, but mistakenly written in my educational documents as Abdul Basit Khan Khattak. Please made necessary corrections. Abdul Basit Khan S/O Akbar Zaman, resident of Kark. Contact No. 0335-7070214

CM Sindh launches 10-day-long anti-polio drive

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah launched a crucial 10-day polio eradication campaign aimed at immunising over 1.1 million children under five in 85 union councils of the city.

He said 1,037,000 children, ages four months to five years, would receive fractional inactivated polio vaccine (f-IPV) injections.

"In the campaign, we will use innovative, painless jet injectors to target high-risk areas in Karachi, where the polio virus still circulates.

He was talking to the media, just after launching a 10-day vital anti-polio campaign, August 15-25, 2024, by administering polio drops to children at Khalid Jameel Dispensary, Garden East on Wednesday.

Provincial Ministers Nasir Shah, Sharjeel Memon, Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, and Zulfiqar Shah were also present on

the occasion.

Murad Ali Shah said that the anti-polio campaign launched in 85 union councils of Karachi city targeted over 1.1 million children under five to receive oral polio vaccine drops.

He added that 1,037,000 children (ages four months to five years) would receive fractional inactivated polio vaccine (f-IPV) injections.

The Chief Minister stated that innovative and painless jet injector technology is being used to target high-risk areas in Karachi, where the polio virus is still circulating.

He added that the mission aims to stop the spread of the virus in the city and prevent its transmission to other parts of the province.

Talking about the current polio situation in Pakistan, Murad Ali Shah said that 14 new polio cases were reported in the country this year, including two in Sindh. "Each

case represents a child affected by polio emphasizing the life-changing impact," he said.

Discussing progress and challenges, the CM said that a significant reduction in polio cases over the years has been achieved due to the efforts of health care workers, volunteers, and community support. However, the virus still exists emphasizing the need for continued vigilance, he said.

"Success depends on the participation and cooperation of everyone: parents, guardians, community leaders," Murad Shah said and emphasized that every child in the community must be vaccinated.

Talking about Independence Day and commitment, the chief minister said that his government was celebrating their commitment to providing a polio-free future as they celebrated Independence Day.

Director Press Muhammad Ali Memon retired

F.P. Report

KARACHI: A dignified ceremony held at the office of Secretary Information Sindh on the retirement occasion of Director Press Muhammad Ali Riaz Memon's retirement The

ceremony was attended by various officials, including Secretary Information Nadeem-ur-Rehman, Director General Sindh Information Department Muhammad Saleem Khan, Deputy Secretary Muhammad Yonus Dahi, and others.

Secretary Information Sindh, Nadeem-ur-Rehman Memon, praised Muhammad Ali Riaz Memon services and said that he performed his duties as a capable and hardworking director and his services will always be remembered.

Office of the Assistant Director (Senior) Local Government & Rural Development Department District Bannu

(NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING)

Sealed tenders for the below mentioned Scheme are hereby invited on the basis of MRS 2022 (2" Bi Annual) single stage single envelope procedure from the government contractors registered with PEC in the relevant category and having registration enlistment renewal with LG&RDD Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, as per centralized Enlistment policy of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the current financial year as per following schedule.

W#	Work Name	Estimated cost in (Million)	Earnest money 2% In Rupees	Last date / time for submission of Electronic Tender forms.	Date & time of opening of electronic bid	Time of completion
1	Repair of Maintenance of Transformers as agreed by the Provincial Cabinet at PK-99 in District Bannu.	10.00	200000	30-08-2024 11:30 AM	30-08-2024 01:30 PM	As per Work Order

Terms & Conditions:-

1-

The Financial bidding will be through E-bidding System. Tender form and BOQ can be filled and downloaded by the original contractor, available on the official website of LG&RDD, DG Office (www.lgkp.gov.pk) and KPRA Khyber Pakhtunkhwa after one day of Publishing of NIT.

2-

The bidders are required to fill Electronic Bids online and attach Scan copy of Bid Securities in shape of original Call Deposit in the name of Procuring Entity and submit a hard copy of the same printed electronic bid form to the concerned AD Office Bannu.

3-

Sealed bids send through registered mail/Courier service should reached up-to the specified time and date as mentioned above.

4-

Only those contractors/firms will be eligible whom workshops are registered/Prequalified with PESCO/WAPDA.

5-

The contractor or his representative may be present at the time of opening of Electronic bids opening.

6-

The call deposits i.e. Bid Security for the work /contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT, before closing time of the Electronic bid apply.

7-

The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% only of Engineer Estimate.

8-

The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional security of Engineer estimate in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of Additional security, then the bid shall be considered as non-responsive and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.

9-

In case, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineers Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and/ or required amount of additional security, then the bid shall be considered as Non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. (KKPRA Notification NO. 6058-71 Peshawar, the May 10, 2022).

10-

In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bid is, in view of the procuring entity, not convincing, the Head of the procuring entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reason thereof.

11-

The procuring entity may offer the contract to the next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procuring opportunity afresh. (KKPRA Notification NO. 6058-71 Peshawar, the May 10, 2022)

12-

Any Electronic bidder who provide false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard form will be disqualified as per KPPRA Act Section 29(1) read with KPPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, the Procuring Entity/Executing Agency will recommend and sent cases for Debarring/Blacklisting and will take action in light of Approval Procedure/mechanism as per KPPRA Act section 29(2) read with KPPRA Rule (44).

13-

Electronic bids will remain valid for 90 days from the closing date of bids.

14-

The firms/contractors who wants to participate in tendering process may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply for uploading their names on the official website i.e. (www.lgkp.gov.pk).

15-

All Bidders are required to be registered (Active tax payer) with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA), established under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Act No. XXI of 2013), for works, consulting and non- consulting Service as listed in Scheduled-II of the Act ibid.

16-

All applicable taxes will be recoverable as per directives of the government in vogue.

17-

In case the bid become a tie the contractor shall be decided through a free toss which shall be final.

18-

The Centralized Enlisted contractors with C&W department for the current financial year who wants to participate in tendering processes may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply for uploading their names on the official website i.e. (www.lgkp.gov.pk).

19-

As per KPPRA rule Section 37(9) "No bidder shall be allowed to withdraw his bid till award of the contract or till bid is valid, which is earlier".

20-

Successful bidder is bound to receive work order within seven days and to start work immediately after receipt of work order.

21-

The procuring entity may reject any or all bids after communicating the reasons for rejection at any time prior to the award of contract.

22-

Work order will be issued subject to attaining prior Administrative Approval, Technical Sanction and release of fund as per (KKPRA Notification NO. S.R.O (16)/Vol: 1-26/2022-23/6349-60 Peshawar, the September 05, 2022).

23-

Successful bidder is bound to carry out repair /maintenance work as per PESCO/WAPDA requirements.

24-

All material testing and all sorts of tests will be performed by contractor on the demand of procuring entity.

25-

Any addition made in terms & conditions in the NIT advertised in the newspaper will be implemented as per KPPRA Rules.

Assistant Engineer (Senior) LG&RDD District Bannu

Assistant Director (Senior) LG&RDD District Bannu

INF(P) 2036/24

We have to take this country forward: Maryam Nawaz

F.P. Report

LAHORE: "May Allah let this green crescent flag soar in the sky" said Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif in her memorable speech at the 77th Independence Day ceremony in Huzuri Bagh. She added, "This country was built by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, may Allah have mercy on him and the martyrs of 1947. As we are lucky enough to breathe in free air, we should remember the sacrifices of our forefathers." She highlighted, "I was thinking at Allama Iqbal's grave today that he had seen a dream of developed Pakistan, may Allah help us all to materialise this dream. She said this country was created to last, we have to move this country forward like a living nation. May Allah make this green crescent flag the highest."

Madam Chief Minister said, "I congratulate from the core of my heart every person present in the ceremony and every citizen of Pakistan on the 77th birthday of Pakistan." She added, "I thank Allah Almighty for blessing us with freedom, Allah Almighty has blessed us with Pakistan." She highlighted, "Alhamdulillah Pakistan is celebrating its 77th birthday. May Allah keep Pakistan stable and prosperous."

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "We are grateful to Allah Almighty that we are breathing in free air, ask the oppressed citizens of Palestine the price of freedom, we pray for their freedom." She added, "The value of freedom is felt by breathing in a free country and seeing the atrocities committed on Palestinians." She highlighted, "We should bow our head before Allah Almighty every day that He has given us a blessing like freedom, which is the greatest blessings in the world."

Madam Chief Minister said, "We pay tribute to all politicians who contributed to the development of this country, especially Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, who made it nuclear power." She added, "I pay tribute to the martyrs of this soil, the martyrs of Pakistan Army, Security Forces and Police who sacrificed their lives for the dear homeland. I pay tribute to the young men who are protecting us and our soil without caring about their lives." She highlighted, "I also pay tribute to all people of Pakistan, Police, Security Forces, Bureaucracy and people belonging to all walks of life who worked for the development of this country." She also welcomed and thanked the members of diplomatic community pres-

ent at Pakistan Independence Day celebrations.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said, "Every living nation is accountable, we have to be accountable individually as well as a nation whether our success in these 77 years is satisfactory or not." She added, "Let bygone be bygone. Let's

move forward. Pakistan has been blessed by Allah Almighty with many blessings, there is no shortage of anything."

Madam Chief Minister said, "I want to tell children that this country's reigns will be in the hands of your and the coming generations. We are a living and a progressive

nation. God Almighty will always keep Pakistan safe. Today we are happy, thanking Allah that we are breathing in a free country." She added, "I want to tell youth, officers, politicians, media persons and other citizens that yesterday I went to pay tribute to Olympian Arshad Nadeem in Mian Chanu.

Positions Vacant

COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI), Abbottabad Campus invites applications for the following positions purely on contract basis for a period of two (02) years for placement in its new campus at Dhamtour (Abbottabad).

Position	No. of Positions	Qualification	Experience
Security Supervisor	04	Secondary School Certificate	05 years relevant experience. Preference will be given to ex-defense personnel.
Security Guard	18	Primary School (05 Years) Certificate.	Preference will be given to ex-defense personnel.
Driver	05	Secondary School Certificate	Five years driving experience having valid LTV and HTV driving license.
Mali	10	Primary School (5 years) Certificate (Relaxable)	Preference will be given to candidates having experience of working on same position.

Eligible candidates may apply by sending handwritten applications along with their copies of degree, certificates, experience certificates, copy of valid CNIC and a copy of valid driving license (for drivers only) at the address mentioned below.

The last date for submission of applications is **August 29, 2024.**

Incomplete applications or applications submitted after the due date will not be entertained.

Only shortlisted candidates will be called for test/ interview.

No TA/DA shall be admissible.

The University reserves the right to accept or reject any application without assigning any reason.

Applications should be sent to:

Deputy Registrar (HR)

COMSATS University Islamabad, Abbottabad Campus

(A Public Sector University of Ministry of Science & Technology)

University Road, Tobe Camp, Abbottabad 22060, Pakistan

Tel: +92-992-383591-6, Fax: +92-992-383441

Website: www.cuiatd.edu.pk

PID(I)1063/24

www.comsats.edu.pk

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA PROVINCIAL ROADS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CORRIGENDUM

EXTENSION OF DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS

1. With reference to the advertisement No. INF(P) 1904/24 daily Mashriq dated 01-08-2024 and others. Request for Proposal (RFP) published on KP-PRIP website https://prp.gkp.pk/ and C&W Website https://cwg.gkp.pk and in Local Newspapers for the Design Review for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development Project (KP-RRDP) (ADB Assisted) ADP No. 1311/200008 (2024-25) from Communication & Works Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa shortlisted consultants. Please note that the pre-proposal meeting date and deadline for the submission of the proposal has been extended as follows:

Procurement Package	Extension of Date for	Original Date & Time	Revised Date & Time
Design Review for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Rural Roads Development Project (KP-RRDP) (ADB Assisted) ADP No. 1311/200008 (2024-25)	Pre-Proposal Meeting	20 August 2024 at 11:30 PM	28 August 2024 at 11:30 PM
	Submission of Technical & Financial Proposals	27 August 2024 at 12:00 Noon	04 September 2024 at 12:00 Noon

2. Please note that the proposals shall be submitted to the PIU address on the revised date mentioned in the table above, Technical Proposals will be opened on the same day. The addendum issued to incorporate the aforementioned change, along with other changes is published on https://prp.gkp.pk/ and https://cwg.gkp.pk. All interested bidders are advised to visit the above-mentioned websites on regular basis for further updates and important information related to the procurement of KP-PRIP.

3. All others and terms and conditions will remains the same

Project Director

Project Implementation Unit

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provincial Roads Improvement Project

Communication And Works Department,

Address: House No. 24, C/3 Circular Road, University Town Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Telephone: +92 91 9216123, +92 91 5700649. Electronic Mail Address: pdprp.pkha@gmail.com

www.khyberpakhtunkhwa.gov.pk

INF(P)2041/2024

CANTONMENT BOARD MARDAN

E-BIDING TENDER NOTICE

Cantonment Board Mardan a body corporate having perpetual succession and common seal invites Electronic bids from the well reputed firms/ suppliers/ manufactures Registered with income Tax and Sale Tax department and who are one Active Taxpayers List of the Federal Board of Revenue for execution of the following M/R works for the financial year 2024-25:-

S#	Description	Estimated Cost	Specifications on MES Schedule of rates 2021
1	Annual Maintenance / Repair of Cantt Fund Buildings.	2.50 (M)	1. Excavation, Dismantling 2. RCC, CC Type B Concrete, 3. 1st Class Brick Work/ plaster 4. Steel Reinforcement 40/60 Grade 5. Electric, Plumbing work etc 6. Painting / weather coats
2	Maintenance / Repair of Cantt Fund Roads,	1.500 (M)	1. Excavation, Dismantling 2. RCC, CC Type B Concrete, 3. Asphalt Premix carpet 4. Road Marking Paint
3.	Annual Maintenance / Repair of Cantt Fund Drains	0.500 (M)	1. Excavation, Dismantling 2. RCC, CC Type B, C Concrete etc. 3. 1st Class Brick Work 4. Steel Reinforcement 40 Grade 5. Steel Grating Manholes
4.	Annual Maintenance / Repair of Cantt Water Supply	0.500 (M)	1. GI Tube Water Quality 80 mm 2. GI Tube Water Quality 40 mm 3. GI Tube Water Quality 25 mm 4. All accessories in water Supply 5. PPR Pipe 25mm,32mm
5.	Maintenance / Repair of Mics: Public Improvement.	3.00 (M)	1. Tuff Pavers, Kerb Stones, Brick work, plastering, PCC, Coloring and street lights etc

(1) The financial bidding will be online through E-bidding system. Tender form can be filled online and downloaded from the official website of ML&C Deptt i.e. **www.etender.mle.gov.com**

(2) All bidders are required to have valid NTN / STRN.

(3) The bidder shall submit detailed tender documents through Courier/ Contractor Representative. 2.00% bid security sealed in envelop of the estimated cost in shape of call deposit (Original) from scheduled bank before closing date and time.

(4) The tender shall be cast electronically on **2.09.2024 upto 12:00 PM** or before and shall be opened on the same day at **2:00 PM** in the presence of tenders or their authorized representative, who may likely to be present.

(5) Conditional tender and tender without call deposit shall not be entertained.

(6) Cantonment Board Mardan reserves the right to demand the analysis of the quoted rates from the concerned bidder, to check their responsibility and workability.

(7) The quoted rates shall be valid till the completion of work and in any case no escalation shall admissible on any pretext.

(8) The Bidder shall specifically mention the period of warranty / guarantee and services that will be provided free of cost for a specified period.

(9) All Govt. taxes shall be deducted from the bill as per rules.

(10) Cantonment Board Mardan shall not supply any kind of material and machinery to the contractors.

(11) The approved supplier shall furnish an agreement on judicial stamp paper.

(12) Cantonment Executive Officer/ Cantonment Board reserved the right to accept or reject all tenders (prior to approval) as per rule 33 (1) of PPRA Rules 2004.

(13) This advertisement is also available on PPRA website.

(14) For further detail/ queries may contact during office hours on the following:
i. Phone No. 0937-9230262 ii. Fax No. 0937-9230261 iii. Email: **mardancantt@gmail.com**

(SEERAT ASGHAR QURESHI)

Cantonment Executive Officer

Mardan Cantt

PID(P)214/24



Kundi hosts Olympic gold medalists Arshad Nadeem

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi hosted Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem at Governor's House on Wednesday. A smartly turned-out police contingent presented a salute to Arshad Nadeem, showering him with flower petals along the way, and traditional Khattak dance was also performed. Arshad Nadeem was accompanied by his coach, Salman Butt.

A prestigious ceremony was held at the Governor's House in honor of Arshad Nadeem. The event was attended by members of parliament, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry, Inspector General of Police Akhtar Hayat Gandapur, the business community, athletes

from various sports, students, and individuals from different walks of life. During the ceremony, the governor presented Arshad Nadeem with a traditional cap and a souvenir.

The governor and Arshad Nadeem also cut a cake to celebrate Independence Day. In his address, the governor praised the outstanding performance of gold medalist Arshad Nadeem at the Paris Olympics, stating that Arshad Nadeem's historic achievement of winning a gold medal not only brought pride to the nation but also doubled the joy of Independence Day celebrations. Arshad Nadeem is our national hero, who has made the entire nation proud. The way he performed individually at the Olympics is an example for our youth. He emphasized that Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa has suffered from terrorism for many years, and the people of the province have made great sacrifices in the war against terrorism, along with the Pakistan Army, police, and other security forces. He also mentioned the martyrs of the Army Public School, stating that the APS students have also sacrificed their lives in the fight against terrorism. The governor expressed his commitment to reviving sports grounds in the province, promoting all kinds of sports, and bringing forward young athletes so that they can shine on the world stage like Arshad Nadeem.

He urged the provincial government to support young athletes so they can play a role in highlighting the positive image of the province and the country. Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem, in his speech, thanked Governor

Faisal Karim Kundi for the excellent hospitality and reception. He stated that the love and affection he received here would never be forgotten. He added that his victory is the result of hard work, the prayers of his parents, and the entire nation.

Later, Olympic gold medalist Arshad Nadeem met with athletes from various sports in the province alongside Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, sharing his experiences of success, hard work, and the emotional and professional training needed to compete in the Olympics. He encouraged the athletes by emphasizing that hard work and dedication are essential for success in any field, and urged the young athletes to continue their efforts with diligence, assuring them that God would reward them for their hard work.



PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur cutting the cake to mark the Independence Day celebrations.

Muqam for giving preference to country over politics

PESHAWAR (APP): Federal Minister for States and Frontier Region and Gilgit Baltistan and Kashmir Affairs Engr. Ameer Muqam on Wednesday congratulated nation 78th Independence Day of Pakistan and said that we should give preference to the motherland rather prioritizing politics and personal interests.

He said that we should avoid politicking on issues of national interest and prioritize the solidarity and sovereignty of the country.

Addressing a function here, Engr Amir Muqam said that on Independence Day we must remember the ordeal and struggle of

people that are facing brutalities and oppression since long in the Indian occupied valley of Jammu and Kashmir. Ameer Muqam said that we desired that Kashmir people should be given right of self-determination as per UN Security Council resolutions and freedom to choose their own path.

He also paid tribute to our forefathers to get a separate homeland for Muslims of subcontinent and sacrificed their lives for the country in line of duty.

Later, addressing party workers at Sher Ghar Mardan, Engr Amir Muqam said that PMLN Govt under leadership of

Prime Minister was working day and night to take the country's out of existing challenges.

He said that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had reduced prices of petroleum products to provide relief to common man.

Engr Amir Muqam said that those political forces that was rulling Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the last 12 years were completed failed to address the people problems.

He said that people of Pakistan knew that who was working for speedy uplift of the country in the shape of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and who put it at the

verge bankruptcy during the four years rule of PTI founder.

PMLN's politics revolves around masses and development while our political opponents used their energies in blame games and accusations.

He said that PMLN has strong roots in masses and would not allow any one to create hurdles in way of development.

Engr Amir Muqam said that Pakistan was created after matless sacrifices by our forefathers and the country's problems could be addressed by strictly adhering to the great Quaid's principles of unity, faith and discipline.

Fundamental rights are at risk, says Meena Khan



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Nation rise and progress following fundamental rights and not infringing constitutional amenities but here we are witnessing the quite opposite in the country. The statement was made by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa higher education minister Meena Khan Afridi who was addressing the gathering set to celebrate 77th Independence Day celebrations at University of Peshawar. He stressed on

through slavery and oppression. He stressed on young generation in audience to emulate national heroes and peers like visionary Founder Quaid-e-Azam, national poet Allama Iqbal and leader like Imran Khan.

Earlier, Pro-Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naem Qazi vowed to steer University of Peshawar to new heights of development and progress despite challenges.

Convenor of Independence Day celebrations, Prof. Dr. Hussain Shaheed Soherwardi called upon political leaders to opine on national affairs amiably and politely to quell ad quash the bitter culture of hit and run in the political affairs. He requested higher education minister to bring inter-provincial exchange visit programs along with self-business startup and e-commerce opportunities.

