

### Earthquake jolts Swat F.P. Report

MINGORA: A moderate earthquake jolted different areas of Swat and surroundings on Tuesday but no casualties or property damages were reported. Tremours measuring 5.3 on Richter scale were felt in Mingora city and surrounding areas. People of the areas where the quake was felt rushed out of their homes reciting verses from Holy Quran but no casualties were reported from anywhere.



@thefrontierpost

First national English daily published from Peshawar, Islamabad, Lahore, Quetta, Karachi and Washington D.C

www.thefrontierpost.com

Vol. XXXIXI

No. 214

Regd. No. 241

SAFAR 22 1446 -- WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 28 2024

KARACHI EDITION

12 PAGES

PRICE. 30

# Nation united to root out terrorism: PM

— says no leniency or talks with terrorists

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday categorically announced that the government would neither hold any talks nor show any leniency to the terrorists who were poised to disrupt the country's journey towards progress.

"The time has come to eliminate terrorism. The sacrifices being rendered for the cause will never be squandered. We need to move forward with firm resolve. There is no question of any weakness. We are open to talks with those who believe in the supremacy of Pakistan's constitution and respect its flag. But there can be no leniency or talks with those who are enemies in the guise of friends. This is a clear message. There are no two opinions on this," the prime minister said addressing the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him.

The prime minister began his remarks by reiterating the condemnation of the terror incidents held in different parts of the country during the last couple of days killing dozens of citizens and the officers and personnel of the security forces. The cabinet members also offered Fateha for the victims of terror incidents and Rana Afzaal, the brother of Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain, who passed away on Monday.

The prime minister said that it was no secret that the terrorists of the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) operating from Afghanistan were behind these terrorist attacks. The government has sensitised the Afghan government on the subject and also taken effective actions against them, he added.

Referring to the killing of passengers in Balochistan on Monday, he said such incidents could not terrorize the people. "Such unholy designs are just meant to impede the

country's progress, ongoing CPEC projects in Balochistan and undermine the relationship between Pakistan and China," he remarked.

He told the cabinet members that the government had assured to provide all-out resources to the armed forces to fight out the terrorists and that the Chief of the Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir and the armed forces personnel were determined to purge this scourge. "Inshallah, their nefarious designs will be foiled, provided we identify our enemies and forge unity to eliminate them," he urged.

Calling the recent terror incidents a "moment of reflection", Prime Minister Shehbaz reiterated there was no room for terrorists in the country. He announced that he would visit Balochistan very soon to hold in-depth deliberations on the situation and decide on immediate measures.

## 25 terrorists killed in Tirah operation F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces are conducting extensive Intelligence Based Operations (IBOs) in Tirah, Khyber District against Fitna-Al-Khwarij and so called Laskar-e-Islam and Jamat-ul-Ahrar. These operations based on robust intelligence, have resulted into major setbacks to Fitna Al Khwarij and its affiliates.

During these daring and highly successful IBOs being conducted since 20 August 2024, Security Forces have so far successfully neutralized twenty five Khwarij including Kharij ring leader Abuzar @ Saddam, who have been sent to hell, while eleven Khawrij have been injured. However, during the conduct of operations, four brave soldiers, having fought gallantly, paid the ultimate sacrifice and embraced Shahadat.

The heavy losses inflicted upon Fitna Al Khwarij in these operations is testament to the valor and commitment of Security Forces to eliminate the menace of terrorism from the country. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister (PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif have reaffirmed that no compromise will be made on peace and security of the country and Fitna-al Khawrij will not be allowed to spread chaos.

In their separate statements on Tuesday, they paid rich tribute to the armed forces of Pakistan for successful operation against the Khawrij in Khyber district on Tuesday. They reiterated the resolve to continue the war against terrorism till the extirpation of the menace from the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari said the Pakistani nation will not hesitate to make any sacrifice for the country. In his statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the entire Pakistani nation stands firm by the armed forces of Pakistan to defeat the Fitna-al Khawrij.

He said the whole nation pays homage to the soldiers of Pakistan Army who sacrificed their lives during the operation. Shehbaz Sharif said the relentless sacrifices of the armed forces of Pakistan for establishment of peace are unforgettable.

## JUI-F, PTI to join hands in parliament F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) and the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on Tuesday held a joint meeting for cooperation on the parliamentary forum.

Committees of both the parties decided to join hands in the parliament on public issues and legislation. It was also decided to take a unanimous stand on the legislation in the Senate meeting. Sources said that Barrister Gohar, Shibli Faraz, Asad Qaiser, Kamran Murtaza, and Ghafoor Haidari participated in the meeting.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, stated that despite various challenges, PTI members remained united, and there was no forward bloc within the party.

Speaking to the media after a hearing on PTI's intra-party election case at the Election Commission, Khan mentioned that the party submitted documents for the intra-party elections on March 8 for the third time but has yet to receive a certificate.

He noted that the Supreme Court had ordered the declaration of 39 members as PTI MNAs, and the Election Commission sought guidance from the Supreme Court, hoping for a clear ruling soon.

Khan also emphasised that the certificate provided for 39 candidates was applicable to all candidates. He expressing confidence that local body elections would occur on time, with PTI expected to achieve a clean sweep if they do.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif chairing a meeting of federal cabinet.

# Senate Opposition demands update on Balochistan situation

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Leader of Opposition in Senate, Shibli Faraz on Tuesday demanded the government of a briefing over the prevailing law and order situation in Balochistan in the wake of recent terror incidents.