Every individual from prime minister to peon must play up to extinguish fire engulfing us", he stressed. He added that this unique day give us a chance to recall services, sacrifices and sufferings of our national heroes for winning us a free county because it is outrightly impossible for us to realize freedom without going

all walk of life and schools of thought to tread the path of flexibility and consensus to bring in stability and integration in the country." During the event, higher education minister planted tree sapling in the university main lawn. A documentary on university and partition migration were also displayed at the event. In addition, national songs, speeches and tableaux highlighted the day in the national spirit as well.

Governor felicitates Arshad on Tamgha-e-Imtiaz nomination

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Wednesday extended his heartfelt congratulations to renowned journalist and President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik on his nomination for the prestigious Tamgha-e-Imtiaz award.

In his statement, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi lauded Malik's nomination as a significant honor, recognizing it as a testament to his outstanding contributions to journalism.

He emphasized that Malik's responsible journalism serves as a guiding light for others in the field.

Governor Kundi further highlighted that the Award is not just a recognition for Arshad Aziz Malik alone but a proud moment for journalists through out Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It is worth to mention here that the President has announced the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz for senior journalist Arshad Aziz Malik from Peshawar in recognition of his remarkable contributions to journalism.

Jashan Azadi Basketball C'ship KP to face Punjab in men's final

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The finals of Jashan Azadi inter-provincial basketball championship will be played today, the women's final will be played between Punjab and Islamabad-A while in men's final will be contested Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The ongoing championship organized by the Pakistan Basketball Federation and supervised by the Federal Basketball Association. In the first Women semi-final, Punjab defeated Sindh 64-32.

The half-time score was 40-13 in the favour of Punjab. For the winning side, Khadija Mushtaq scored 17 points and Aiman Mahmood scored 16 points, while Maryam scored 10 points and Aqsi scored 9 points for Sindh. In the second semi-final, Islamabad-A defeated Islamabad-B by 36-24 after an interesting match.

Maria scored 12 points and Amani scored 7 points from Islamabad-A, while Shanzy scored 9 points and Shabbano scored five points from Islamabad-B. In the men's first semi-final, Punjab beat Islamabad-A by 81-56.

The score at half-time was 41-28 in favor of the winning team. Muhammad Taimur scored 22 points and Muhammad Saifullah scored 21 points for the winning team, while Ali Hamza Kazmi scored 23 points and Muhammad Usman scored 7 points for Islamabad-A.

Second Semi final was played between KPK and Islamabad-B which was won by KPK.

Sports Climbing Championship held on Independence Day

Fakhar assures provision of facilities for climbing sport



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The first-ever Sports Climbing Championship was organized at Qayyum Sports Complex Peshawar in celebration of Independence Day on August 14th. The event was graced by the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Advisor for Sports and Youth Affairs Syed Fakhar Jehan who watched the competition appreciated the athletes' performances and distributed prizes among the winners. Accompanying him were Director General Sports Abdul Nasir Khan, Alpine Club President Abu Zafar Sadiq, Secretary Qarar Haider, Provincial Secretary Najeeb Khattak and Administrator Peshawar Sports Complex Syed Jafar Shah among others.

On this occasion Advisor Syed

Fakhar Jehan assured the provision of all necessary facilities for sports climbing and mentioned that the provincial government is also focusing on climbing sports so that the athletes of the province can bring fame to the country in this game just like in other sports.

He further stated that under the special instructions of the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur the provincial government is taking concrete steps for the welfare of sports and athletes and to revive the sports fields the results of which will be seen in the near future.

The advisor also mentioned that basic facilities for climbing sports would be provided in other districts as well and coaches would be appointed for this game. He said that his doors are always open for

athletes and their issues will be addressed on priority basis.

In the Sports Climbing Championship competitions were held in various categories wherein, according to the results, in the Girls Under-8 category, Asma won the gold medal, Maimuna took silver and Hooriya won bronze. In the Open Classic category, Wajid won the gold medal, Tanveer Ahmed took silver and Amjad won bronze.

In the Open Speed category Abu Zar won gold Zabeer Ahmed took silver, while Huzaifa won bronze. Under-12 category Umaina won the gold medal, Bakhtawar took silver and Fatima won bronze.

In the Classic category Manahil Afzal secured the first position, Uzma took second and Maliha Naz took third place.

Similarly in the Boys competitions, in the U-8 category Hassnain won the gold medal Ahmed took silver, and Uzair won bronze.

Under-10 category Sufiyan Ahmed, Ahmed Zaid, and Muneeb won the gold, silver, and bronze medals, respectively.

In the Under-12 category Subhan secured the first position, Hasan took second and Iftikhar took third place. In the U-14 category Abbas won the gold medal, Azghar Ali took silver and Rashid won bronze. In the Under-16 category, Tauheed secured the first position, Adnan took silver and Saleem won a bronze medal.

Qasim inaugurates Pakistan's First 24/7 vaccination center

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: On the occasion of Pakistan Day, Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah presented a remarkable gift to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa by inaugurating the country's first 24/7 Vaccination Centers at Maulvi Ameer Shah Memorial Hospital in Peshawar and the District Headquarters (DHQ) Hospital in Mardan.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by Medical Superintendent Dr. Akram Shah, District Health Officer Dr. Idrees, UNICEF representatives, and other relevant officials in Peshawar. In Mardan, the Minister, accompanied by local MPAs and DHQ Hospital Medical Superintendent Dr. Javed, cut the Pakistan Day cake and officially inaugurated the Vaccination house.

Speaking to the media in Peshawar, Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah highlighted that these centers will



remain operational 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The Vaccination Centers feature four counters, which will be active round the clock.

Separate counters have been designated for pregnant women to receive tetanus and diphtheria vaccines, routine immunizations, and newborns as part of the Birth Dose Initiative.

Additionally, a special 24-hour counter has been established for people travelling abroad, including those going abroad for Hajj and Umrah, where they can receive COVID-19 and

polio vaccinations and obtain their vaccination cards at any time.

The Minister also announced plans to establish 24/7 Vaccination Centers in all District Headquarters Hospitals across the province.

Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah expressed confidence that these centers will significantly improve routine immunization rates and assist in controlling epidemics. "Now, parents can vaccinate their children at any time, day or night," he added. In response to a question, the Health

Minister mentioned that when he assumed office, polio samples were positive in 13 districts, but today, thanks to efforts of the department, only three districts remain, and they too will soon be polio-free, Inshallah.

He also noted that the province has successfully reduced dengue cases to the lowest levels in history, demonstrating the effectiveness of the health department's efforts.

"By adopting preventive measures, together we can defeat dengue," he concluded.

Malik Lal for unity on Independence Day

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Political and social personality, as well as Khudai Khidmatgar and former candidate for PK-74, Alhaj Malik Lal Sher Mohammadzai, conveyed a message to the nation on the occasion of Independence Day.

He extended congratulations to the nation on the 77th Independence Day, emphasizing that the achievement of freedom was the result of a prolonged struggle that included the great sacrifices of our elders, political leaders, and the Muslims of the subcontinent.

He expressed pride in our country and stated that as a nation, we must strive to make Pakistan shine like a bright star on the world map.

He mentioned that the celebration of Independence Day fosters a spirit of unity and solidarity among us and instills the passion and ambition to elevate our beloved Pakistan to a prestigious status among the nations of the world.

Chanzeb appeals nation to plant saplings

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Advisor to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Tourism, Culture, Archeology and Museums Zahid Chinzeb has said that Independence



Day reminisce about the immolations and great struggle of our leaders, elders and braves, due to which Pakistan came into existence as an independent country. He added that on the auspicious occasion of Independence Day, everyone should plant a sapling by participating in the tree planting campaign to make their beloved homeland greener.

Zahid Chanzeb said that the development of Pakistan is related to the tourism industry and steps are being taken on a priority basis for the development of the tourism sector.

He expressed these views while cutting a cake in the conference room of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority on the occasion of the 77th anniversary of Pakistan's independence. Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority Tashfeen Haider, Director Admin and Finance Muhammad Ali, General Manager Tourism Sajjad Hameed, Manager Events Hasina Shaukat and other officials were present on this occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Advisor Tourism and Culture Zahid Chanzeb said, "I congratulate all the nation on the joyous occasion of Independence Day. August 14th gives us the spirit to make Pakistan a dignified state in the world." As a nation, everyone should make their country and city green on this auspicious occasion and be a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority's plantation drive. While giving a message, he said that we all have to make collective and individual efforts to develop Pakistan and make it a prosperous state.



In brief

August 14: Events held F.P. Report

BUNER: Several events are arranged in different areas of Buner district for celebrating Independence Day including a major ceremony at Deputy Commissioner Office in which Kashif Qayyum, Colonel Usman, DPO Shah Hassan hoisted the national flag, on Wednesday. On this occasion, DC, Col. DPO, DFO, SDFO, ADCs, ACs, TMO Daggar planted saplings on behalf of the Forest Department. District Khatib Maulana Hameedur Rehman, DFO, SDFO, ADCs, ACs, TMOs, Youth Officer, Sports Officer participated in the ceremony. Abdali School and College Jowar Director Alam Khan and students have participated. Talking to the media, the Deputy Commissioner has said that the ancestors made Pakistan by making sacrifices and got Pakistan by leaving behind the heads of elders, young sisters and old mothers and children. He said that everyone should value freedom and give blood and return honors and leave everything. The second major function was held at District Jail Daggar in which Chairman PTI Barrister Gohar, Chairman DDAC MPA Abdul Kabir Khan, Minority MPA Rajesh Kumar, Kamran Khan, Jail Superintendent Junaid Khan, Assistant Jailor Inam Khan, DC, DPO, TMO, TMA Assistant Sadaqat, Sports officers, youth officer, DSPs SHOs Principal and students of Al Khair School and Jail staff and detainees participated. Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner, TMO, Nazim Gagra, Assistant Commissioner, TMO, Nazim Chaghorzai Haji Sharif Khan, Tehsil Mandar Assistant Commissioner Maryam Bakhtawar, Nazim, TMO, Tehsil Khadukhel Assistant Commissioner, Nazim, TMO along with the heads of other departments and school teachers and students organized Azadi celebrations and decorated the markets and government buildings and planted saplings in the monsoon plantation drive and expressed their love for the motherland.

Independence Day celebrated F.P. Report

HAFAIZABAD: The 77th Independence Day celebrated with enthusiasm and fervor in the district Hafizabad on Wednesday. Deputy Commissioner All government buildings have been decorated with National Flags, buntings and images of founder of the Pakistan Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allah Muhammad Iqbal and other heroes of Pakistan movement whereas all buildings were also illuminated at night. Deputy Commissioner said that on the directions of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, saplings has also planted at premises of government offices, educational institutions, hospitals, parks and other public places under the slogan of 'Plant for Pakistan' to make the country green and meet the challenges of climate change. She urged the government offices, official, social workers, civil society and prominent personalities to come forward for making the 'Plant for Pakistan' Tree Plantation campaign successful and result-oriented. Meanwhile, District Police Officer Hafizabad has said that police have made security arrangements to keep peace while all entry and exit points of the district were being monitored so keep vigilant eye upon anti-social elements and law breakers.

Independence Day celebrated with zeal in Khyber

F.P. Report

JAMRUD: Like elsewhere in the country Independence Day was celebrated on Wednesday in all three tehsils of district Khyber with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervor. The Day was dawn with special prayers in the Morning Prayer for the solidarity and prosperity of the country.

The main function was organized in the police line, Shahkas, Jamrud where District Police Officer (DPO) was the chief guest on the occasion besides other police officials were among the participants. The DPO hoisted the national flag and a smart contingent of police officers saluted to it.

In addition, a cake was cut to celebrate the 77th

Independence Day of Pakistan. Similarly, in the presence of tribal elders, Assistant Commissioner, Landi Kotal Adnan Mumtaz hoisted the national flag inside the tehsil compound.

Like other patriotic citizens, prisoners in sub-jail, Landi Kotal also commemorate the Independence Day celebration with zeal. They decorated the cells with the national flag and presented dances on national songs played in the jail.

Independence Day was observed at Torkham border and the citizens took a rally that was attended by locals and administration officials. The marchers were holding the national flag and chanted slogans like, "Long Live Pakistan".

In the same way a simple but impressive gathering

was initiated in Rescue 1122 headquarter, Jamrud. The District Emergency Officer Engineer Shareq Riaz Khattak besides other subordinate officers hoisted the national flag and presented a salute to it.

DEO also planted a sibling in the lawn of the office to mark the Independence Day celebrations and offered prayers for the prosperity of the country. Independence Day observed in Bara where a moot was set up at Khyber Square that was attended by Assistant Commissioner, Bara Shahbuddin and police officials. Meanwhile the tribesmen of Koki Khel in Jamrud initiated a protest sit-in at Bab-e-Khyber on 14 August against restricting the displaced people of Rajgal, Tirah Valley to go to their hometown.

Dar inaugurates 21 new Nadra registration centres

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Wednesday inaugurated 21 new NADRA registration centers and six new mobile registration vehicles in Balochistan during a ceremony held at CM Secretariat in Quetta.

National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, provincial ministers, parliamentary secretaries, assembly members, NADRA officials, were also present. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar expressed satisfaction with the provision of new NADRA registration centers and MRVs in the province.

He instructed federal institutions to fully cooperate with the provincial government in providing services to the remote areas of Balochistan. Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, on the occasion hoped that the establishment of new registration centers in 21 tehsils of Balochistan's remote areas

would facilitate the public in obtaining registration and identity cards.

The Chief Minister added that the people in remote areas had faced difficulties in registration and obtaining identity cards. The new registration centers and mobile vehicles would particularly benefit the elderly and women, allowing them to register and obtain identity cards at their doorstep.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti today inaugurated the Solid Waste Management Project in Quetta. Speaking on the occasion in Quetta, Ishaq Dar expressed happiness over the launch of state of the art solid waste management project in Quetta. He said the Quetta Waste Management Project will provide better sanitation facilities to the people.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti the project was completed in a short period of three months. He commended Commissioner Quetta Hamza Shafqaat and his team for starting an impor-

tant project of public nature in a very short time. He said the provincial government is paying special attention to the provision of basic facilities to lessen difficulties of the people of Balochistan.

Hamza Shafqaat briefed that the Quetta Waste Management Project is the first initiative of its kind in Pakistan. He said a private company will collect garbage from door to door in the provincial capital from today. He said 1600 tons of garbage will be collected daily and it will not incur any additional expenses on the government. The Municipal Corporation and the private company will work to keep the provincial capital clean through multi-pronged initiatives.

Besides, Ishaq Dar and Mir Sarfaraz Bugti also inaugurated 21 new NADRA registration centers and six mobile registration vehicles. These registration centers and mobile vehicles will further facilitate the people of Balochistan's far-flung areas to get their registration and national identity cards with utmost ease.

Residents to arrange sit-in on Friday in Bannu

F.P. Report

BANNU: The Bannu and Noor tribes have announced a protest sit-in in Bannu city on Friday for the recovery of the kidnapped Ahmad Shah. The business organizations will also lead the Mirian tribes by announcing their participation in the protest, and the plan A plan B for the strike is continuing.

The Jirga was held under the chairmanship of Dr. Pir Saheb Zaman, leader of the tribes and member of Qaumi Jirga. Sher Ahmed, Maulana Fada Ahmad Shah, Malik Rahat Khan Advocate, Engineer Malik Ehsan Khan, Malik Farman Meerakhel, Mayor Maryam Pir Kamal Shah, Former District Naib Nazim Pir Mainer Shah, Malik Gul Bahadur Khan, President of Anjuman Tajran, Dr. Abdul Rauf Qureshi, Nasir Khan, Ghulam Qibaz Khan, Shah Wazir Khan, Malik Zahid Amin Khan, Mureed Hayat Khan Advocate, Malik Iqbal Jadoon Khan, Salim Rahman have said that on August 12, Pir Ahmad Shah, who is employed in the Audit Office Bannu, after completing his duty.

He left the office in the afternoon and went to the village, but during that time he disappeared mysteriously. After he did not return home throughout the night and was not found anywhere, there was a fear of abducting him. On this occasion, Malik Arab Khan, Malik Sher Ayaz alias Chalak Malik, Malik Karim Dad Khan, Malik Sadr Nawaz Khan, Malik Niaz Ali Khan and others said that such incidents are a conspiracy to sabotage peace.

The July 19 Peace Pass has given a clear message to the institutions that the people of Bannu want peace. There will be no more arbitrary

travellers here, if this series is not stopped, the Mirian nation will be forced to leave once again, which will be fully supported by all Bannu nations. who had placed 16 demands before the government, which the government implemented fully, but despite the agreement, Pir Ahmed Shah, a member of the peaceful sit-in, was abducted by the government and institutions.

It will happen and the whole nation will stand side by side to accept more demands because it has been several weeks since the peaceful sit-in that the member and youth leader of the peaceful sit-in Pir Ahmad Shah was kidnapped and the situation of law and order is deteriorating again. In the incident, the speaker is looking helpless. On Friday, the speakers once again instructed to start the preparations for the parade in the city of Bannu, appealed to the Bannu nations to participate in the sit-in and gave the procession routes for the various nations, on which the whole district. Leaders and people will reach Bannu city in the form of processions under the leadership of regional leaders and after staying at Milad Park, a protest sit-in should be held at the Pretty Gate of Bannu city.

Meanwhile, Expressing their frustration with the government, the tribals blocked the main highway of Tehsil Mir Ali for all kinds of traffic and held a protest sit-in. Chief of Nasrullah Khan, Spokesman Mufti Baitullah, Chairman Abdul Khalil, Malik Akbar Khan, Malik Amshadullah, Malik Sanauallah held a sit-in at Atmanza on the main highway of Mir Ali Tehsil of North Waziristan. Hamzuni, Malik Jan Faraz, Malik Aurangzeb Khan Wazir while speaking, they said that it is very sad that the

government has seized our resources on the one hand and on the other hand we are being killed.

The nation cannot afford such incidents anymore. We want peace, prosperity, dignified employment and privileges in exchange for resources on our land. We do not ask for charity from anyone. This is our own constitutional and legal right. But Jirgas have been held and we have repeatedly informed them about our pleas, but nothing is being given except assurances.

August 14 celebrated at Mardan F.P. Report

MARDAN: Like other parts of the country, Independence Day was celebrated with full national spirit and devotion in Mardan. After Fajr prayer, special prayers were offered in the mosques for the country's stability and development. A flag hoisting ceremony was held at Pakhtunkhwa House. Regional Police Officer (RPO) Najibur Rehman, Additional Commissioner Naem Akhtar, Deputy Commissioner Behzad Adil and DPO Zahoor Babar Afridi attended the ceremony. Police and Rescue 1122 contingent presented salute.

Assistant Commissioner Kamran Khan and officers of various government departments were present on the occasion. Children from different schools presented Hamd and Naat while tableaux were also presented in which the freedom struggle and the achievements of the martyrs were highlighted.



HYDERABAD: Students showing their skills during flag hoisting ceremony at Circuit House on the occasion of 77th Independence Day celebrations.

WSSCM hold special cleanliness drive F.P. Report

MARDAN: Independence Day was commemorated in a simple and dignified manner by water and sanitation services company Mardan (WSSCM). Various teams of the company cleaned the city. The head office was decorated with Pakistani Flag and illuminated.

The flag hoisting ceremony was held at office. Chairman Board of Directors Engineer Adil Nawaz along with other members Haroon Rashid and Mubina Raziuddin hoisted the Flag and cut the cake. Speaking on the occasion Adil Nawaz said, that love for the country is a part of faith. Independence is a great blessing and living nations celebrate their independence day with full zeal and enthusiasm. He said today we pay rich tributes to Muslims of the sub-continent and express our collective gratitude to them for their heroic struggle, and epic sacrifices for the creation of Pakistan.

He said that this day should not be limited to just celebrating but this day reminds us that the way our forefathers gave sacrifices and made Pakistan. We should express our determination that we will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the development and stability of the country, he added.

Nation to uphold sacrifices Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: Vice-Chancellor Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer-ud-Din said that our forefathers made countless sacrifices to achieve freedom. It is now our duty to contribute in every possible way to the development of this country and to equip the coming generations with education in science and technology, so that they can bring glory to the nation on the rapidly changing global stage.

Earlier, at the beginning of the ceremony, Vice-Chancellor Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer-ud-Din also conducted the flag-hoisting ceremony. Along with the Vice-Chancellor, KUST Registrar Dr. Imran Ali, Dr. Zeeshan Bangash, and Dr. Jan Alam were also present.

During the event, students presented national songs and speeches. Later, Vice-Chancellor of Kohat University of Science and Technology, Professor Dr. Muhammad Naseer-ud-Din, distributed shields and certificates among the students who performed well. The ceremony in connection with Independence Day was organized by the Office of extracurricular activities.

5 shot dead

SIALKOT (INP): Five people including four members of the same family were killed over a land dispute in Sialkot on Wednesday. According to police, the opponents shot dead Javed, his wife and two daughters while a woman from the neighbourhood also lost her life in the firing.

A heavy police force contingent was rushed to the spot and launched an investigation into the killings.

KKKU Karak cerebrates Independence Day

F.P. Report

KARAK: Keeping its traditions alive, Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak celebrated the 77th National Independence Day with great zeal and enthusiasm.

The flag hoisting and cake cutting ceremony was performed by Registrar Dr. Ghani ur Rehman. National Anthem was also played on this occasion. A large number of faculty, administrative staff and students were present on this event.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Ghani-ur-Rehman said that "Pakistan is its identity and it's a day to fulfill our commitments to this motherland". He stressed upon character building of new generation saying that nation which does not have ethical values and characters cannot value her independence.

He said that young students are the future of this country and they should use their fullest capacity for the progress of the country. We must look into the past, to get lesson but also move forward for better and prosperous Pakistan, he added.

Later, he kicked off the monsoon campaign and tree plantation drive with faculty and students at the old campus of the university. Meanwhile, like the rest of the country, Independence Day was celebrated with full enthusiasm in Karak district. On the occasion of Independence Day, the flag was unfurled at Circuit House Karak.

District Police Officer, Member National Assembly, Member Provincial Assembly, Additional Deputy Commissioners Karak, Assistant Commissioner, Tehsil Mayor Karak, DSP Headquarters and other line department officers, students and kirk advisors, youth participants. Addressing the participants of the event, Deputy



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District Police Officer, Member National Assembly, Member Provincial Assembly, Additional Deputy Commissioners Karak, Assistant Commissioner, Tehsil Mayor Karak, DSP Headquarters and other line department officers, students and kirk advisors, youth participants. Addressing the participants of the event, Deputy

Commissioner Karak said that our veterans and elders fought for Pakistan and made countless sacrifices and under the great leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, they finally succeeded in achieving their goal.

He further said that today is a day of renewal of pledge for all of us that we should all take a pledge that we will play our role well in the development and prosperity of our country.

At the end of the ceremony, the District Khatib made a special prayer for the security of the country. Later, Deputy Commissioner Karak, along with members of the provincial and national assembly, also planted saplings in the circuit house as part of the monsoon planting campaign.

Saplings planted to celebrate August 14

F.P. Report

Toba TEK SINGH: The main function of 14th August to celebrate Independence Day held at District Council Hall in which public servants along with people from every walk of life participated, on Wednesday.

According to details, the event was held under chairmanship Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh in which District Police Officer (DPO), Member Provincial Assembly Amjad Ali Javed attended the event as the chief guest. Along with ADCR, ADCG Zeeshan Labbha Masih, DSP, DSP Sadar Circle, DSP Headquarters, AC, President and Secretary District Bar Council, Anjuman Tajaran, Peace Committee Members, police officers and employees, district heads of other departments, electronic and print media a large number of women, children and citizens, including representatives, participated.

The colorful ceremony was started with the sounding of sirens, followed by the singing of the national anthem of Pakistan, after which MPA Amjad Ali Javed and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu and DPO Ibadat Nisar unfurled the flag. On this occasion, armed forces of District Police, Elite Police, Jail Police, Rescue 1122, Civil Defense presented a salute.

In celebration of Independence Day, the Pakistani flag was released in the air with balloons and birds were also released. Horse dance was also organized on this occasion. After that, MPA Amjad Ali Javed, DPO and Deputy Commissioner also planted saplings on the occasion of Independence Day. The main event of Pakistan Day was started in the District Council Hall with the recitation of Holy Quran and Naat Rasool Maqbool (peace be upon him) was presented.

A large number of citizens including women and children attended the ceremony.

Kashmir's freedom tied to Pakistan's strength

F.P. Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) marked Pakistan's 77th Independence Day with a series of vibrant and meaningful events that highlighted the deep connection between Pakistan and Kashmir. The day's celebrations at UAJK included a majestic flag-hoisting ceremony, a thought-provoking seminar, an inspiring art exhibition, a tree plantation drive, and a grand rally—each activity underscoring the spirit of freedom and unity.

The seminar, titled "Pakistan's Independence Day: A Message of Freedom for Kashmir," was a central highlight. Former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, in his address, stressed the critical importance of a strong, stable, and prosperous Pakistan as the bedrock for the success of the Kashmir freedom movement. He called upon Pakistan's political leadership to ensure the country's political and economic stability, praising Pakistan for its unwavering support of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination on the global stage. He also expressed deep gratitude to the people of Pakistan for their consistent solidarity with the Kashmiri cause.

Former Chief Justice (R) Syed Manzoor Hussain Gilani, speaking at the seminar, emphasized the pivotal role of universities in shaping the youth and raising societal awareness. He posed a reflective question on whether Pakistan, founded on a strong ideological basis, continues to adhere to that ideology. Justice Gilani urged the nation to reconnect with its ideological roots and remember the sacrifices made during the freedom struggle.

Minister of Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Prof. Taqdees Gilani, reinforced the inseparable bond between Kashmir and Pakistan, declaring that no force in the world can divide them. She thanked Pakistan for its ongoing political, diplomatic, and moral support for the Kashmiri cause, despite its own challenges.

Vice-Chancellor of UAJK, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Kaleem Abbasi, highlighted the importance of celebrating Independence Day to honor those who sacrificed for freedom. He encouraged the nation to reflect on the goals for which Pakistan was established and to continue striving toward achieving them. Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed, Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir, spoke passionately about the profound bond between Kashmir and Pakistan, rooted in the shared belief in the Kalma.



Despair as the sea slowly swallows a Kenyan beauty spot

NAIROBI (BBC): When Roberto Macri built his luxury hotel in the Kenyan coastal village of Kipini, it was about 100m (330ft) away from the beautiful waters of the Indian Ocean. For nearly two decades his business thrived as tourists arrived in droves to enjoy the pristine beach and sunny weather.

The Tana Lodge Hotel, which was built on top of sand dunes, offered a spectacular view of the ocean. But in 2014 people started to notice a change. The sea level had begun to rise and within five years, the hotel's nine guest cottages had been swallowed by the sea - one after the other. "The ocean changed steadily and started encroaching the hotel. The last standing cottage was gulped by the sea in 2019, marking the end of my glorious hotel," Italian businessman Mr Macri told the BBC.

Now other residents of Kipini village, whose houses are located further back from the hotel, are facing the same prospect. Kipini - built at the mouth of Kenya's longest waterway, the Tana River, which flows into the Indian Ocean - is among several coastal villages that are slowly disappearing. "The ocean advances every day and our houses are becoming weaker. We are afraid and distressed but there is nothing much we can do," Said Idris, a community leader, told the BBC.

She said several people had died and an unknown number were missing after being swept away by the rise in sea levels, coupled with strong winds and heavy tides, especially at night. The depletion of mangrove forests along the shoreline - the coast's main line of defence against erosion - is to blame. Mangrove forests are full of salt-tolerant trees and shrubs that prevent sea water from advancing into farmlands by stabilising soil that otherwise could be washed away.

The cause of their disappearance appears to be a combination of deforestation by locals wanting coveted hard wood - and rising sea water as a result of climate change, which scientists feel is the major factor. "The shoreline in Kipini is very exposed to the effects of strong winds that strengthen the ocean waves," George Odera, a scientist with Fauna and Flora, a nature conservancy group, explained. Kipini, with its welcoming palm trees and smells of spice and barbecuing seafood, evokes what every Kenyan pictures of laid-back coastal life.

But this idyll is under threat as the sea-

water levels continue to rise. According to Omar Halki, a local administrator, nearly 10km (6.2 miles) of what used to be dry land have been swallowed by the sea in the last 10 years. "It's just a matter of time before the whole region goes under water," he told the BBC. Kipini has a population of about 4,000 people and residents told the BBC they could no longer dig or build strong foundations for their homes because of the rising sea levels. Some in Kipini estimate that more than 1,000 people have relocated to other villages over the last decade.

Most of the wells or boreholes that used to give them fresh water have now turned saline, forcing them to look for alternative sources of drinking water. The increasing salinity in groundwater has also severely affected farming. Crabs and prawns, which have also served as a source of livelihood for locals, are now scarce as their breeding grounds are within the mangrove swamps.

The rising waters have affected almost all facets of life, including how people are buried. "Graves are shallow because if we dig the recommended six feet, the dead will be buried in water," one resident told the BBC. Kipini is within Tana River county, which is facing multiple climate emergencies - from severe drought and water shortages in some places to flooding in others.

It is the county's first recorded instance of a village being overtaken by rising sea levels. But some locals say the geography of the coast has always changed - pointing to how the small fishing community of nearby Ungwana Bay was swept away years ago. Others say the Tana River could be changing its course. "Our forefathers showed us where the original waterway used to pass," resident Rishadi Badi told the BBC, explaining that he was told the river used to pass through Kipini generations ago.

But Mr Odera, who studies the calamity facing Kipini, puts the blame squarely on climate change. "What is happening in Kipini is not history, it is a recent occurrence and the bitter truth is, it is not getting better," he said. Local authorities want to build a sea wall along the 72km (45-mile) coastline to save the village from further intrusion by the ocean. Although the authorities acknowledge the situation is dire, the wall project is yet to start because of a lack of funds, says Mwanajuma Hiribae, a senior land official in the county.

Senegal's media outlets stage blackout day

DAKAR (AP): Media organizations in Senegal staged a blackout day to protest a government crackdown they say targets them directly and is aimed at curtailing press freedoms in the West African country.

Television screens went blank on the main TV stations TFM, ITV and 7 TV, and radio outlets such as RFM and iradio were silent. Most of the daily newspapers did not publish editions, except for the government-owned Le soleil and the private pro-government WalfQuotidien and Yoor Yoor Bi. The move comes as tensions have been rising between media organizations and the government, triggering international concerns over press freedoms in one of Africa's most stable democracies. Separately, Senegal's main media companies have accumulated massive debt over the years, threatening the sector's economic survival.

The Senegalese Council of Press Distributors and Publishers, an organization representing both private and public media companies, claimed that the government had frozen banks accounts belonging to the media outlets, allegedly for owing back taxes, "seized production equipment" and "unilaterally and illegally terminated advertising contracts." The claims, published in an editorial in Le Quotidien, could not be independently verified. Government officials were not immediately available for comment.

"For nearly three months, the Senegalese press has experienced one of the darkest phases of its history," the organization wrote in the editorial. In June, Senegal's Prime Minister Ousmane Sonko, who took office earlier this year, denounced what he described as a "misappropriation of public funds" in the media industry.

Cases of police brutality against journalists and arrests of government critics have also increased in Senegal over the past few years, according to the international watchdog Reporters Without Borders, which has urged Senegalese authorities to safeguard press freedoms. The group, known by its French acronym RSF, says Senegal fell from the 49th to 94th place on its World Press Freedom Index, an annual ranking of countries that assesses multiple factors, including a reporter's ability to work and security, in the last three years.

"Journalists are not sufficiently protected when doing their job and politicians are not playing their role in the matter," Sadibou Marong, the West Africa chief at RSF, told The Associated Press. "Even worse, the political forces have jeopardized the right to inform and be informed."

LRA rebel commander found guilty of war crimes

KAMPALA (BBC): A child soldier-turned-rebel commander in the notorious Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has been convicted of war crimes and crimes against humanity in a landmark case in Uganda. Thomas Kwoyelo was found guilty on 44 counts including murder, kidnap and pillaging. He denied all 78 charges that were brought against him.

Of the remaining 34 charges, Kwoyelo was acquitted of three murder charges and 31 other charges were dismissed. Kwoyelo becomes the first LRA commander to be tried by a Ugandan court, marking a watershed moment for the country's judicial system. The trial was held in Gulu city in northern Uganda - the region that was terrorised by the LRA for more than two decades.

In a dark suit and red tie, the former LRA commander showed no emotion in response to the long list of guilty verdicts. A judge read out the names of civilians who were

killed on Kwoyelo's orders. One notorious incident was an attack on a camp for displaced civilians at Pagak in northern Uganda in 2004. Dozens of women and children were beaten to death with wooden clubs. Kwoyelo has spent the last 14 years in detention, which analysts partly attribute to the scale and complexity of the case.

Joseph Kony formed the LRA in Uganda more than two decades ago, and claimed to be fighting to install a government based on the Bible's 10 Commandments. The group was notorious for chopping off people's limbs and abducting children to use as soldiers and sex slaves. Hundreds of thousands of people were forced from their homes by the conflict. The LRA first operated in northern Uganda then shifted to neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo, where Kwoyelo was arrested in 2009, and later the Central African Republic (CAR). The group has largely been wiped out. But Mr Kony,

who is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for crimes against humanity, has never been apprehended.

Rights group Human Rights Watch has previously criticised the delays in Kwoyelo's case, and says in general there has been limited accountability for crimes committed during the 25-year conflict, including abuses by Ugandan state forces. In 2021, senior LRA commander Dominic Ongwen was jailed for 25 years by the ICC, which decided not to give him a maximum life sentence because he had been abducted as a child and groomed by rebels who had killed his parents. Kwoyelo says he too was abducted by LRA fighters at the age of 12 while walking to school. Thousands of former LRA members have been granted amnesty under a controversial Ugandan law, after leaving and renouncing the rebel group. But this option was not given to Kwoyelo, who is yet to be sentenced.

Tanzania's opposition leaders freed on bail

DAR ES SALAM (BBC): Senior leaders of Tanzania's main opposition Chadema party - including its chairman Freeman Mbowe and his deputy Tundu Lissu - have been released on bail, after they were detained ahead of a youth rally. About 520 people were arrested in a nationwide crackdown to prevent Chadema from holding a parade through the south-western town of Mbeya.

Police said some of them remained in custody as they had failed to meet the requirements for bail. The arrests raised fears that Tanzania was returning to the repressive rule of late President John Magufuli, despite his successor Samia Hassan lifting a ban on opposition gatherings and promising to restore competitive politics.

Police banned the Chadema rally, saying it was intended to cause violence. They cited the party's rallying call for people to come together like the "youth in Kenya" - apparently referring to the weeks of deadly anti-government demonstrations in the neighbouring East African country. Chadema's youth wing said it had expected 10,000 people to attend rally, under the slogan "take charge of your future".

The party posted on X that its offices in Mbeya were "surrounded by the police and they are not allowing people to enter". Chadema spokesman John Mrema confirmed the release of several party leaders - including Mr Mbowe and Mr Lissu - but said that several others remained in detention. However, police said that "all the top Chadema leaders who were arrested, after interrogation and other procedures, have been returned to where they came from".

Chidema said Mr Lissu was arrested, and Mr Mbowe when he arrived at Mbeya's airport to bail out the party chairman and two other officials, including the leader of the party's youth wing, John Pambalu. Mr Lissu, who survived an assassination attempt in 2017 after being shot 16 times, returned to Tanzania in 2023 after two years in exile in Belgium. President Samia, who came to power following Mr Magufuli's sudden death in 2021, was praised for moving away from many of her predecessor's policies. But in the wake of the arrests, some opposition politicians have criticised her, questioning her commitment to political reconciliation. Tanzania is due to hold presidential and parliamentary polls late next year.

Governor WhatsApp number hacked

ABUJA (BBC): Suspected fraudsters have hacked the WhatsApp number of Umo Eno, the governor of Nigeria's oil-rich Akwa Ibom state, and asked his contacts for money. Akwa Ibom, in southern Nigeria, is the country's third-richest state based on its annual gross domestic product of \$19bn (£15bn).

The governor, a pastor who founded the All Nations Christian Ministry International, was elected last year. Many of Mr Eno's phone contacts received messages from his WhatsApp number asking them to transfer a specified amount of money to an account and promising reimbursement later. The governor's chief press secretary, Ekerete Udoh released a statement confirming that the governor's WhatsApp number was "cloned" by criminals attempting to defraud unsuspecting individuals.

Mr Udoh said law enforcement agencies had been notified. "We hereby warn that any message appearing to solicit funds by these imposters should be totally discountenanced by the general public as they do not emanate from the Governor," the statement read. Less than a month ago, a phone numbers linked to another governor was compromised in similar circumstances - Ademola Adeleke of Osun state, the uncle of Afrobeats star Davido.

Thai court orders dismissal of Prime Minister Srettha

BANGKOK: Thailand's Constitutional Court has removed Prime Minister Srettha Thavasin from office for appointing a minister with a criminal conviction, throwing the kingdom into new political turmoil.

Judge Punya Udchachon, reading the ruling on Wednesday, said the court voted 5-4 to remove Srettha, whose appointment of former lawyer Pichit Chuenban, jailed for six months in 2008 for contempt of court conviction, fell short of official moral and ethical standards. The ruling comes less than a week after judges voted 6-3 to accept a petition submitted by 40 senators to remove Srettha from office, but they rejected an application to suspend him from his duties as prime minister pending the probe.

Pichit resigned from his role as a minister in the Prime Minister's Office in a bid to protect Srettha. The real estate tycoon is the fourth Thai prime minister in 16 years to be removed by verdicts of the same court. Reporting from Bangkok, Al Jazeera's Tony Cheng said the development was "a big surprise", but Srettha did not appear to be particularly concerned.

"He was seen looking cheerful at the government house earlier today. He said he wasn't going to go to the court [for an appeal]," Cheng said. "Most people here in Thailand, certainly those watching the political scene, thought that it was probably unlikely that he would be disqualified from his position. They thought he would get a good rap over his knuckles," he added. Srettha told reporters after the ruling that he had not anticipated the decision.

"I respect the verdict. I reiterate that for the almost one year I have been in this role, I have tried with good intentions to lead the country with honesty," he said. His removal after less than a year in power means parliament must convene to choose a new prime minister, with the prospect of more uncertainty in a country



dogged for 20 years by coups and court rulings that have brought down multiple governments and political parties. Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai is expected to take over as the caretaker premier. The Constitutional Court last week dissolved the anti-establishment Move Forward Party, the hugely popular opposition, ruling its campaign to reform a law against insulting the crown risked undermining the constitutional monarchy. It regrouped on Friday under a new name.

Srettha's Pheu Thai Party and its predecessors have borne the brunt of Thailand's turmoil, with two of its governments removed by coups in a long-running grudge match between the party's founders, the billionaire Shinawatra family, and their rivals in the conservative establishment and royalist military. The decision could rock a fragile truce between influential former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his rivals in the conservative elite and military old guard,

which enabled the tycoon's return from 15 years of self-exile in 2023 and ally Srettha to become prime minister the same day.

A Pheu Thai official said the party will meet on Thursday to decide its candidate for prime minister. "We are the biggest party in the government," its secretary-general, Sorawong Thienthong, told the Reuters news agency. The next premier would need to have been nominated a prime ministerial candidate by their parties prior to the 2023 election, with Thaksin's 37-year-old daughter and party leader Paetongtarn Shinawatra among Pheu Thai's options.

If successful, she would be Thailand's third Shinawatra premier after Thaksin and her aunt, Yingluck Shinawatra. Other potential candidates include Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, Energy Minister Piraporn Salirathavibhaga and Prawit Wongsuwan, an influential former army chief who was involved in the last two coups. — Al Jazeera

Germany probes suspected sabotage at sealed military base

BERLIN: German authorities have sealed off a military base in Cologne as they investigate the potential contamination of the water supply. A German defence ministry spokesman confirmed on Wednesday that an investigation of suspected sabotage was under way at the Cologne-Wahn barracks. A warning has been issued to those at the base not to drink the tap water and to remain on site.

The base, which sits next to Cologne airport, is home to the German Air Force office responsible for aircraft used for travel by Chancellor Olaf Scholz and ministers. Following indications of a disturbance, a hole was discovered in a fence, it was reported. Samples have been taken due to suspicion that the water supply could have been contaminated. Thousands of people at the base, which employs 4,300 soldiers and 1,200 civilians, have been ordered not to enter or leave the barracks and advised not to drink tap water while the police, military police and the military intelligence agency carry out their probe.

A spokesperson for the territorial command in Berlin confirmed to news agency Reuters that the base

in Cologne-Wahn had been sealed off, saying the army took the case "seriously". There was no indication of who might have gained illegal access to the Cologne base. NATO has previously warned of a campaign of hostile activities staged by Moscow, including acts of sabotage and cyberattacks.

Several countries such as Poland, Germany, Britain and the Czech Republic have reported incidents in the past months. In July, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said the Western military alliance saw a pattern evolving and that recent attacks were a result of Russian intelligence becoming more active. Meanwhile, Germany has issued a European arrest warrant for a Ukrainian diving instructor over his alleged involvement in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea, according to German media.

German investigators believe Volodymyr Z was a member of a team that in September 2022 planted explosive devices on the pipeline route carrying natural gas from Russia to Germany, German media reported on Wednesday. German law does not allow

publication of the suspect's surname. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has repeatedly denied his country was behind the sabotage, which disrupted Russian gas exports to the European Union, hitting Moscow's energy revenues hard. Volodymyr Z was last known to have lived in Poland, according to a report by the Suddeutsche Zeitung and Die Zeit newspapers and the ARD public broadcaster, which quoted unnamed sources.

The Polish prosecutor's office confirmed on Wednesday that it had received a German arrest warrant for a Ukrainian man who is a suspect in the Nord Stream attack named "Volodymyr Z". It said it received the warrant in June, but the suspect left for Ukraine last month. It said also that the authorities failed to prevent him from leaving because the relevant information had not percolated down to the country's border guard. Germany's investigation has identified another man and a woman who like Volodymyr Z are also Ukrainian diving instructors. However, no arrest warrants have been issued for them for the time being, according to the

German media report.

Several explosions on September 26, 2022 damaged the two gas pipelines, Nord Stream 1 and 2. The explosions were registered near the Danish island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea. Four leaks were discovered shortly afterwards. Russian natural gas had previously flowed to Germany through Nord Stream 1, which had a capacity of 63 billion cubic metres (82.4 billion cubic yards) per year. The similarly sized Nord Stream 2 was not yet in operation. The route was built to divert Russian gas exports to the EU away from Ukraine's pipelines, on which they were previously heavily reliant.

Russia's gas sales to the EU were by far the country's most lucrative until the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and ensuing political disputes all but wiped the trade out. Russia and the West accused each other of being behind the Nord Stream blasts. Each has denied involvement, and no one has taken responsibility. Authorities in several countries investigated the case, but Denmark and Sweden halted their investigations without noting any conclusion. — Al Jazeera

'Unprecedented escalation': How Russians view Ukraine Kursk incursion

MOSCOW: Last week, Ukrainian troops crossed the border to mount an offensive into the Kursk region of Russia, reportedly seizing scores of towns and settlements. Residents frantically scrambled to leave their homes while electricity and water were shut off. "It was not an easy journey," said Elena from Sudzha, a town now under Ukrainian control.

Together with her cat Roo, she drove to the city of Voronezh, where she's now staying with friends. "We spent one and a half hours searching for a new carrier because Roo managed to break the front netting with his claws. He was stressed. I ended up carrying him in my arms, and he spent the whole journey hiding under the seat of the car." Local Telegram channels are filled with offers of free accommodation in various Russian cities, and the government has offered evacuees a one-time payment of 10,000 roubles (just over \$100) as compensation although there may be additional payments, for example 600,000 roubles (\$6,500) in case of serious injury. "The enemy will certainly

receive a worthy response, and all the goals facing us will undoubtedly be achieved," Russian President Vladimir Putin said, ordering security services to conduct a "counterterrorist operation" in the region. The Russian media, which is largely aligned with the Kremlin, has grudgingly acknowledged the Ukrainians' success. "The Zelenskyy regime has made a strong move - with all the resulting not-very-pleasant conclusions and consequences for our side," columnist Mikhail Rostovsky wrote for the newspaper Moskovsky Komsomolets, referring to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

"If you are dealing with a strong adversary (and no sane person has long doubted that the Ukrainian Armed Forces are a strong and highly motivated adversary for Russia), you must be prepared for the fact that from time to time they will make strong and unexpected moves that will catch you off-guard." These successes were not lost on the exiled opposition. Politician Leonid Gozman praised the Ukrainian troops. "The actions of the Ukrainian

Armed Forces speak not only of their high professionalism, but also of the creativity of the Ukrainian leadership," Gozman wrote in Novaya Gazeta, a newspaper that often takes aim at the Kremlin.

"Someone said to them: 'Why not?' and they did what no one expected of them, completely changing the picture of the war. As President Zelenskyy rightly noted, the Ukrainian army knows how to surprise." Gozman noted that Russian citizens have not yet resisted the Ukrainians en masse and disparaged Russia's defence capabilities. "Just as during the days of [Yevgeniy] Prigozhin's rebellion it suddenly became clear that the various Russian Guards were only good at fighting peaceful demonstrators, and did not want to go up against armed bandits," he said, referring to the late leader of the Wagner Group mercenary force.

"So now it turned out that the border guards were not capable of confronting a real threat (and it was not their fault, they were designed for something else), that the formidable Chechen troops had missed the enemy for the umpteenth time, otherwise

they would have certainly routed him, but it did not happen, and most importantly, our generals are good at attacking other countries, but not at defending their own." Pro-Kremlin Russian media have repeatedly accused the Ukrainian army of targeting civilians, including a drone strike on an ambulance that killed its driver and one paramedic and wounded another.

There have also been reports that Ukrainian soldiers opened fire on cars in the village of Kurilovka, fatally wounding a pregnant woman, and took captive volunteers who were helping evacuate civilians. On his talk show on Rossiya-1, Putin-friendly TV host Vladimir Solovoyov accused Ukraine's Western backers of masterminding the incursion. "What we're witnessing is an unprecedented escalation," he told viewers.

"Western countries are sincerely attempting to say, 'We weren't involved. We didn't greenlight this.' This is an obvious lie. It's clear that this operation wasn't organised by Zelenskyy or his headquarters. This operation was developed by NATO specialists. — Al Jazeera

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US consumers rein in inflation

EVEN as the US Fed Reserve has been fighting the demon of inflation in the world's largest economy by keeping the interest rates at an elevate level, the ordinary American seems to have done more than his bit to curb inflation. He has refrained from buying things which s/he felt were at a higher price range, and s/he tried to bargain hard and bring down the prices of goods which were essential.

This forced the retailers to bring down the prices, and businesses felt the pinch that they were not able to sell high-priced items because the consumers were not willing to spend that extra cent and extra dollar. The finding came out clearly in the US Fed Reserve's "Beige Book", which is an anecdotal business report brought out eight times a year from the 12 US Fed districts.

In its July report, It says, "Almost every district mentioned retailers discounting items or price-sensitive consumers only purchasing essentials, trading down in quality, buying fewer items or shopping around for the best deals." The finding is supported by what David Gibbs, CEO of Yum Brands, which owns Taco Bell, KFC and Pizza Hut, had told investors that price-sensitive consumers had slowed down sales in the past year. He said, "Ensuring we provide consumers affordable options has been an area of greater focus for us since last year." This phenomenon has been witnessed in the online retailer Dornify's sales of comforters, where the price had to be brought down from \$99 to \$69. Andrew Jassy, CEO of Amazon said, "We are seeing lower average selling prices...right now because customers continue to trade down on price when they can."

It has been observed that the American consumer cooled inflation without getting the economy into a recession. It has been a balancing act, bringing the prices down by refusing to indulge in that impetuous buying spree, and yet buying enough, although at bargain prices, to keep the wheels of the economy going as it were. This is indeed a revealing aspect of the economic behaviour of the people in changing a trend. Though there has been much talking about behavioural change as a key element in setting right many of the distortions, especially in matters concerning climate change, this is the first time that a spontaneous behaviour of the consumer has changed the economic trend.

This gives insight into the fact that American society, which is generally blamed for being an unabashed consumerist group, has managed to show the right amount of prudence and frugality. The American story is one of debt and indebtedness, especially because of the credit card phenomenon. But the American people have shown this admirable quality of keeping away from indulgence is a rare example.

This uncharacteristic frugality on the part of Americans could be due to the fact that there are not enough jobs around and the competition is so fierce that the salaries are reined in. This is the general trend with the major segments of the economy, whether it is manufacturing or the services. The exception is the tech sector with the explosion of AI applications and the computer techies needed to generate ever newer AI applications. The fear has been that AI could affect jobs in manufacturing and services. It is this fear that is restraining American families from spending. The consumer restraint will have wider ramifications in the economy. The economists will now have to build their models factoring in the consumption patterns. If higher prices were to deter consumers from buying, then it would impact sales, and thus production. The need to keep prices at affordable levels becomes an imperative.

Young Arabs want jobs

WHEN the most recent Arab Youth Survey found that nearly half of its respondents wanted to start their own businesses within the next five years, it was proof of what many in the Arab world knew already – that its young, energetic population is looking for opportunities to live up to its potential.

Nonetheless, an International Labour Organisation report released this week has recorded an increase in youth unemployment in many Arab states, with eight countries posting higher rates last year than in 2019, despite the global average falling in the same period. The youth unemployment rate in Arab states last year was at 28 per cent, up from 27 per cent in 2019.

Each of these countries faces unique challenges but the persistence of youth unemployment poses an important question: what is standing in so many young Arabs' way?

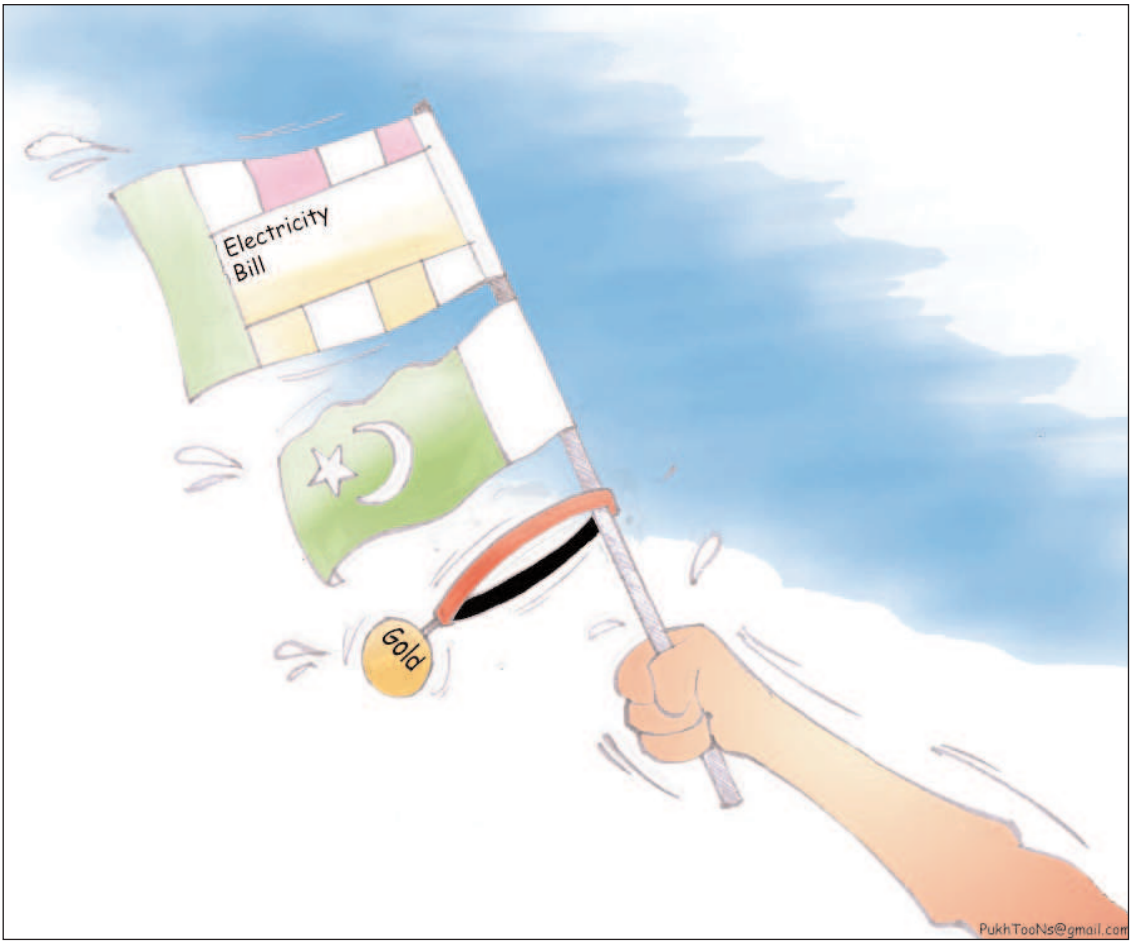
The answer is not a lack of ambition. Nor is it necessarily a lack of education or training, although both are important. In fact, education in many Arab states is more accessible than ever, according to the Arab Development Portal, a knowledge platform. Worryingly, the International Monetary Fund has found that unemployment in the Arab world actually tends to increase with schooling, exceeding 15 per cent for those with tertiary education in Egypt, Jordan and Tunisia. What too many young Arabs lack is opportunity. The reality is that many young people in Arab countries who seek a good job or want to start their own businesses are too often stymied by financial bottlenecks, burdensome bureaucracy, corruption (including nepotism) or – in several countries – war. A lack of access to startup capital, with an accompanying lack of support for young entrepreneurs, condemns many to low-skilled, low-paid jobs or, as the ILO has found, no job at all. According to research from the Brookings Institution "the inability of Mena economies to create enough decent employment opportunities is arguably the most important factor behind the high rates of youth unemployment and joblessness in the region".

Young Arabs want the chance to work and build for the future. According to World Bank data from last year, the Middle East's population is growing rapidly and a third of its people are under 15 – this is a huge resource for that more Arab states should be investing in. That is easier said than done, and there are no easy answers. Some Arab states are stable and resource-rich; others suffer from the effects of current or past armed conflicts, something that deters the international investment that is often critical to creating good opportunities their young people. Youth unemployment has dogged many Arab states for decades.

Nevertheless, economic freedom – that is, opportunity for those who are willing to work in a fair labour market that supports entrepreneurship – is an indispensable part of building and maintaining a modern economy that will help to deliver social cohesion and stability. The proliferation of successful, Arab-led startups in the UAE is just one example of what can be achieved when society nurtures young people's dreams. The task is to ensure that sense of opportunity knocks across the Arab world.

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Harris ignores pro-Palestine voters at her peril

Ray Hanania

MUCH has been made over the past week about a protest by a handful of pro-Palestine activists during a presidential campaign rally in Detroit for US Vice President Kamala Harris.

Although President Joe Biden has withdrawn from the November presidential election and endorsed Harris to take his place, she will not officially become the Democratic nominee until the party convention in Chicago ends on Aug. 22.

Biden stepped down for many reasons, but the Democrats acknowledge only one — that his debate performance against Donald Trump on June 27 was so bad that he had no choice, with more and more party figures and donors urging him to withdraw. Insisting initially that he would remain as the official candidate, Biden relented 25 days later on July 21.

But even had he not stepped down, Biden risked being defeated as a direct result of protests organized across the US by Arabs, Muslims, and progressives angered by his support for Israel's war crimes in the Gaza Strip, where more than 40,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, and almost half women and children, have been killed.

The #AbandonBiden movement in Minnesota, supported by several related protest campaigns, including "Leave it B l a n k", "VoteUncommitted" and "ListentoMichigan" in other states, significantly redirected votes Biden needed in order to defeat Trump.

Few in the US were willing to give the anti-Biden protesters any recognition, brushing off the movement, and rele-

gating the Arab and Muslim vote as insignificant.

Some state government election boards declined to quantify the anti-Biden vote. Many mainstream media outlets marginalized the numbers, Biden's political allies, including those funded by Israel's political lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, ignored the demonstrators, or demonized them as "pro-Hamas protesters" in an effort to tie them to Hamas' attack on Oct. 7, 2023 that took 1,200 Israeli lives.

There has been a campaign to pretend that Arabs and Muslims have no voice or influence in the upcoming presidential election.

But Harris should not believe the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim media, and political campaign of exclusion, and recognize that they will play a significant role in several states she must win to defeat Trump.

The Arab and Muslim vote in the November presidential election is Harris' Achilles' heel.

When a handful of protesters interrupted the vice president's speech in Detroit, chanting: "Kamala, you need to call for a ceasefire in Gaza," and, "Kamala, Kamala, you can't hide, we won't vote for genocide," she responded angrily: "I am speaking now ... You know what? If you want Donald Trump to win, then say that. Otherwise, I'm speaking."

Her response was a major political blunder that has sparked robust debate in many swing states where Arabs and Muslims showed during the Democratic primary elections during the past six months that they can deflect thousands of votes

away from Biden, all but erasing his slim margin of victory in 2020 over Trump.

In Michigan, more than 130,000 Arab and Muslim Americans cast votes not for Trump, but against Biden in the Democratic primary. Biden only won the state by 154,000 votes in 2020.

In Arizona, 47,800 Arab and Muslim Americans cast votes against Biden, who won the state by only 10,457 votes. In Minnesota, 45,914 people cast "uncommitted" votes. Biden won that state by 233,012 votes. It was a similar situation in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Georgia.

The Democrats are afraid to acknowledge the anti-Biden vote, and the likelihood that it will grow if Harris refuses to take the Arab and Muslim community seriously.

Harris could have responded in a positive manner to the latest protest.

In scorning them, as she did, she was scorning the entire Arab and Muslim American community, and all those American voters who support the demands that Israel stop the carnage in Gaza.

What the vice president should have done was acknowledge the pain that exists in the Arab and Muslim community.

But we understand why she was afraid to do that. Israel's lobby has targeted and defeated 264 candidates who have supported Palestinian human rights or criticized Israeli government violence.

Two of those who were defeated by AIPAC, which poured millions into the coffers of their rivals, were African American congressman Jamaal Bowman in New

York and congresswoman Cori Bush in Missouri.

African Americans have been strong advocates of justice for Palestinians, and certainly the Arab and Muslim American community must tread carefully in protesting against Harris.

But, more importantly, Harris needs to show that she is not a political hack who can be controlled by AIPAC money and pro-Israel lobbies that have a heavy hand in influencing American elections.

Harris should know that most Arab and Muslim Americans have expressed a willingness to work with her, like Dearborn Mayor Abdullah Hammoud, who said: "We believe the door is cracked open, that there's now opportunity to have dialogue, for us to understand how Vice President Harris will differentiate herself from President Biden on the path for Gaza."

Harris' response to the protesters was a blunder. It shows that she may lack the strength to stand up to Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who not only faces three corruption charges in Israel, but has also been condemned by the International Criminal Court chief prosecutor, Karim Khan, who announced in May that he would seek arrest warrants against the Israeli leader and senior Hamas figures on charges of war crimes.

The International Court of Justice has ruled that Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem is unlawful.

But, apparently, Harris is more afraid of what AIPAC and some pro-Israel Democrats can do to undermine her campaign.

And that makes her no better than Biden.

US candidates set their sights on Pak-American voters

Farhan Ahmad

AS the United States approaches its November 2024 presidential election, the role of immigrant communities, particularly the Pakistani-American diaspora, is gaining unprecedented attention. With an estimated population exceeding half a million, Pakistani-Americans are no longer a quiet minority. They are a politically active and influential group whose voting patterns and policy preferences are increasingly on the radar of U.S. political strategists.

The rise of the Pakistani-American community in U.S. politics is nothing short of remarkable. Over the past two decades, this group has transitioned from being a relatively inconspicuous segment of the population to becoming a significant force in American political life. This change is largely due to the growing number of Pakistani-Americans who are not only voting but also running for public office, participating in advocacy organizations and leading grassroots movements. Their increasing presence in politics is a reflection of their determination to shape the policies that affect their lives and those of their communities, both in the United States and back in Pakistan.

In 2024, the stakes are higher than ever. The Pakistani-American community is concentrated in key swing states such as Texas, Michigan and Pennsylvania regions that are likely to play a pivotal role in determining the outcome of the election. In these battleground states, where every vote counts, the influence of immigrant communities can be the deciding factor in tipping the scales in favor of one candidate over another. Political analysts and campaign strategists are keenly aware of this and both major parties are making concerted efforts to court the Pakistani-American vote.

While Pakistani-Americans, like many immigrant groups, hold diverse political views, certain trends have emerged that reflect their collective concerns. Historically, this community has leaned towards the Democratic Party, drawn by its positions on immigration, civil rights and social justice. The Trump administration's policies, most notably the travel ban that affected several Muslim-majority countries, served to galvanize the community's support for the Democrats in the 2020 election. The memories of these policies, which many in the community viewed as discriminatory and harmful, continue to influence voting behavior.

As the election approaches, several key issues are at the forefront of Pakistani-American voter's minds. Immigration reform remains a top priority, particularly in light of the challenges that many immigrants have faced in recent years. Healthcare and education are also critical issues, as they are for many American voters. However, what sets the Pakistani-American community apart is its deep concern for U.S. foreign policy, especially regarding South Asia. The Biden administration's approach to Pakistan,

including its handling of the post-withdrawal situation in Afghanistan and its stance on Kashmir, has been closely scrutinized by the diaspora. These foreign policy issues are not just abstract concerns. They have real implications for the families and communities that Pakistani-Americans maintain ties with back in Pakistan.

The political engagement of Pakistani-Americans extends beyond domestic matters, bearing significant implications for U.S.-Pakistan relations. The diaspora serves as a bridge between the two nations, advocating for policies that promote stronger bilateral ties. This advocacy is not only the work of individual voters but also the result of concerted efforts by Pakistani-American law-makers, lobbyists and advocacy groups who have been instrumental in shaping U.S. foreign policy towards Pakistan. These efforts have helped ensure the continuity of cooperation and diplomatic support, crucial for maintaining stability in the region.

The rise of the Pakistani-American community in U.S. politics is a powerful testament to their growing confidence and capability. From grassroots organizers to elected officials, they are making their voices heard across all levels of government. This newfound political clout has the potential to influence not only U.S. policies but also the future trajectory of U.S.-Pakistan relations. For many Pakistani-Americans, their engagement in U.S. politics is not only about shaping the policies of their adopted country but also about advocating for the interests of their homeland. This dual focus on domestic and international issues is what makes the Pakistani-American community such a unique and important constituency in the election.

As the election draws nearer, both the Democratic and Republican parties are expected to intensify their outreach efforts towards the Pakistani-American community. Addressing key concerns ranging from immigration reform to foreign policy will be crucial in securing their votes. Candidates who can effectively communicate their positions on these issues and demonstrate a commitment to addressing the needs of the Pakistani-American community are likely to find a receptive audience.

In the broader context, the engagement of Pakistani-Americans in U.S. politics stands as a reminder of the interconnectedness of our global society. The influence of expatriates in shaping the policies of their adopted countries is undeniable. The 2024 election could very well be a turning point, highlighting the growing importance of Pakistani-Americans as a voting bloc and as advocates for policies that resonate across borders. The decisions made by this community will not only impact the future of U.S. domestic policy but also have far-reaching consequences for U.S.-Pakistan relations, influencing both their homeland and the United States.

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Invading Russia is a gamble that may pay off for Zelensky

Mohamed Chebaro

WHAT, exactly, Ukraine's endgame is with the Kursk operation remains an open question.

The incursion might be President Volodymyr Zelensky's boldest and riskiest gamble, a masterful strike that could bring about change within Russia and its leadership.

If we are to believe Ukrainian claims that the operation is aimed solely at forcing Russia to redeploy fighting forces away from the northern front lines near Kharkiv, the chances are the move could backfire if Russia mounts a counterpunch, with reprisals that many fear will be bloody.

No doubt, Ukraine has been on the back foot since its long-awaited, but unsuccessful, offensive last summer, and Zelensky is desperate to change the narrative that it is losing the war despite its successes against Russian forces in the Black Sea, as well as in Crimea.

Regardless of its aims, the incursion so far has lasted more than a week and claimed 1,000 sq. km of Russian territory, according to Ukraine's generals — the first time a foreign force has set foot on Russian soil since 1941. And although Russian President Vladimir Putin has accused the West of being behind the operation — a claim the US and other allies reject — his regime finds itself in a tight corner.

The images from Kursk will shock the Russian public. In his assessment to his military leadership, Putin said that the operation is aimed at sowing discord among the local population and trying to improve Kiev's position in any future negotiations — claims that might not be totally wrong.

Experts have praised the complex preparations for the incursion, with Ukraine relying on total secrecy and the use of electronic warfare techniques to blind Russians

border defense units and blunt aerial surveillance.

Military strategists are trying to establish the reasoning behind the Ukrainian step — and in history, only the 1950 Inchon landings during the Korean War offer a counterpunch strategy that was as risky. But that operation was aimed at turning a whole offensive around, while the objectives of the Kursk incursion will be much more limited.

Though the speed and suddenness of the Ukrainian operation appears to have caught Russian forces and the leadership by surprise, it is most likely a desperate act to try to disrupt Russian supply lines to troops near Kharkiv. However, the strike demonstrates that Ukraine is still capable of mounting cross-border raids, sending a message to Russians that they cannot sit easily at home while invading a neighboring

country.

Since February 2022, Kyiv has struggled to defend itself, while occasionally carrying out attacks targeting Russian territory aimed at tarnishing the invader's image of invincibility. Stunts such as flying drones over Moscow and almost hitting the Kremlin were part of this strategy.

There was also success with the sinking of key Russian navy ships, and the limiting of Russian naval activities in the Black and Azof seas. Attacks on the Kerch bridge linking mainland Russia and Crimea have also been effective in exposing Russian vulnerabilities and weaknesses, while other operations revealed Ukraine's ability to engage in covert operations targeting military units, and the arms and oil industries using sabotage, drones strikes, and long-range missiles.

Other attacks have taken place inside Russia,

mainly in border regions, such as Kursk, Belgorod and Bryansk Oblast. But these were undertaken by anti-war, anti-Putin Russian forces supported by Ukraine, with raids on lightly defended border settlements and towns before withdrawing back into Ukraine-held areas.

The next phase of the Kursk incursion depends on what reserves each side has available and how it deploys them, in a race against time for both sides.

The longer the operation lasts and Ukrainian forces increase their gains, the more Putin is likely to feel pressured to respond with any means at his disposal. He has described the attack as a terrorist act, which in the Russian leader's lexicon means that anything will be permitted.

The other problem for Kyiv is that the initial incursion seems to have been more successful than expected, requiring the deployment of additional manpower and military

resources desperately needed elsewhere. Although the Ukrainian forces are likely to dig in and fight, their efforts are unlikely to change the fundamentals present on the front line in the east of Ukraine, where Russian troops are advancing slowly against outgunned Ukrainian forces.

It is impossible not to praise Ukraine's audacity and its leadership's bravery in deciding to stand up and fight the forces of an invading superpower. If doubt begins to seep into the upper echelons of the Kremlin, with the suggestion that Russia is risking its peace and stability after losing face against a far weaker enemy, then the sacrifices of the Kursk operation will have been worthwhile.

The longer the Ukraine incursion survives, the more unpredictable Moscow will become — and that is likely to determine whether the gamble was worthwhile or a blatant miscalculation.

Gebran Bassil has turned Lebanon’s FPM into his own personal fiefdom

AS Lebanon faces the prospect of an expanded war with Israel, the country’s Maronite Christian community is going through transformations of its own. Its main political party, the Free Patriotic Movement (FPM) of former president Michel Aoun, is rapidly being transformed into the personal fiefdom of Mr Aoun’s son-in-law, Gebran Bassil. While less dramatic than a war, this development says a great deal about the Christian community’s politics in the country, and its direction.

In 1990, after Mr Aoun had declared a war of liberation against Syrian forces in Lebanon during the country’s civil war, he regularly made speeches to the throngs standing outside the presidential palace, from where he headed a military government. One of the themes he often repeated was that he sought a new, more egalitarian Lebanon, in which prominent sectarian leaders would no longer rule.

Coming from Mr Aoun, this made sense at the time. He himself was a child of the Lebanese periphery, who gained social promotion through the country’s military – sometimes, though not always, a rare example of meritocracy in the country. Yet when Mr Aoun rejected the Taif Accord of 1989, after Lebanon’s parliamentari-

ans had voted in favour of it in Saudi Arabia, another facet of his character came to the forefront.

His rejection seems to have been motivated by the fact that the negotiations leading to Taif had not led also to his own election as president of the republic. This was despite the fact that he had significant Maronite Christian support, had begun his campaign in 1988 by closing down illegal ports, and seemed to embody a statist project against a decade and a half of wartime militia rule.

Mr Aoun was soon defeated by the Syrians and forced into exile. When he returned to Lebanon in 2005, he was received with great enthusiasm by his supporters. The political class’s efforts to contain him and form alliances to limit his success in parliamentary elections that year only boosted his appeal. Consequently, Mr Aoun secured the largest Christian bloc in Parliament.

From that moment on, Mr Aoun revived his old ambition of becoming president. He allied himself with Hezbollah, effectively breaking up the March 14 coalition that had opposed Syria in the aftermath of former prime minister Rafic Hariri’s assassination. This had obliged the Syrians to withdraw from Lebanon, allowing Mr Aoun to

Michael Young

initially had a more interesting potential. Many parliamentarians of the group were people of note in their respective areas, not factotums of Mr Aoun. It appeared the FPM could become a gathering point for a mostly middle-class and lower middle-class electorate, was genuinely popular in Christian areas, and was also willing to cross sectarian lines.

Second, Mr Aoun’s past rhetoric portrayed the FPM as different than the sectarian elite against which Mr Aoun had rallied in 1990. One couldn’t go too far, as the general could himself be very much a sectarian figure, but at least on the face of things the party’s constituency appeared to be less focused on sect than on a vision of the state to which its middle-class and lower middle-class supporters adhered.

Third, by removing prominent people from the FPM and intimidating the rest, Mr Bassil has taken what had been a fairly pluralistic party and turned it into one susceptible to becoming a gaggle of yes-men. That doesn’t apply to all its remaining leading members, but Mr Bassil’s message is clear: “Either work with my programme, or you’re gone.”

Fourth, in the short term, Mr Bassil’s controversial choices have alienated a significant number of voters, so that in the last elections of 2022, it was

the rival Lebanese Forces Party that received a majority of Christian votes, not the FPM. As more FPM figures are forced out of the party, the party’s electorate will probably continue to be eroded.

That may not bother Mr Bassil, whose aim appears to be to create an organisation entirely loyal to himself. Yet all that this shows is how dysfunctional and undemocratic Lebanese politics has become, where retaining personal power is far more of a priority than presenting novel ideas that build constituencies.

In a way, Mr Bassil has only reinforced a sense that the Christian community remains a prisoner of the duality that led to its destruction in 1990, when the Aoun-led Lebanese Army fought Mr Geagea’s Lebanese Forces in a savage war that undermined the Maronites’ national power. The Aounists and Lebanese Forces are still around, and both are still dividing the Christian electorate.

Most disappointingly, Mr Bassil and Mr Geagea have sustained a political environment within the Christian community that leaves little room for dissenters. At a time when many Christian citizens seem to have given up on a unified Lebanese state, the community would gain by breaking out of the Aounist-Lebanese Forces headlock.

what Iran and its allies in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria have done.

Now, let’s look at Syria...

Many are watching Syria closely after recent events. These include multiple Israeli operations, such as assassinations of Iranian leaders, and the mysterious disappearance of key political figures close to the Syrian regime.

There is also the unusual silence from Syria’s leadership regarding the events of Oct. 7 and the escalating war in Gaza, including the lack of condolences for the assassinations of Haniyeh in Tehran and Fuad Shukr in Beirut’s southern suburbs.

Sources familiar with the Assad regime, both under the father and the son, believe it remains committed to the 1974 security agreement with Israel, which prevents any group from using Syrian territory to threaten Israel.

I believe that Iran and its allies, especially in Lebanon, seem to understand this “reality” from a regime they know well — one that prioritizes “coexistence” with Israel to ensure its survival.

At a time when “tactical moves” overshadow ideals and grand strategies, most players, except the naive, recognize that words and actions often do not match.

Iran is not tied to Moscow for life, the “resistance” narrative is not built to last, and the borders of entities born out of convenience will survive only if their creators stick to the realities that shaped them.

Social media needs regulation – and it’s coming not a day too soon

WHEN the Malaysian government announced it had plans to require social media platforms and messaging services to apply for licenses earlier this year, there was significant pushback. The proposals by the country’s internet regulator reportedly included “pre-emptive action to prevent offences, a kill switch for content deemed egregious, forced auditing of licensees’ content moderation and algorithm processes, and the requirement to have a local entity in Malaysia that would be subjected to local laws”. There was disgruntled murmuring by some about restrictions on free speech, and potential abuse of rules.

Sholto Byrnes

to protect children from exploitation, he told them: “We could regulate you out of business if we wanted to.”

For a long time many authorities appeared to think that the big tech firms were just too dominant to be tamed by any local rules. When they were confronted, however, it was clear that the companies would respond to ensure they weren’t shut out of markets.

Colbert looking taken aback.

This is one of the reasons that misinformation spreads so easily on social media. If faith has eroded in what should be the “trusted sources”, suddenly anyone who can string a sentence together can appear plausible to far too many people.

“Just as there is a right of freedom of speech, there is a right for people to have access to accurate information,” Henry Parker of Logically, a UK firm that monitors disinformation online, said this week.

In 2021, Australia forced Google and Facebook to strike deals with media outlets to pay for content that appeared on their platforms. AI firms are making a series of agreements with media firms whose content they have doubtless already scraped, not least to avoid lengthy legal action. European Commissioner Thierry Breton warned X’s owner Elon Musk about spreading “harmful content” before his livestreamed interview with former US President Donald Trump. Mr Breton may have overstepped the mark by not consulting his colleagues, but the EU’s determination to be at the forefront of social media regulation is clear.

Ireland’s Mr Harris said it was wrong that these platforms did not “come into contact with the same laws and enforcement” as newspapers did. I agree with him, but he also made an important distinction. For as much as there has always been a degree of cynicism about the whole mainstream media ecosystem — “it must be true, I read it in a newspaper” ran the old joke — historically many outlets made huge efforts to get the facts right. To take a personal example, when I worked for UK newspapers, for several years every single word I wrote was read by libel lawyers before publication.

But trust in many of the legacy broadcasters and publishers has been undermined. If you doubt that, you should watch a recent interview by US talk show host Stephen Colbert. Addressing a reporter from a rival network, he said: “I know you guys are objective over [at CNN], you just report the news as it is.” The audience immediately erupted in hysterical laughter, leaving even Mr

And for information to be accurate it must be complete and provide full context. It is therefore in my opinion an obligation for all the big media companies who are so delighted that Kamala Harris is now the Democratic candidate for US president to explain just why it was that only a few months ago they were describing her as a drag on the ticket and moaned that it was too difficult to dump her.

Most people are aware of the tides of harmful misinformation, outright falsehoods and often successful attempts to stir up hatred that have flooded these platforms and services. The recent riots in Northern Ireland and England are just one example of the disruption, terror and destruction that can follow. Across the world, politicians have realised that the big tech companies are not willing, or perhaps sometimes unable, to provide users and societies with sufficient protection, and that governments must now step in. “We can’t have a situation where it’s seen as some kind of Wild West,” said Irish prime minister Simon Harris last week, after threats to him and his family had apparently remained posted on one platform for two days after the Irish police had asked them to be removed.

All those White House correspondents who col-luded in the pretence that US President Joe Biden was as “sharp as a tack” also need to come clean about their reasons for doing so; and answer why, if he’s mentally unfit to run for office again, he is still fit to have his finger on the nuclear button when he’s only “dependably engaged” between 10am and 4pm.

The failure to do so plays into right wing narratives about the “lamestream” media, a term I hate, as it dismisses the work of so many decent, committed people. But the point is that disinformation of whatever kind — and that includes deliberate omission — is too dangerous to be allowed to proliferate. That is one of the main reasons that regulation is coming for social media.

It would ill behove legacy media firms to be too sanctimonious about it, though. Many ought to be examining their consciences and asking if they are truly in the business of providing “accurate information”, or if they too are focused on promoting their own preferred, partisan narratives, which also provoke division and polarisation — just, perhaps, in a less obviously “egregious” manner.

Tactical calculations, not ideals, shape Middle East security

YEARS of experience have taught me to be cautious about two events that invariably dominate the news: a US presidential election year, and major global sports events, such as the World Cup and the Olympics, which capture public attention for about a month.

This year, we have a US presidential election and have just had the Paris Olympics. Since Oct. 7, a series of major events has unfolded rapidly, with significant consequences, but no real efforts or strategic plans to resolve them.

In the Middle East, it seems the region’s players and their regional backers are moving without clear direction. Their actions are mostly tactical, lacking any clear vision for lasting solutions.

What appears to be a mutual effort to maintain “rules of engagement” barely hides the reality that some stronger players, benefiting from global ties, are escalating tensions.

Israel’s leadership feels unbound by any commitment to a peace process that the ruling far right has never genuinely supported.

The assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, even while Hamas holds Israeli hostages, highlights that the captives’ fate is not a top priority for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his supporters, who are focused on dismantling the Palestinian people, their identity, and their cause.

Meanwhile, there has been much talk about the “unity of the

fronts” in support of Hamas, reflected in recent military actions. However, none of these actions compares to what Israel has done

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in the Occupied Territories, including Gaza, or to its strikes in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen, or the increasingly sophisticated assassinations in the capitals of what Tehran’s allies call the “Axis of Resistance.”

This situation requires a rethinking of the terms “Axis of Resistance” and “unity of the fronts,” especially as the gap between the intense rhetoric and the actual substance grows wider.

At one time, we heard Iranian leaders claim that “eliminating Israel would take just seven minutes.” Now, Tehran’s allies are making strange statements, such as “our goal is to prevent Israel from winning.” Moreover, the trust and coordination within the “Axis of

Resistance” seem to be weakening, particularly in their responses to Israeli assassinations.

It is clear from the reactions of

Iran and Hezbollah that despite suffering significant losses, both are avoiding the confrontation that Netanyahu, supported by Washington, seems to be seeking.

The reason is simple: Iran’s leadership is more focused on “coexisting” with Israel under US-guaranteed terms, rather than engaging in a suicidal war.

Even Washington does not want to dismantle the Tehran regime, seeing long-term strategic benefits in its survival. US policymakers have often said that the goal is not to change Iran’s regime, but to change its behavior.

This means Tehran must understand its limits, and avoid threatening Israel’s existence or vital interests. In practice, this is exactly

what Iran and its allies in Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, and Syria have done.

Now, let’s look at Syria...

Many are watching Syria closely after recent events. These include multiple Israeli operations, such as assassinations of Iranian leaders, and the mysterious disappearance of key political figures close to the Syrian regime.

There is also the unusual silence from Syria’s leadership regarding the events of Oct. 7 and the escalating war in Gaza, including the lack of condolences for the assassinations of Haniyeh in Tehran and Fuad Shukr in Beirut’s southern suburbs.

Sources familiar with the Assad regime, both under the father and the son, believe it remains committed to the 1974 security agreement with Israel, which prevents any group from using Syrian territory to threaten Israel.

I believe that Iran and its allies, especially in Lebanon, seem to understand this “reality” from a regime they know well — one that prioritizes “coexistence” with Israel to ensure its survival.

At a time when “tactical moves” overshadow ideals and grand strategies, most players, except the naive, recognize that words and actions often do not match.

Iran is not tied to Moscow for life, the “resistance” narrative is not built to last, and the borders of entities born out of convenience will survive only if their creators stick to the realities that shaped them.

of non-white people in positions of power.

In 2022, the Chartered Management Institute found that 71 percent of

employees from a black background reported feeling overlooked for opportunities because of their identity.

Populations of Britain’s small towns are largely white compared with those of the country’s major cities.

A 2017 study revealed that just 2 percent of Britain’s black population lived in the UK countryside — those that did spoke of receiving strange looks, and were often asked where they were from or “really” from when they described

themselves as British.

But, as history has shown us, migrants and their descendants will continue to bear the brunt of hate crimes and bullying in all aspects of life.

Statistics will be ignored, and any failure in the country’s economy will be put down to an unproven takeover by nonexistent waves of foreigners.

Supposedly well-educated people will continue to complain of an increase in foreign accents despite living in cities such as London, Birmingham and Nottingham that historically have had mixed-race populations for decades.

People will forget history and how in the 1950s thousands of people from South Asia and of Afro-Caribbean origin were encouraged to come to Britain to help rebuild the country, earn their fortune and then leave.

Of course, there was no fortune, but these people made the best of a bad lot and stayed, building themselves a life in the UK while they continued to work — contributing

to society.

People forget that many of the world’s problems are the long-term outcomes of decisions made in the past, by former empires that created nations and redrew borders.

These same people will ask why those fleeing war in their own countries have to “come here.”

Economic failings will continue to be blamed on those who allegedly stole other people’s jobs. And the country will seem to ignore the apparent damage caused by Brexit and years of economic mismanagement by predominantly white politicians.

The recent race riots in Britain are not a one-off — they were big, but not an isolated incident.

As long as politicians continue to play the migrant card in order to appease the masses, the real issues within British society will not be addressed and, instead, people who dare speak out about generalizing and so-called passive racism will continue to be told to “lighten up” or worse.

We should not be surprised by the UK race riots

THROUGHOUT the 1960s, ’70s and ’80s, a lot of UK culture was based on what many saw as a “harmless bit of fun.”

But maybe we should pay more attention to this so-called harmless fun and ask ourselves if it is merely a coincidence that the people recently rioting in the streets of England and Northern Ireland are the same people who grew up laughing at jokes about Irishmen or fictitious black men called “Chalky” on television?

The riots are not typical of everyday life in Britain, but they should not have come as a surprise.

There now seems to be a lull in the most recent unrest to have hit British streets, as hundreds of extreme right-wing rioters are hauled into court, with many receiving lengthy prison sentences.

But the underlying current of everyday racism in Britain will likely continue.

Historically, English jokes about “an Englishman, Irishman and Scotsman” were 10-

a-penny — with the Irishman inevitably the butt of the gag.

Prime-time viewing included comedy shows with white people mocking just about every nationality and culture but their own.

If you took offense, you were told to “lighten up, it’s just a joke.”

And, for many, this seemed reasonable — after all, seemingly “no one was hurt,” not physically at least.

Even as people began to recognize the negative connotations of such language, it was dismissed as “casual racism,” as if it were somehow acceptable.

This is not a new concept that can be simply written off as “woke.”

Back in September 2014, The Conversation website explained that referring to certain experiences of racism as “casual” diminished their importance.

“Casual” suggests “irregular,” which is inaccurate and also implies we need not take this type of racism too seriously,” the website said.

The Financial Times

newspaper reported in June 2020 that a YouGov poll of black, Asian and minority ethnic Britons surveyed in the same

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month found that two-thirds of black Britons had had a racial slur directly used against them or had people make assumptions about their behavior based on their race.

Again, it was hardly surprising given that jars of jam had gollywogs on the label, while on television “The Black and White Minstrel Show” and its song-and-dance troupe featured white men with their faces blacked up.

Intended or not, in all aspects of culture, racism

was effectively both directly and indirectly encouraged.

In her report, she

placed the primary blame on the force’s past leadership, saying that public respect had reached a low point, with those Londoners holding no confidence in the force outnumbering those who did.

The report quoted Casey as saying: “The Met has yet to free itself of institutional racism. Public consent is broken.”

However, the racism does not stop there — throughout British society there remains a disproportionately low number

Peter Harrison

of non-white people in positions of power.

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Independence Day: SCCI holds flag hoisting ceremony

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A flag hoisting ceremony was held on the eve of 77th Independence Day at the premises of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (SCCI) here on Wednesday.

The event was especially attended by Businessman Forum leader and former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour. Businessman Forum leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and President Fuad Ishaq hoisted the national flag on the building of the chamber.

Sanaullah Khan, senior vice president, Ijaz Khan Afridi, vice president, former presidents Haji Muhammad Afzal, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, former SVP Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, former vice president Javed

Akhtar, member of the chamber's executive committee Qurat Ul Ain, Monawar Khurshid, and Ihsanullah, Imtiaz Ali Ahmad, Syed Ejaz Ali Shah, Aftab Iqbal, Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, Fazl e Wahid, Zafarullah Shinwari, Aqeel Kayani, SCCI Secretary General Muqtasid Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum, member of business community and staffers were in attendance in a large number.

In the event, a great national enthusiasm and fervour was demonstrated by participants and congratulated the whole nation on the eve of 77th Independence Day.

The speakers prayed for country solidarity, integrity, peace and prosperity on the occasion. They also paid glowing tribute to sacrifices

of forefathers and armed forces for a separate motherland, because today, we are living as an independent nation, he added.

During the ceremony, the FC band presented a march past to BF leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and President Fuad Ishaq. National songs were played on multiple-media giant screen to the occasion.

BF leader Ilyas Ahmad Bilour and President Fuad Ishaq felicitated the whole nation on 77th Independence Day and celebrated the day with national zeal and zest.

They said the day of August 14 reminded us about the commitment to give sacrifices for economic development, stability and peace and prosperity of the country.

The speakers vowed to

follow the motto of the founding father of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah, "Unity, Faith and Discipline".

Fuad Ishaq said the country will put on a path of development and sustainable progress by following the quotes of the father of the nation, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

He advised the youth to do hard work for construction and development of the country and render every sacrifice for the motherland.

BF leader Ilyas Bilour also spoke on the occasion and said our forefathers gave unmatched sacrifices for the creation of a separate homeland. He stressed upon all segments to join hands for the country's solidarity, integrity and stability and progress.

Economic stability key to national sovereignty, says Governor SBP



F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Independence Day was celebrated at SBP with renewed fervor and enthusiasm. The formal proceedings began with the hoisting of the National Flag, as the Navy band played the National Anthem.

The colorful ceremony was attended by a large number of SBP employees along with their families. A small contingent of Inter Bank Security Officers performed a march-past, demonstrating discipline and cohesion, and presented the guard of honor. Additionally, a choir consisting of students from the Garage School, DHA CSS and Bahria School sang national songs.

Governor SBP, Jameel Ahmad's message which was readout by Executive Director Muhammad Haroon Rasheed, praised the immense sacrifices made by the founding fathers in establishing a separate homeland for Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. His message focused on improvements in macroeconomic indicators.

In his message, Governor Jameel Ahmad pointed out that inflation had significantly decreased to 11.1 percent in July this year, down from 28.3 percent in July 2023. He highlighted the country's previous struggles with macroeconomic indicators, noting that the current account deficit, which was USD 17.48 billion in FY 22, had been reduced to USD 3.2 billion in FY 23, and further to USD 0.68 billion in FY 24. Foreign remittances have now increased to USD 30.25 billion in FY 24 from USD 27.33 billion in FY 23.

The Governor also noted that the situation regarding foreign reserves has improved, with reserves rising to USD 9.3 billion despite ongoing debt repayments. Furthermore, there have been no import restrictions, and IT exports have risen significantly. These improvements, he emphasized, bode well for the country's economy.

The Governor elaborated that the improvement in macroeconomic indicators is the result of measures taken by both the

Government and the SBP, leading to a better economic outlook. Banks have developed their plans to issue more loans to the agriculture and SME sectors compared to last year, to harness the potential in these areas. He emphasized the SBP's efforts to ensure access to financial services for the general public, including initiatives such as the National Financial Inclusion Strategy, the National Financial Literacy Program, and Banking on Equality. He also highlighted 'Raast,' Pakistan's first instant payment system, which enables end-to-end digital payments among individuals, businesses, and government entities, as well as the Asaan Mobile Account, which allows the general public, especially low-income segments, to open branchless banking accounts digitally.

Governor SBP Jameel Ahmad stressed the need for adopting new and innovative strategies to resolve perennial economic issues. Particularly in the context of digital innovations and emerging cybersecurity

threats, he stated that the SBP is actively addressing these challenges and urged the banking industry to upgrade their systems to enhance cybersecurity and inform their customers in advance to protect their credentials from potential fraudsters.

He also mentioned that the SBP observed the first edition of Pakistan Financial Literacy Week in March this year. The theme for the week was 'Digital Bankari - fori aur asaan' aimed at leveraging the potential of digital solutions to equip individuals with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed financial decisions. The general public was provided with information regarding digital financial services such as Raast, QR Codes, Asaan Mobile Account, and Asaan Digital Account, with SBP BSC field offices and commercial banks participating.

UK annual inflation rises first time

LONDON (AFP/APP): Britain's annual inflation rate rose in July for the first time this year and is now back above the Bank of England's target, official data showed on Wednesday.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) climbed 2.2 percent in the 12 months to July compared with a 2.0-percent annual gain in June, the Office for National Statistics said in a statement.

The rise was "mainly driven by prices of gas and electricity falling by less than a year ago", the ONS added.

The faster inflation rate could keep the Bank of England from cutting interest rates quickly, according to analysts.

Earlier this month, the BoE trimmed borrowing costs for the first time since the onset of the Covid pandemic after UK inflation retreated from four-decade highs back towards its 2-percent target.

Wednesday's data "may not alleviate the Bank's concerns about persistent price pressures entirely", noted Ruth Gregory, deputy chief UK economist at research group Capital Economics.

"And it probably isn't enough to prompt a back-to-back interest rate cut in September."

Gregory added, however, that she expects the BoE to cut again this year, bringing its main interest rate down to 4.5% from 5.0.

SNGPL celebrates Independence Day

F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) organized a flag hoisting ceremony at Head Office in Lahore to celebrate the 77th Independence Day of Pakistan. Managing Director (MD) SNGPL Amer Tufail was chief guest of the ceremony. In his speech, MD SNGPL urged the employ-



PESHAWAR: President Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Fuad Ishaq addressing during a ceremony on eve of 77th Independence Day. Vice president Ijaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

Minister felicitates nation

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Industries, Production and National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday urged for collective efforts towards achieving a prosperous, peaceful and united Pakistan.

Felicitating the nation on the country's Independence Day, he emphasized the crucial role of the youth in driving Pakistan's progress, urging them to harness their potential and contribute to the country's growth through their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment.

He stressed that Pakistan was earned through the immense sacrifices and tireless efforts of our forefathers. "We pay tribute to the sacrifices of our forefathers," he remarked.

He said, "We must worked together to become a brave nation that stands tall against current challenges and builds a bright future for our beloved country."

Most equities marched higher

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Most equities marched higher Wednesday after hopes for a Federal Reserve interest rate cut next month were boosted by data showing US wholesale prices rose less than forecast last month.

The producer price index (PPI) report helped traders put last Monday's painful rout behind them and put the focus on consumer inflation figures due later in the day, and retail sales on Thursday.

Last week's sell-off came on the back of a big miss on US jobs creation, which stoked worries that the world's top economy was heading for a recession, but a strong read on the services sector and unemployment benefits provided some much-needed reassurance.

The PPI figures showing factory-gate inflation heading closer to the Fed's two percent target added to the

improved mood as it suggested the central bank was on course to deliver an economic "soft landing".

Monetary policymakers are tipped to cut rates by 25 basis points at their September meeting -- with some observers eyeing as much as 50 -- followed by at least one more cut before December.

"With the prospects of an imminent Fed easing cycle, key US data releases are taking centre stage and ahead of the US CPI release... a softer-than-expected US PPI for July was treated as welcome news by the market," said Rodrigo Catril at National Australia Bank.

"Importantly too, the items that feed into the Fed's preferred inflation measure (core personal consumption expenditure), such as physician care costs, hospital outpatient care and airfares were flat to lower." Still, Atlanta Fed chief Raphael Bostic

warned that he still wanted to see more positive data to be confident he could agree to a cut -- but added he would likely be ready "by the end of the year".

Wall Street ended sharply higher, with the Nasdaq jumping more than two percent on a rally in tech titans including Amazon, Nvidia and Apple, which sank earlier this month on worries their surge this year may have been overdone.

And most of Asia picked up the baton Wednesday.

Tokyo swung before ending in positive territory after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he would not seek reelection as his party's leader next month, bringing his premiership to a close.

There were also gains in Sydney, Seoul, Singapore, Manila, Mumbai, Wellington, Bangkok and Jakarta, but Hong Kong and Shanghai dipped.

Chairman hoisted flag at KPT head office to mark Independence Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: KPT celebrated 77th Independence Day of Pakistan with national fervor, zeal and enthusiasm in KPT Head Office on 14th August 2024. The Chairman KPT Syedain Raza Zaidi graced the occasion as Chief Guest, accompanied with all General Managers and Heads of Departments.

The Celebrations began with sounding of Sirens for 2 minutes followed by hoisting of national flag by the Chairman KPT. He also reviewed Guard of Honor presented by Port Security Force.

Chairman KPT emphasized the virtuous and cost of independence and self-



less contributions and sacrifices of our forefathers in the creation of Pakistan. He honored those who have made supreme sacrifices to

secure and preserve this invaluable independence. After the culmination of simple but graceful flag hoisting ceremony, Chair-

man KPT proceeded to Quaid-e-Azam Mausoleum to offer prayers and pay homage to the Father of the Nation.

National Shipping Corporation celebrates Independence Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The 77th Independence Day of Pakistan was celebrated in the institution organized by Pakistan National Shipping Corporation. The ceremony started with recitation of Holy Quran.

The executive directors of the institution hoisted the national flag, read the national anthem and sang national songs along with the officers, officials and students of Government Boys/Girls Secondary School Orangi Town and also distributed gifts among these students.

On this occasion, a tree planting campaign was started in the premises of Pakistan National Shipping Corporation building in



collaboration with Murad Sahib's organization Co-

munity Policing Karachi. At the end of the event,

sweets were distributed among the participants.

OGDCL discovered gas at Mari East Block



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL), Pakistan's largest petroleum exploration and production company, on Tuesday announced a major gas discovery from its exploratory well Chak 202-1 in the Mari

East Block, located in Rahim Yar Khan district of Punjab.

The exploratory well Chak 202-1 was spudded on June 29, 2024, utilizing OGDCL's in-house expertise and cutting-edge technology. The well was drilled to a depth of 1956.50 meters. Results from wireline logs interpre-

tation and Drill Stem Test-1 (Barefoot) in the Sui Main Limestone (SML) have confirmed a gas flow rate of 6.15 Million Standard Cubic Feet Per Day (MMSCFD) through a choke size of 32/64" at a Well Head Flowing Pressure (WHFP) of 1340 Pounds per Square Inch (Psi).

This discovery marks the second consecutive success in the Mari East Block, underscoring OGDCL's commitment to unlocking the hydrocarbon potential of the region through a robust and aggressive exploration strategy. The discovery will significantly contribute to bridging the energy demand-supply gap in the country by augmenting indigenous resources and will expand the hydrocarbon reserves base of both OGDCL and Pakistan.

OGDCL, the Operator of the Mari East Exploration Licence, has intensified its exploratory efforts and is planning to drill three to four more wells in the Mari East Block to enhance the country's energy security. The company is at the forefront of Pakistan's energy sector, driving sustainable growth through strategic exploration and development initiatives.





In brief

Szczesny tipped to join Saudi club

ROME (AFP): Wojciech Szczesny has left Serie A giants Juventus after seven years, the Italian club said Wednesday, with reports the Polish goalkeeper is set to join a club in Saudi Arabia. Szczesny, 34, took over from Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon following his arrival in 2017 but has fallen out of favour at the Turin club which won its last league title four years ago. "Juventus and Wojciech Szczesny part ways after seven seasons together, with the two parties agreeing to a mutual termination of their contract," the club said in a statement. The Polish international arrived from Premier League club Arsenal after spending two seasons on loan at Roma from 2015 to 2017. He played 252 matches for Juventus and kept 103 clean sheets, winning three Serie A and three Italian Cup trophies. New coach Thiago Motta has recruited Michele Di Gregorio from Monza to replace him. "Tek (Szczesny) will always be remembered as a dedicated player and a man who wore our jersey with pride and professionalism," the club said. "Thanks for everything Tek, and good luck for the future!"

Blind announces retirement

THE HAGUE (AFP): Former Manchester United and Bayern Munich defender Daley Blind announced his retirement from international football on Wednesday after 108 caps for the Netherlands, making way for a "talented new generation." The 34-year-old was part of the Dutch squad that reached the semi-finals of the World Cup in 2014 and the quarter-finals in 2022, losing to Argentina both times. "A talented new generation is coming up and after a good chat with the national manager, it is time to fully focus on my club and my family," Blind said in a message on X. "It was an honour to wear the Oranje shirt 108 times, for me that is the greatest thing a player can achieve: representing your country," added the defender. Blind came through the Ajax youth system, eventually breaking through into the first team and won four straight Eredivisie titles with the Amsterdam-based giants of Dutch football. In 2014, he transferred to Manchester United for £14 million (\$23 million, 17.7 million euros at the time) during the reign of Dutch coach Louis van Gaal. His stint at United brought success in the FA Cup and the Europa League but he went back to Ajax in 2018 for another spell that saw the club win three Eredivisie trophies. In January 2023, he signed for Bundesliga giants Bayern Munich, helping them to the German titles, before moving to Girona in the Spanish La Liga. In 2019, Blind was diagnosed with an inflammation of the muscles around his heart after suffering dizziness during a Champions League match. He had a heart defibrillator fitted, allowing him to continue his career. "For 11 years I have done everything I could to keep wearing that beautiful Oranje shirt. It has given me so much, so many beautiful moments. I cherish them," he wrote. He made his debut in 2013 in a friendly against Italy. His last appearance for the Dutch side was as a substitute against Romania at Euro 2024.



LAHORE: Bangladesh's players train at the Gaddafi Stadium.

No spectators will attend Pakistan vs Bangladesh Test in Karachi: PCB

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced it would hold the second Test match against Bangladesh in Karachi without spectators in attendance, saying it could not risk fans' safety amid the ongoing construction work at the stadium. PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has vowed to upgrade the stadiums in Karachi, Lahore, and Rawalpindi as per international standards before Pakistan hosts the Champions Trophy 2025 cricket tournament in February and March next year. "In light of ongoing construction work at the National Bank Stadium as part of preparations for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has made the

difficult decision to hold the second Test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh, scheduled from 30 August to 3 September, without spectators in attendance," the board said. The PCB said that it kept the safety and health of Pakistani fans in mind while making the decision. As per local media reports, construction work at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi began this week. The PCB acknowledged the importance of spectators in cricket, noting, "We understand the vital role that our passionate spectators play in cricket, providing inspiration and motivation to our players." Despite the unusual circumstances, the board emphasized that the construction work is crucial

for hosting future international events. "As a result of this decision, ticket sales have been suspended with immediate effect," the board said. "Fans who have already purchased tickets will receive a full refund automatically, with the amount credited to the account details provided at the time of purchase." The board regretted the inconvenience caused to fans but reminded them that the construction work was aimed at "enhancing their experience." "The renovations are part of our commitment to making the venue more spectator-friendly and preparing it for the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, which will be the first ICC event hosted in Pakistan since 1996," it concluded.

Babar remains on top in ICC ODI ranking, Rohit rises to second

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan's former skipper and top batter Babar Azam continued to hold the top position in the latest ODI rankings released by the International Cricket Council (ICC) on Wednesday. India ODI captain Rohit Sharma has moved closer to the top-ranked Babar Azam, holding onto the top spot with a massive lead of 59 points. Rohit had an outstanding series against Sri Lanka, although India lost 0-2. The 37-year-old finished as the top run-scorer after notching 157 runs from three games at an average of 52.33 and a strike-rate of 141.44 with two half-centuries and a top score of 64 to his name. The Indian captain surpassed his teammate Shubman Gill, who moved down to third place, with a difference of two points. Sri Lanka batters made significant gains in the latest ICC ODI Rankings after they defeated India in a bilateral series for the first time since 1997.

Morne Morkel named as bowling coach of India

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former South Africa pacer Morne Morkel has been appointed as the bowling coach of the India men's cricket team. Jay Shah, the secretary of the Board of Cricket Control in India (BCCI) confirmed the appointment on Wednesday. "Yes, Morne Morkel has been appointed as the bowling coach of the senior Indian men's team," Jay Shah confirmed to PTL. The former South African pacer was rumoured to replace Paras Mhambrey as the bowling coach ever since Gautam Gambhir took over as the country's head coach. Gambhir recommended Morkel to join his coaching staff, having previously worked with South African during his time at Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Lucknow Super Giants. Morne Morkel previously served as the bowling coach of the Pakistan men's cricket team from July 2023 to November 2023. However, he resigned following a disastrous ICC ODI World Cup 2023 campaign in India. He has also worked with the New Zealand team at the Women's T20 World Cup 2023 and Namibia at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. Prior to that, he had a successful 12-year-long career, where he took a total of 544 wickets from 86 Tests, 117 ODIs and 44 T20Is.

Slam this year, Osaka has shown she can still compete with the best players - pushing current world number one Iga Swiatek all the way in a second-round thriller at the French Open in May. However, she said she does not understand "why everything has to feel almost brand new again." "This should be as simple as breathing to me, but it's not," she added. "I genuinely did not give myself grace for that fact until just now." Osaka is set to play at the US Open, where she is a two-time champion, later this month.

Umar Amin's century puts Shaheens in dominating position

ISLAMABAD (Monitoring Desk): Umar Amin's 32nd first-class century has put Pakistan Shaheens in a commanding position against Bangladesh 'A' at the close of day two of the first four-day match at the Islamabad Club on Wednesday. At stumps, Shaheens were 367 for four in 90 overs, with a first innings lead of 245 runs. Saad Khan (31 not out, 39b, 6x4s) and Kamran Ghulam (20 not out, 63b, 1x4, 1x6), will resume batting on the third day, which will begin at 09.30am tomorrow. For Bangladesh 'A', left-arm spinner Hasan Murad bagged two wickets for 49 runs. Earlier, after resuming their first innings at the overnight score of two for no loss, the home side were dealt a blow when left-handed batter Saim Ayub returned back to the hut, scoring 11 off 28 balls, which included a four. Mohammad Huraiera was the second batter to be dismissed, scoring 39 off 67 balls, hitting five boundaries.



The experienced Umar was then joined by captain Saud Shakeel and the pair knitted a 195-run partnership for the third wicket. During the partnership, left-handed Umar brought up his century. He fell 23 runs short of a double-century, and was dismissed for 177 off 211 balls, smashing 23 fours and three towering sixes. After Umar's departure, fellow southpaw Saud soon followed the century on and was stumped off the bowling of Hasan for 76 with the scorecard reading 322 for four. Saud's innings included

nine boundaries across 132 deliveries. Scores in brief: Close of play - Day 2 Bangladesh 'A' 122 all out, 44.3 overs (Mahmudul Hasan Joy 65; Naseem Shah 3-24, Mir Hamza 3-33, Mohammad Rameez Jnr 2-41) Pakistan Shaheens 367-4, 90 overs (Umar Amin 177, Saud Shakeel 76, Mohammad Huraiera 39, Saad Khan 31 not out, Kamran Ghulam 20 not out; Hasan Murad 2-49, Tanzim Hasan Sakib 1-67, Nayeem Hasan 1-81) Pakistan Shaheens lead by 245 runs.

Rookie Pieterse wins stage four of women's Tour de France

LIEGE (Belgium) (AFP): Rookie road rider Puck Pieterse clung on to win stage four of the women's Tour de France at Liege on Wednesday with Demi Vollerling taking second in a photo finish to conserve the yellow jersey. It was a first ever road race victory for the 22-year-old cross-discipline star Pieterse, at her first Tour de France. The result lifted the Dutch rider to second overall, and gave her the best young rider's white jersey and the polka dot climb jersey. Kasia Niewiadoma of Poland was with the Dutch duo as they entered the final kilometre of a race that started at Valkenberg in the Netherlands, and she launched the dash early with the trio hitting



57kmh after a hilly day. Defending Tour de France champion Vollerling then allowed Pieterse to open a small lead before timing her run to the line slightly wrong. Stage five takes the Tour into France Thursday with Vollerling in yellow and Pieterse second over-

all at 22sec and Niewiadoma third another 12 seconds back. Olympic road race champion Kristen Faulkner of the United States is fourth at 47sec. The Tour finishes on Sunday with one of cycling's most challenging climbs up Alpe d'Huez.

Mbappe set for long-awaited Real Madrid debut in UEFA Super Cup

WARSAW (AFP): Kylian Mbappe is set to finally make his debut for Real Madrid when the European champions take on Europa League winners Atalanta in the UEFA Super Cup in Warsaw later on Wednesday. After years of trying to secure the services of Mbappe, the Spanish giants got their man when he signed a five-year deal at the Santiago Bernabeu in June as a free agent after ending his association with Paris Saint-Germain.



The France captain will now be thrown in at the deep end in his new club's first official game of the campaign, which offers him the chance to win his first European trophy. Mbappe helped France reach the semi-finals of Euro 2024 although he endured a difficult tournament in Germany, breaking his nose in his country's opening game and only scoring one goal, from a penalty. The 25-year-old was then unveiled before 80,000 fans at the Bernabeu before being afforded a holiday, meaning he played no part in Real's pre-season tour of the United States. Therefore, Mbappe's debut in the Polish capital will come just a week after he completed his first training session with Carlo Ancelotti's squad. "Kylian can play from the start just like everyone who is here," Ancelotti said in Warsaw on the eve of the game. "He is adapting really well, he is focused and he is showing extraordinary quality." Media back in Spain are licking their lips at the

prospect of seeing Mbappe in action for Real at long last. 'Superdebut' The two major sports dailies in the Spanish capital splashed the same picture of the striker in training on their front pages on Wednesday. "Superdebut" was the headline on the cover of AS, while rival publication Marca went with KMO, using the new signing's initials to signify "Kilometre Zero" ahead of his first game. Ancelotti, meanwhile, laughed off suggestions that fitting Mbappe into a side that won the Champions League last season could somehow be a problem. "I have been thinking about this all summer. Who to play and who not to play. It has ruined my holidays," joked the Italian. Real already had Vinicius Junior, Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo in attack, while Mbappe is not the only new recruit, with Brazilian prodigy Endrick also having arrived from Palmeiras. Toni Kroos and Nacho have departed since Madrid were crowned

European champions for the 15th time at the start of June, while Eduardo Camavinga is out of Wednesday's game after injuring a knee in training. Atalanta are contesting the Super Cup for the first time after winning last season's Europa League, their first piece of European silverware. The Italian club are without striker Gianluca Scamacca, who tore the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee at the start of the month. However, they have signed another Italian international striker in Mateo Retegui, who has joined from Genoa. Last season's Super Cup was won by Manchester City, who beat Sevilla on penalties. Recent UEFA Super Cup winners 2023: Manchester City (ENG) 2022: Real Madrid (ESP) 2021: Chelsea (ENG) 2020: Bayern Munich (GER) 2019: Liverpool (ENG) 2018: Atletico Madrid (ESP) 2017: Real Madrid (ESP) 2016: Real Madrid (ESP) 2015: Barcelona (ESP) 2014: Real Madrid (ESP).

Hockey legends set for historic showdown at London's Indian Gymkhana

LONDON (APP): Hockey legends from five nations are set to showcase their skills at an exhibition match at the Indian Gymkhana Club in London on Saturday. Speaking at a press conference here the event organiser, Pakistan's erstwhile great Olympian Khawaja Junaid said that hockey's legends from India, Pakistan, Spain, Germany, and England would come together for the match to raise funds for Khawaja Junaid Hockey Academy. "The star-studded lineup boasts some of the sport's most iconic figures, including India's Dhan Raj Pelay, Pakistan's Shahbaz Ahmad Senior, Germany's Stephen Bloecher, Spain's Juan Escarce, and English players Kulbir, Tandil, Balsaini, Ben, and Suti," he said. "Despite their ages ranging from the 50s to 60s, these veterans are set to showcase their skills and passion that once electrified stadiums worldwide. "I will request to hockey fans and enthusiasts in



London and other parts of the UK to come in large numbers to witness the match. I assure it will be a thrilling contest," he added. According to Junaid, prior to the match a coaching clinic will also take place wherein hockey great will give tips to budding players. Indian Gymkhana's Vice President Ravi Virdi expressed his enthusiasm stating, "This event is more than just a match; it's a testament to the unifying power of hockey. "We anticipate a packed stadium filled with fans eager to relive memories

and witness their childhood heroes in action." The match promises not just a trip down memory lane but also a competitive display of talent. "Beyond the thrilling gameplay, the event underscores a deeper mission - fostering friendship and understanding between nations through sport," Ravi added. The overwhelming response has already set wheels in motion for a return match in Pakistan next year, further strengthening the bonds forged on the field.

I don't feel like I'm in my body - Osaka

TOKYO (Agencies): Former world number one Naomi Osaka says she does not "feel like I'm in my body" following her return to tennis after a maternity break. Japan's Osaka returned to the WTA Tour in January after the birth of her first child, daughter Shai, in July 2023. Since then, the four-time Grand Slam champion has struggled to rediscover her best form and been unable to advance past the quarter-finals at any tournament. "My biggest issue currently isn't losses though, my biggest issue is that I don't feel like I'm in my body," Osaka, 26, wrote on Instagram on Tuesday. "It's a strange feeling, missing balls I shouldn't miss, hitting balls softer than I remember I used to. I



try to tell myself, 'It's fine you're doing great. Just get through this one and keep pushing.' Mentally it's really draining through." Osaka was defeated by American Ashlyn Kreuger in the second round of qualifying for the Cincinnati Open on Monday. "I've played a handful of matches this year that I felt like I was myself and I know this moment is prob-

ably just a small phase from all the new transitions (clay, grass, clay, hard), however the only feeling I could liken how I feel right now to is being post-partum," she said. "That scares me because I've been playing tennis since I was three, the racket should feel like an extension of my hand." Despite failing to reach the third round of a Grand



In brief

Rubina launches tree plantation campaign

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Rubina Khalid, on Wednesday started a tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling. Speaking to the private news channel, she said that tree plantation drive was pivotal in combating environmental pollution. She expressed her hope that Pakistan will become as green as it once was, and highlighted BISP's participation in this crucial initiative. She urged people to celebrate Independence Day by planting trees. Chairperson said that BISP was committed to serve the marginalized segments of society, regardless of their religious affiliation. She also thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for increasing the program's funds.

IRSA releases 386,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Wednesday released 386,200 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 427,500 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1547.00 feet and was 149.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 280,700 cusecs and 251,700 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1210.90 feet, which was 162.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 22,300 cusecs and 10,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 290,700, 318,100, 392,400 and 350,500 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 59,400 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 47,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

AIOU celebrates Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) on Wednesday marked Pakistan's Independence Day with enthusiasm and national pride. The celebration commenced with a Guard of Honor presented to Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood, by a well-coordinated contingent of the university's security guards. Following the Guard of Honor, the Vice-Chancellor hoisted the national flag to the tune of the national anthem, accompanied by collective prayers for the stability and prosperity of the country. The event also featured a seminar titled "August 14: Day of Renewed Commitment," organized by the Department of History in collaboration with the Directorate of Student Advisory and Counselling Services. In his address, Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood emphasized the importance of adhering to the principles of Quaid-e-Azam to make Pakistan a beacon of peace and progress. He urged the youth to channel their passion towards the country's development, stating that nations progress when their youth are determined to move forward. Speakers at the seminar included AIOU Registrar, Raja Umar Younas, Director General of Regional Services, Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan, Chairperson of the History Department, Dr. Kishwar Sultana, and Senior Faculty Member, Dr. Abdul Basit Mujahid. They called for a renewed commitment to realizing the dreams of Pakistan's founders and working for the nation's progress with unity and discipline.

Flag hoisted at IHC to celebrate Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): A flag hoisting ceremony was organized at Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday in line of celebrations of 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

IHC's Justice Mohsin Ahtar Kayani unfurled the national flag, on the occasion Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb and Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir were also present.

Addressing the ceremony, Justice Kayani said that development in various areas is witnessed in the last 77 years but our struggle is still continued. We are doing every job in the limits

of law and constitution to maintain the ideological and geographical boundaries of Pakistan, he said.

He said that perhaps we do not realize the sacrifices made by our ancestors for this country because we were not there at that time. It is necessary to remember the martyrs who have sacrificed their lives during and after the formation of the country, he said.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani said that working within the jurisdiction of the constitution and law is essential for the survival of this country. He said that be sure to plant one plant so that future generations can

see them and understand that someone has done something for them.

He said that sapling should be planted from the hands of elders and children to keep as memories.

Addressing on the occasion, Justice Miangul Hassan Aurangzeb said that the sacrifices made by our elders for Pakistan raises the questions whether they are satisfied with us today or not. We have to live and die in Pakistan. The prosperity of Pakistan is our future, he said, adding that when democracy takes root in the country, then we can say that Pakistan is prosperous.

Faryal felicitates nation on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Pakistan People's Party Women Wing, Faryal Talpur has extended her congratulations to the nation on Independence Day.

She remarked that celebrating 77 years of independence symbolizes the national unity and dignity.

In her message, Faryal Talpur highlighted that Pakistan's Independence

Day commemorates the sacrifices made by Muslims in the region.

She said that today serves as a reminder to strengthen democratic values and to defeat anti-national elements through mutual solidarity.

Faryal Talpur emphasized that on this 77th anniversary of independence, "we are committed to

envisioning a bright future. Insha'Allah, our future generations will also celebrate the thousandth anniversary of our freedom."

Faryal Talpur urged the nation to uphold national unity and work collectively towards strengthening democracy, ensuring that Pakistan's future remains bright and robust.

Talal pays tribute to founders & martyrs of Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, Senator Talal Chaudhry congratulated the nation and paid glowing tributes to the visionary founders of Pakistan and the brave martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country's freedom.

Talking to a Private news channel he emphasized the need for collective efforts and a shared sense of purpose and reiterated his commitment to building a prosperous Pakistan, urging all citizens to work together towards a brighter future. He called on the government, opposition, and citizens to put aside their differences and work together

towards a common goal.

He said that because of the untiring struggle and sacrifices of our forefathers, today we are breathing in a free country.

He said the purpose of celebrating Independence Day was to reaffirm the commitment to the country's prosperity, development, and peace.

Senator Talal vowed to work tirelessly towards creating a brighter future for all Pakistanis, where every citizen has access to equal opportunities, resources, and services. He urged the nation to rekindle the same spirit of unity, determination, and perseverance that characterized the Pakistan Movement. "We must renew

our commitment to the ideals of our founding fathers, who fought for a separate homeland where Muslims could live with dignity and freedom," he said.

He further stressed that the development and progress of Pakistan is a collective responsibility, requiring the efforts of every citizen, institution, and government.

"We must work together to address the challenges facing our country, including economic disparities, social injustices, and political polarization," Senator Talal said. "By doing so, we can build a prosperous Pakistan that is just, equitable, and prosperous for all," he added.

Metropolitan officer stresses need to improve public service delivery

ISLAMABAD (APP): On the directions of Chief Commissioner Islamabad, Muhammad Ali Randhawa, Chief Metropolitan Officer Bushra Iqbal Rao has conducted a briefing with the heads of all the directorates within the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad.

In a move to enhance public services and streamline city operations, Islamabad's top officials have issued directives for immediate action and strategy implementation across various city departments, the said the Spokesman of the Chief Commissioner Office, Nouman Nazim.

During the meeting, officials including the Deputy Director General of Administration and Human

Resources, the Director of Municipal Administration, the Director of Emergency and Disaster Management, the Director of Support and Culture, the Director of Health Services, and the Director of Care Ambulance Services presented detailed reports on their respective departments.

The focus was on providing a comprehensive overview of each directorate's current operations, particularly concerning revenue generation, human resources, and ongoing projects. Chief Officer Bushra Iqbal Rao reviewed the presented details and stressed the need to improve public service delivery.

She highlighted the need to fully utilize all available resources, particularly in areas such as fire

and rescue services, ambulance services, and epidemic control, including the ongoing polio campaign.

She stressed the importance of a well-coordinated team approach to tackling climate-related diseases and other public health challenges.

Moreover, the Chief Officer ordered all directorates to develop swift strategies for achieving revenue targets. She also directed them to resolve ongoing court cases and address any pending audit issues promptly.

These actions are part of a broader effort by Islamabad's leadership to ensure efficient city management and improved service delivery to the public.



ISLAMABAD Chairman Pakistan Human Rights Party Dr. Khalid Sulhari and others cutting the cake during 77th Independence Day celebration. —INP Photo

Chairman PMYP felicitates nation on I Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) Rana Mashhood Ahmed Khan in his message felicitated the entire Pakistani nation on the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan.

He said, "The day marks the sacrifices of our forefathers for their right to self-determination." Rana said today, "We need to set aside our differences and work committedly for unity, integrity, and economic stability." The Chairman PMYP urged the Youth to play their role in making the country more prosperous according to the vision of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah with their hard work and dedication. He said, "Youth is the hope of Pakistan and can play a major role in the prosperity and stability of the country."

PHA organizes flag-hoisting ceremony

RAWALPINDI (APP): Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) Rawalpindi and district administration here on Wednesday organized an program and a flag-hoisting ceremony to celebrate 78th Independence Day at Allama Iqbal Park.

Member National Assembly, Leader of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Tahira Aurangzeb, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Aamir Khattak, Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi, Hasan Waqar Cheema, DG, PHA Ahmed Ahsan Ranjha and other administration officers participated in the event as special guests.

Addressing the participants, MNA Tahira Aurangzeb said that the creation of sweet homeland, Pakistan was not less than a miracle and a gift and blessing of Allah. On this occasion the participants also offered special prayers for the development and prosperity of Pakistan.

Congratulating the nation on Independence Day, she said that the students should work hard for the prosperity and development of the country. On the occasion, Tahira Aurangzeb, the Commissioner, DC and DG, PHA also planted saplings in Allama Iqbal Park.

The Commissioner also distributed plants among the citizens at green points organized by PHA.

Mohsin congratulates nation on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi has extended heartfelt congratulations to the nation on the eve of Independence Day.

He said, "We are grateful to Allah Almighty that we are living in a free homeland. He said that we must learn the value of freedom from the enslaved nations."

He emphasized that we must appreciate the true value and dignity of our free homeland. He also highlighted that millions of Muslims sacrificed their blood to light the flames of freedom. He paid rich tribute to the unparalleled sac-

rifices of those who were martyred in the Pakistan Movement. He also honoured the great sacrifices of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the peace of the homeland.

Interior Minister stated that there is no country as beautiful and resource-rich as Pakistan in the world, but unfortunately, as a nation, we have wasted 77 years in mutual discords, parochial, linguistic and sectarian biases. He stressed that now is the time for the entire nation to unite and think about Pakistan collectively, because if Pakistan exists, so do we all.

He underscored that we must set aside egos, differences, and divisions forever and contribute towards making Pakistan a great country. He said, "Independence Day demands that we must learn from past mistakes and move towards a bright future. We must all play our part in national development by following the principles of faith, unity, and discipline."

He expressed confidence that with the grace of Allah Almighty, the nation will overcome every challenge. He called for the resolve to put aside personal interests and work together for the progress and development of Pakistan.

Google displays 'Mango doodle' to mark Pakistan's I-Day celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): To commemorate Pakistan's 78th Independence Day celebrations, the world's most popular search engine 'Google' has replaced its usual doodle with mango-themed colourful truck art design.

The search engine features special doodle replacing its traditional signature coloured logo to celebrate various important occasions. For Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, the search engine is celebrating with a doodle featuring the search engine's name spelled out in white against a vibrant green background, surrounded by traditional Pakistani art showcasing mangoes.

Pakistani truck art, with its colourful and intricate designs, has become a symbol of the country's rich heritage and artistic talents. This distinctive folk art style not only enhances the aesthetic appeal of the trucks but also functions as a powerful storytelling medium that showcases Pakistani culture.

Pakistan is a country which produces high-quality Mangoes which are famous for their taste and varieties. These mangoes are only liked within the country but abroad also. The country also exports mangoes internationally on demand basis. The creative doodle serves a special addition

to the spirit of celebration and recognition of Pakistan's Independence Day, fostering a sense of national pride and unity among Pakistanis worldwide.

By clicking on this doodle, users are taken to a webpage that features all information related to the Pakistan's Independence Day: from national songs, the history of Pakistan's birth, videos, other updates and news articles related to the day.

On the new webpage, users may find a different doodle on the top-left corner of the page, in which a Pakistani flag replaces the double "O"s in "Google" surrounded by the same mangoes inspired truck art.

Senator Chandio greets nation on Independence Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan People's Party Senator Maula Bakhsh Chandio

Wednesday extended warm greetings to the nation and urged citizens to reflect on the sacrifices, struggles, and visionary leadership of its founding fathers, including Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal.

Talking to a private news channel, Senator Chandio

reminded the nation that the true essence of independence lies in upholding the principles of justice, equality, and prosperity towards a future that honors the

legacy of those who fought for a separate homeland.

By honoring their legacy, the nation can reignite the spirit of patriotism, unity, and progress that defined the country's early years, he added. Senator Chandio's message is a timely reminder to work together towards a brighter future, built on the principles of justice, equality, and prosperity for all Pakistanis.

Attaining the true purpose of independence is the responsibility of every citizen, he added. Maula Bakhsh Chandio emphasized that every Pakistani

should celebrate this day with great fervor and enthusiasm, while also reminding themselves of the immense sacrifices made by the country's forefathers.

He stressed that the independence gained after countless struggles and sacrifices should not be taken for granted, and that it is the responsibility of every citizen to protect and preserve the nation's sovereignty and integrity. By doing so, Pakistanis can truly honor the memory of their ancestors and work towards a brighter future for themselves and future generations, he added.

Asma Riaz calls for nationwide tree plantation

ISLAMABAD (APP): On this Independence Day, a climate change activist Asma Riaz urge nation's youth, children, and elderly to join hands in a mission to secure our country's future where our forefathers fought tirelessly for our freedom, but now it is our turn to fight for a more critical cause to safe environment.

Let us plant trees to protect our beloved Pakistan from the wrath of natural calamities, such as floods, droughts, and heatwaves, she appealed while talking to PTV news channel.

By doing so, we can ensure a sustainable future, preserve our natural resources, and honor the sacrifices of those who came before us, she said, adding, tree plantation is a symbol of our love for Pakistan and our commitment to a greener, more resilient tomorrow.

Climate change activist also urged people to engage their elders and children in this noble cause. She believes that these efforts will become a lasting symbol for future generations, inspiring a sense of responsibility and

stewardship for the environment.

Asma Riaz encouraged families to make tree planting a collective activity, where grandparents can share their wisdom and experience, parents can lead by example, and children can learn valuable lessons about the importance of conservation and sustainability.

This collective approach, she hopes, will foster a sense of community and ownership, ensuring that the benefits of tree plantation are felt for generations to come.



ISLAMABAD: Safe Gaza campaign activists hold rally on the occasion of Pakistan Independence Day. —INP Photo

KANDAHAR (Ariana News): Kazakhstan has expressed its readiness to cooperate in the construction of a railway line between the land ports of Torgandi in Herat and Spinboldak in Kandahar. The government of Kazakhstan stated its Deputy Prime Minister Serik Zhumangarin has said the country is ready to provide the necessary equipment and tools for the construction of the railway line. He said Kazakhstan is willing to build an international north-south highway.

The Frontier Post

AFGHANISTAN

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said this week that 23.7 million people in Afghanistan are dependent on humanitarian aid. OCHA said in a post on X that 48 percent of Afghanistan's population lives below the poverty line, and 12.4 percent are experiencing food insecurity. The UN office highlighted that economic poverty has significantly increased in the past few years.

Asia is comparable to a living body composed of soil and water. The heart that beats inside the body is Afghanistan. The destruction of Afghanistan would be the destruction of Asia. And in its progress and prosperity lies the well-being of Asia. - Allama Iqbal

A composite image featuring a religious leader, likely a Taliban leader, speaking at a podium. The podium has a sign that reads "د ملي دفاع وزارت" (Ministry of National Defense) in Pashto. In the foreground, there is a military officer in a uniform with a red band on his cap. The background shows a large, open-air structure with a metal roof and several white fans hanging from it. The image is overlaid with a white diagonal line and a semi-transparent blue box containing the text "الله اکبر" (Allahu Akbar) in Arabic script.

Maulvi Abdul Kabir, Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs, said that Afghanistan would not tolerate any external interference in its internal affairs and reaffirmed that Afghan soil will not be used against any other country.

He highlighted the IEA's foreign policy achievements, including the opening of numerous embassies, visits from foreign diplomats, and active participation in international diplomatic meetings. Kabir also

Minister for Administrative Affairs, also spoke at the ceremony, emphasizing that the IEA now holds authority in Afghanistan and that the issuance of an amnesty decree has fostered a sense of brotherhood among the people.

Hanafi highlighted the IEA's commitment to public welfare and its efforts to strengthen the Islamic system while combating ethnic, linguistic, and sectarian prejudice and discrimination.

KABUL (TOLOnews): The spokesperson of the General Directorate of Passports has announced that the online passport registration process in three newly established passport distribution centers in Kabul began.

Passports, told TOLOnews: "Every Tuesday, we process 2,000 people in our three branches. Once the capacity of our central branch is filled, the site will automatically close."

However, some passport applicants are asking for more convenience in the payment process for passports.

Afghanistan needs uplift assistance

The organizations stated that Afghanistan desperately needs long-term development assistance to address the root causes of poverty.

Signatories to the statement warned that shrinking humanitarian funding is adversely impacting people's daily lives, and a lack of funding for medium and longer-term programming has only heightened underlying vulnerabilities, adding to the humanitarian burden.

"Already this year, 343 mobile health teams have shut down, which equals 52% of all mobile health teams. This has had a significant impact on the health and nutrition response, as populations are not able to access essential lifesaving services," warned ACF, CARE International, DRC, IRC, INTERSOS, IRW, NRC, People in Need, Save the Children and WVI.

KABUL (Ariana News): Marking the third anniversary of the Islamic Emirate's return to power in Afghanistan, the IEA said the day should be remembered as a day of conquest which freed the country from occupation and aggression.

"We pledge to implement the Islamic system, which was achieved as a result of the hard work of Afghans and under the shadow of which the religion of Allah is the ruler and the Sharia, peace, and security have come, our people have calmed down, and there is an opportunity for the material and spiritual development of the country. "We are prepared to strongly protect it and defend it at any cost," the statement read.

The statement emphasized that an Islamic system has been put into place and that officials also need to abide by Sharia. Thursday, August 15, will be the third anniversary of the IEA's arrival in Kabul. On that day, in 2021, the then president Ashraf Ghani boarded a helicopter and fled the country.

Within hours the IEA had moved into Kabul and regained control after being ousted by foreign forces in 2001.

JUL (TOLOnews): In an interview, Khan Muttaqi, the acting Foreign Minister, said that the world has begun to engage practically with the Islamic Emirate, noting that 39 of its embassies and consulates are currently active in various countries. He also urged Western powers, which he believes have fallen short in this process, to begin their own engagement with the Islamic Emirate.



Salim Paigir, a political analyst, said: "Terrorism and narcotics are not just Afghan problems. These are international issues and should be resolved with the help of the international community."

Regarding the execution of Afghan citizens in Iran, the acting Foreign Minister mentioned that discussions have been held about transferring prisoners back to Afghanistan, and the interim government has asked Iran to stop executing Afghan citizens.

UL (TOLonews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce has announced that it will provide facilities for traders to export the country's agricultural products of fresh fruits to Russia.

Khundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Commerce and Investment, told TOLonews: "We believe that our fruits are mainly sold and marketed in warm regions like India, Pakistan, South Asia, and only in China and Moscow in Central Asia. Our fruits and vegetables have special significance there."

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On the other hand, some economic experts have considered the development of trade between Afghanistan and Russia beneficial for the country's economy.

Abdul Zahoor Madbar, an economic expert said: "There is a high demand for our agricultural products. If we mechanize our agriculture, Russia could become one of the best foreign buyers and consumers of Afghan goods and agricultural products."

With the return to power of the Islamic Emirate, interactions between Afghanistan and Russia have seen progress, and both countries have emphasized expanding trade and strengthening economic relations.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, in the first six months of the current year, trade between Afghanistan and Russia amounted to 174 million USD, of which Afghanistan imported 171 million USD worth of goods from Russia.

On the her studies at home in these future. We are Muslims and living in an Islamic country, shield for the girls.” that want the reopening of religious studies. We know that the significance of knowledge is high land to
Emirate three years and asked the caretaker government to we observed hijab and we are observing and we will.” Education and establish a software company in the schools and universities, the girls of other provinces of Afghanistan desire the He called the suspension of girls’ courses in educational centers harmful: but still do not know why the schools and universities tters”,
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her studies at home in these three years and asked the caretaker government to reopen schools for them. "Every night when I sleep, I hope that maybe tomorrow the doors of school will reopen for us and we will be able to go to schools again," she explained. She added: "We would observe hijab in the past. We want the IEA to reopen the doors of school for us. We want to continue our lessons and make progress alongside our brothers." Soraya Wakilzadeh, another student who was a 10th grade student when the doors of school closeded for girls, said that she would have graduated from high school if the doors of school were not closed for girls.

Referring to the third anniversary of IEA coming into power, she said: "We want the IEA leadership to reopen the doors of schools for us. We want to go to schools and study in order to serve for nation in the

shield for the girls."

She hoped to end her education and establish a software company in the future.

Roya Sherzad is another student of the second year of Kabul University. She said: "We were in our second year of the university when it was shut for girls. An incident which left negative impact on us. We were upset and shocked that we can't describe."

She was encouraged by her parents to study the subjects of the university at her home and study English and computer at courses.

Sherzad said: "Everyone knows that we all are Muslims Al Hamdu-lillah and live in an Islamic country. We observed hijab before the IEA rule in the country. We wore a special uniform which was according to the values of Sharia Law, we want to learn all of the religious and scientific subjects even as any other girls of Muslim countries."

It is not the Kabul girls

gious studies.

He called the suspension of girls' courses in educational centers harmful: "Right now the only open institutes for girls are health institutes, if no more girls are graduated from schools, after a few years such institutes would be also closed due to the lack of female high school graduates. That means that we will not have any doctresses in the future"

He concluded, the leadership of the IEA must listen the voice of the people and put an end to this situation and open the doors of schools and universities as soon as possible for girls.

Tafsir Siahposh, an activist of women rights told Pajhwok: "What the religion of Islam says is that the knowledge is an obligation of both the women and men. The first verse the came to the Prophet PBUH was "Iqra" which means "Read". The Prophet PBUH had also said to seek knowledge from the cradle to grave.

We know that the chance of knowledge but still do not let the schools at all were still closed.

He said it were no more women education in Afghanistan people suggest the closed doors of universities.

to be restricted especially mothers. We be away from right, as we is educated, himself, but we is educated, cate society."

He emphasized that the IEA attention, open universities, it claims is with Islam because the of Islam has, est rights to especially women children".

"This situation. Most forced to learn

the significance is high but we don't know why the universities closed." Islam there has strict restrictions on women: "Afghanistan: demand and opening of schools and we don't like anymore, tomorrow's we don't like to see education now if a man is just for when a woman we could educate," he said. "I hope we would pay for schools and that what is in accordance with Sharia, and religious even the high-income men and children is worrying for families were in their homes."

Terrorists have no place in Islam: Maj Gen Zulfiqar

Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR- Terrorists should not teach us about Islam. The war against terrorism will continue until they surrender or are completely eliminated. Those who carry out terrorist attacks in the country have no connection with Islam or Pakistan. Enemies cannot bear to see Pakistan peaceful and progressing. Pakistan was, and remains, a dream and an ideology; dreams and ideologies cannot be erased or extinguished.

These thoughts were expressed by Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti, GOC of the 9 Division, while addressing a ceremony in Thall Cantt on the occasion of Independence Day. The event was attended by Commandant Thall Scouts

Colonel Alamgir Khan Yousafzai, Wing Commander Jawad, DPO Muhammad Khalid, Deputy Commissioner Gohar Zaman Wazir local dignitaries, political and social figures, members of the Hangu Peace Committee, and a large number of students.

During the ceremony, Major General Zulfiqar Ali Bhatti hoisted the national flag and delivered a speech, emphasizing that no power in the world can destroy Pakistan. He urged the youth to understand the significance of Pakistan and its creation. He stated that when it comes to the survival of the country, all differences should be set aside, and everyone should unite for the nation's cause.

He further stressed that internal differences must

be resolved through dialogue, as Pakistan is our home, and we must not set it on fire. He called for a united fight against terrorism, urging everyone to play their part in the country's development, progress, and the establishment of peace and security. "Insha'Allah, we will remain united for this country and lead it to the heights envisioned by Allama Iqbal," he concluded.

The ceremony concluded with students delivering impressive performances of patriotic songs, receiving much applause from the audience. Additionally, SOG commandos demonstrated various judo, karate, and defense skills, and weapon exhibition stalls were also set up for display.

Pakistan Navy celebrates 78th Independence Day

F.P. Report

KARACHI: An impressive Change of Guard ceremony was held at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah as the entire nation celebrated 78th Independence Day of Pakistan. A smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Naval Academy cadets and sailors clad in ceremonial dresses assumed guard duties at Mazar-e-Quaid with traditional enthusiasm, spirit and military customs.

Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, Commodore M Khalid graced the occasion as Chief Guest and reviewed the guard. The Chief Guest and cadets of Pakistan Navy presented Qaumi Salam to Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The ceremonial mounting of Guard was followed by the laying of floral wreath at Mazar-e-Quaid by Chief Guest on behalf of Chief of the Naval Staff, officers and men of Pakistan Navy.

Earlier, the day dawned with Gun Salutes, and special prayers were offered in all mosques in Naval areas for solidarity and progress of the country. Pakistan Navy Ships and establishments were illuminated in Navy's traditional manner.



Flag hoisting ceremonies were held at units of Pakistan Navy at Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Gwadar and Ormara.

Various Independence Day activities were held at Pakistan Navy units/establishments including singing of national anthem in the morning, cycle races and boat rallies. PN mission in command of CTF 150 Bahrain also celebrated Independence Day at Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) Headquarters, Bahrain.

Independence Day celebrations at Pakistan Navy educational institutions were also held where school children presented tableaux on national songs and declamation contests were held highlighting the importance of Independence Day.

President of Pakistan also approved military & civil awards to Officers, CPOs/ Sailors and Civilians of Pakistan Navy on the occasion of Independence Day. The awards include 03 x Hilal-e-Imtiaz (Military), 14 x Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military) and 14 x Tamgha-e-Imtiaz (Military).

In addition, 97 x awards of Tamgha-e-Khidmat (Military) have been approved for Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers and Sailors. Letters of Commendation from Chief of the Naval Staff have also been approved for Officers, Master Chief Petty Officers, Chief Petty Officers/Sailors and civilians. Pakistan Navy celebrated Independence Day with a firm resolution to safeguard the country against any belligerence.

Four youth martyred in IOJK

JAMMU (KMS): Four Kashmiri youth are believed to have been martyred by Indian troops in the Doda district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

According to a Kashmir Media Service report on Wednesday, Indian troops martyred the four youth in an ongoing cordon and search operation in the Shivgarh-Assar area of Doda district. A local was also injured by Indian troops' firing in the area. Earlier, an Indian army officer was killed in the same area of Doda district of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, which was.

Indian Army Captain Deepak was killed in an attack during a cordon and search operation in the Akar area of the district on Wednesday. The operation continued until the last reports came in.

Meanwhile, Indian authorities have imposed strict restrictions across occupied Jammu and Kashmir, on the eve of India's Independence Day celebrations. According to Kashmir Media Service, the restrictions are aimed at stifling any protests or demonstrations in favour of Pakistan and against Indian rule.

A multi-tier restriction set has been put in place at Bakshi Stadium, the venue of the main Independence Day function, while regulatory barricades have been established at several places as part of the restriction drill. Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V K Birdi said that the restrictions are in place to ensure that everything remains "peaceful," implying a clampdown on any dissenting voices.

Authorities are conducting checking of vehicles on the Jammu-Srinagar highway. Forces personnel are seen carrying out checks for the safe and smooth conduct of the celebrations. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Udhampur Prehlad Kumar appealed to the public to report any suspicious activity to the police, hinting at a surveillance state.

The restrictions are a stark reminder of the disputed nature of Jammu and Kashmir, which has been under Indian occupation since 1947. The UN has acknowledged the territory's disputed status, and the international community has called for a resolution to the conflict.

Israeli military kills in West Bank

WEST BANK: The Israeli military has killed one Palestinian in a dawn raid in the occupied West Bank city of Tubas before launching an air attack on the nearby town of Tammun that killed four people. The army entered Tubas at dawn on Wednesday and raided the home of Fayeze Fawaz Abu Amer, shooting and killing the man, according to the Palestinian news agency Wafa.

In a statement, the Israeli military said it launched a "counterterrorism operation", during which it "eliminated one terrorist" and "hit others during an exchange of fire". It said its troops had "arrested wanted suspects and located and confiscated weapons".

Reporting from Tubas, Al Jazeera's Nida Ibrahim said the confrontations later extended to Tammun, southeast of Tubas, where a drone struck a group of men and killed four of them. "The governor of Tubas said the Israeli forces took the bodies with them, which is part of Israel's policy of withholding the bodies of Palestinians it deems responsible for attacks," Ibrahim said. Footage shared on a Palestinian social media account, verified by Al Jazeera's fact-checking agency Sanad, appeared to show Israeli troops dragging one of the bodies on the road before slinging it into the back of a military vehicle.

The Israeli army said it had "carried out air strikes on several armed terrorists" in the city. Clashes were also taking place on the ground, Al Jazeera's Ibrahim said, as shots and loud explosions could be heard in the area. The Qassam Brigades, the armed wing of Palestinian group Hamas, said in a statement it was fighting Israeli forces. — Arab News



KABUL: Taliban security personnel ride in a convoy to celebrate the third anniversary of Taliban takeover of Afghanistan.

Taliban celebrate 3 years since Afghanistan takeover

KABUL (AFP): Afghanistan's Taliban rulers celebrated three years in power on Wednesday with a military parade paying homage to their homemade bombs used in war, fighter aircraft, and goose-stepping security forces.

The Taliban's armed forces towed Soviet-era tanks and artillery pieces through the former US air base in Bagram, where Chinese and Iranian diplomats were among hundreds who gathered for the parade and speeches. The former Bagram base once served as the linchpin for US-led operations against the Taliban for two decades.

A swarm of motorbikes strapped with yellow jerry cans, often used to carry homemade bombs during the fight against international forces, also rumbled past assembled officials. There were also US-made armoured personnel carriers, the black-and-white flag of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan — the Taliban government's formal name for the country — fluttering above them.

Helicopters and fighter aircraft flew over the base, where Taliban fighters were once imprisoned, about 40 kilometres north of Kabul. Taliban forces seized the capital on August 15, 2021, after the US-backed government collapsed and its leaders fled into exile. The anniversary is marked a day earlier on the Afghan calendar.

Their government remains unrecognised by any other state, with

restrictions on women, who bear the brunt of policies the United Nations has called "gender apartheid", remaining a key sticking point. "Three years have passed since the dreams of girls have been buried," Madina, a 20-year-old university student in Kabul, told AFP. "It's a bitter feeling that every year, the celebration of this day reminds us of the efforts, memories, and goals we had for our future."

Prime Minister Mohammad Hassan Akhund, who had been scheduled to appear at Bagram, praised the Taliban authorities' victory over "Western occupiers" in a statement read by his chief of staff. The Taliban government has "the responsibility to maintain Islamic rule, protect property, people's lives, and the respect of our nation", he said.

Security has been a key priority for Taliban authorities as they consolidated their grip on power over the past three years, implementing laws based on their strict interpretation of Islam. However, attacks by the militant Islamic State group remain a threat, and extra security was deployed in Kabul and in the Taliban's spiritual home of Kandahar in southern Afghanistan ahead of the "day of victory".

Helicopters also flew over the Ghazi stadium in Kabul, where hundreds of men gathered to watch an exhibition of athletics and perform-

ances of Taliban anthems. The Taliban takeover is marked both in mid-August around the date Kabul fell and at the end of the month, when the last foreign troops left Afghanistan after a chaotic withdrawal.

The black-and-white standard decorated streets and trucks full of young men that choked Kabul streets. Happy young boys carried a large flag in the Green Zone, once a secure enclave of foreign embassies, saying "We're ready to do a suicide attack!" While many Afghans expressed relief at the end of 40 years of successive conflicts, the economy remains stagnant and the population is mired in a worsening humanitarian crisis.

A joint statement from international non-governmental groups warned of the growing aid funding gap, with 23.7 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. Women have been squeezed from public life — banned from many jobs as well as parks and gyms — and barred from secondary and higher education. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reiterated calls for pressure on the Taliban government to lift restrictions on women. "The third anniversary of the Taliban's takeover is a grim reminder of Afghanistan's human rights crisis, but it should also be a call for action," said Fereshta Abbasi, HRW's Afghanistan researcher.

Ukraine is advancing deeper into Russia, Zelenskiy says

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine said on Wednesday its forces had advanced further into Russia's Kursk region in the biggest foreign incursion into Russia since World War Two, posing a dilemma for President Vladimir Putin according to US President Joe Biden.

Thousands of Ukrainian troops rammed through the Russian border in the early hours of August 6 into Russia's western Kursk region in what Putin called a major provocation aimed at gaining a stronger hand in possible future ceasefire talks. Ukraine has carved out a slice of the Russian border region of Kursk and though Putin said the Russian army would push out the Ukrainian troops, more than a week of intense battles have so far failed to oust them.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said Kyiv's forces were continuing to gain ground in the Kursk region and that they had taken another one to two kilometres on Wednesday. "We continue to advance further in the Kursk region," Zelenskiy wrote in a statement on Telegram, "from one to two kilometres in various areas since the start of the day. And more than 100 Russian prisoners of war in the same period."

Russia's defence ministry said 117 Ukrainian drones had been shot down within its territory overnight, mostly in the Kursk, Voronezh, Belgorod and Nizhny Novgorod regions. It said missiles had also been downed, and showed Sukhoi Su-34 bombers striking Ukrainian positions in the Kursk region. Later, the ministry said Russian forces had repelled a series of Ukrainian attacks inside the Kursk region, including at Russkoye Porechnoye 18km from the border, and pro-Russian war bloggers said the front has been stabilised.

The Ukrainian drone attack included strikes on four Russian military airfields in an attempt to undermine Russia's ability to attack Ukraine with gliding bombs, a Ukrainian security source told Reuters on condition of anonymity. Russia's National Guard said it was beefing up security at the Kursk nuclear power plant, located just 35km from the fighting.

The Ukrainian assault into Russian territory has dramatically changed the narrative around the two-and-a-half-year-old war. Russia had been advancing in eastern Ukraine since the failure of Kyiv's 2023 counteroffensive to make any major gains against Russian forces. But Ukraine's unprecedented incursion also comes with major risks for Russia, Ukraine and the West, which is keen to avoid a direct confrontation between Russia

and the US-led Nato military alliance that has helped arm Kyiv against Moscow.

Biden said US officials were in constant touch with Ukraine over the incursion, which he said had "created a real dilemma" for Putin, who ordered thousands of troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The White House said Ukraine gave no advance notice of its incursion and the United States had no involvement. Russian officials have suggested Ukraine's Western backers must have known of the attack.

"Of course they are involved," Russian lawmaker Maria Butina told Reuters. "It looks even worse when they say they don't know anything and put all the responsibility on Ukraine." Russian state television said Russian forces were turning the tide on the Ukrainian forces, showed footage of successful attacks on Ukrainian positions and gave wide coverage of the evacuations of Russian civilians from the border zone. Ukraine's top commander, Oleksandr Syrskiy, said that the Russian town of Sudzha, a transshipment hub for Russian natural gas flowing to Europe via Ukraine, was fully under Ukrainian control. Natural gas was still pumping on Wednesday.

Diplomatic resolution achievable in Gaza: US envoy

BEIRUT: US Presidential Envoy Amos Hochstein believes a solution can be reached in Gaza. Speaking from Beirut on Wednesday, he said: "A diplomatic resolution is achievable because we continue to believe that no one truly wants a full-scale war between Lebanon and Israel."

Hochstein's visit to Lebanon comes on the eve of Thursday's Doha negotiations which aim to avoid all-out conflict. Iran and Hezbollah have vowed to avenge Israel's assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, Hamas's political bureau chief, and prominent Hezbollah military commander Fuad Shukur. The outcome is eagerly awaited as Hezbollah has said it will have a ceasefire in Lebanon if one is agreed in Gaza.

According to the Lebanese Information International Center this secondary war, launched in southern Lebanon on Oct. 8 last year, has resulted in 564 casualties to date. This includes 393 Hezbollah members, 88 civilians, 11 Palestinians, 18 Syrians and one Lebanese soldier, along with seven paramedics, three journalists, and others linked to parties allied with Hezbollah. Hochstein

met with caretaker Prime Minister Najib Mikati and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri, a Hezbollah ally and channel of communication with the party. He also met with Army Commander Gen. Joseph Aoun and several opposition MPs representing the Kataeb Party, the Lebanese Forces Party, independents and reformists.

In a press conference after an hour-long meeting with Berri, Hochstein said: "When I was in Lebanon on my last visit in June, I told everyone that we believe the conflict has lasted too long, and that a diplomatic solution is both possible and urgently necessary. What was true in June, unfortunately, remains true today." He said his discussions with Berri centered on "the framework agreement that's on the table for a Gaza ceasefire, and he and I agreed there is no more time to waste and there's no more valid excuses from any party for any further delay."

According to Mikati's media office, the prime minister emphasized "the importance of exerting pressure on Israel to halt its aggressions and threats. He stressed that

the key to a solution lies in establishing a ceasefire in Gaza and implementing the Security Council resolutions, particularly Resolution 1701, which ensures stability in the southern region." MP Hankash spoke about "great efforts by the international community to reach a ceasefire" and said: "All parties must abide by this. The Lebanese government must make the decision, deploy the army and implement Resolution 1701."

An Israeli airstrike targeted a road at the junction of the entrance to the city of Tyre and the town of Abbasiyeh while Hochstein was in Lebanon. A motorcyclist sustained critical injuries, while ten civilians in a nearby vehicle and a number of other people were injured. Two young girls, Sara and Lara Tarmas, and their grandfather were struck by shrapnel. Security reports indicated that the motorcyclist, who was targeted, was linked with Hezbollah. On Tuesday two of the organization's members, Ibrahim Al-Ashi and Fadi Shihab, were killed in an Israeli drone attack on their car in the town of Baraachit. — Arab News

Bangladesh's ex-premier Hasina faces case

DHAKA (Anadolu Agency): A case was filed against Bangladesh's former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and eight other members of her now-dissolved cabinet and police officers on charges of "crimes against humanity" and "genocide", according to an official on Wednesday.

The case was filed at the local International Crimes Tribunal in the capital Dhaka, Ataur Rahman, a deputy director of the investigation agency of the court, told the media. The tribunal was formed by the then-Awami League government

of Hasina in 2010 to prosecute those who had opposed Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971.

Some of the top opposition party leaders have been tried by this tribunal. The investigation agency of the court accepted the case on Wednesday after the father of Alif Ahmed Siam, a ninth-grade student who was shot by police on August 5 and succumbed to his bullet injuries, filed the suit through his lawyer Gazi MHT Tamin.

Earlier, the adviser to the transitional government on law affairs, Asif Nazrul,

told reporters that those involved in the killings that took place from July 1 to August 5 during the student protests "may be tried in the International Crimes Tribunal". He also said no individual would be exempt from prosecution, including Hasina.

The law adviser said they would make efforts to involve the UN in the investigation process. Earlier, three cases, including murder and abduction, were filed against Hasina, who fled Bangladesh on Aug 5 to neighbouring India.