The 342nd Senate session commenced with Deputy Chairman, Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasar in chair as the House offered fateha for the deceased who lost their lives in Balochistan incidents. Senator Kamran Murtaza of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (JUIP) led the prayer. Senator Shibli Faraz said the situation in Balochistan needed to be addressed through effective measures and the government should take the House into confidence on the matter.

He emphasized the need for conducive environment in the province to attract investments, and improve stability. The Opposition Leader also regretted the delay in production orders of the detained Senator Ejaz Chaudhry of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf. He demanded the government to probe the incidents and address the issues of Balochistan on priority. Minister for Law and Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said during the previous regime, selective use of production orders' law was employed.

However, he said, Senator Ejaz Chaudhry was arrested in many cases registered under criminal procedure laws and under judicial custody as per the court orders. He vowed to probe the matter to ascertain the delay, which he said, could possibly be due to the grounds of charges leveled against the detained Senator as per law. He endorsed that privilege of a Senator should be protected. Earlier, Senator Karman Murtaza said the recent bloodshed in Balochistan had badly impacted peace and stability of the province.

Leader of the House in Senate, Ishaq Dar on Tuesday said that no one could be allowed to perpetrate violence in the name of nationality as

## China, US pledge support to Pakistan against terrorism

WASHINGTON, BEIJING: As the country continues to reel under back-to-back terrorist attacks, the United States and China came out in support of the country, strongly condemning the latest militant forays in Balochistan and pledging support to Pakistan in countering terrorism.

Condemning the militant attacks, Pakistan's long-time regional ally China extended its support and expressed deep grief over the dastardly attacks in the southwestern resource-rich province, home to major China-led projects such as a port and a gold and copper mine.

A spokesperson for the Chinese foreign ministry said at a regular press briefing on Tuesday that Beijing strongly condemns the attacks in Pakistan and will continue to give strong support to the country in anti-terrorism action. "China stands firm against all forms of terrorism. We will continue giving staunch support to Pakistan in its effort to advance counter-terrorism operations, uphold social solidarity and stability, and protect the safety of the people," Lin Jian said.

He reaffirmed China's readiness to enhance counter-terrorism and security cooperation with Pakistan further and jointly safeguard peace and security in the region. Similarly, taking the gravity of the situation into account, Washington strongly regretted the deaths of law enforcers and civilians in Balochistan's Musakhail and other areas.

"Our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of those killed in yesterday's attacks. The United States will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan in its fight against terrorism," the US embassy in Islamabad wrote on its official X account. Similarly, the European Union also condemned the heinous attacks in the southwestern province of the country. "Terrorism and violence in any form have no place. They threaten the foundations of democracy. Our thoughts are with those affected [by] this senseless act," the EU Commission Spokesperson Nabila Massrali wrote on X. — Agencies

Balochistan is an essential part of Pakistan and the Parliament must collectively devise a way forward to overcome prevailing unrest in the province.

Speaking on the recent terrorist incidents in Balochistan, he said that every Pakistani was sad over the bloody violence and the matter was discussed in detail in the cabinet, adding the interior minister had reached Balochistan to examine the ground situation while Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif would visit Balochistan to review the law and order situation within two days. Ishaq called for the in-depth happening of the issue and suggested to form a committee of the House to probe the matter.

The Leader of the House further stated that the State had collectively adopted the policy of operation of Zarb-e-Azb and Radd-ul-Fasaad to counter the terrorism after the Army Public School attack in 2013 and law and order situation improved but unfortunately during the recent past the terrorist brought back and released from jails resultantly increase in crimes and terrorist attacks.

The senator added that there was a need to think above the politics of Pakistan and resolve the country's problems being faced. He seconded the resolve of Chief Minister Balochistan that no one could be allowed to carry out violence in the name of nationality.

# Naqvi assures all-out support to Balochistan govt

F.P. Report

QUETTA: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday the centre would support the Balochistan government through all means to eradicate the evil of terrorism.

He made these remarks in a presser flanked with Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti in which he said the federal government was willing to work with and support the Balochistan government. Naqvi said, "The aim of my visit is to let you all and the people of Balochistan know that the federal interior minister is standing behind the Balochistan chief minister."

"Whatever decision he (Bugti) makes, we will support him," Naqvi stated. The incidents of terrorism targeting innocent people is highly condemnable and unacceptable and those involved will face the consequences of their actions soon," he said.

There is no need of a grand operation against these militants as they will be tackled easily through one SHO," he said. Mentioning that the whole leadership was in deep grief over the recent attacks, he said "Such incidents are absolutely intolerable and together, we will close the door to these incidents. Those thinking that they can relay their message or scare us by these incidents will soon receive a 'good message'." "We have to pursue those who are planning these [attacks], perpetrating this and forming this entire strategy," Naqvi affirmed.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti has reiterated the resolve to root out the menace of terrorism from the province.

Addressing media along with representative of the allied parties in Quetta on Tuesday, he said we will never sit silent over the incidence of terrorism and will take every possible measure to curb it. Condemning the recent incident of terror in strong words, he said from today we will not listen to propaganda tools that are aimed at getting sympathy and will take robust action against all involved in spoiling peace of the land. He said some forces are maligning government through propaganda after acquiring sympathy through different

means. He said all those political forces who keep soft corners for the spoilers of peace should rethink.

The Chief Minister said to fight the war against terrorism and restore peace in the province, we will improve response time on highways while the capacity of CTD and police will also be enhanced. Smart kinetic approach will be adopted to target these terrorist elements. He said there is no good or bad violence, we have to deal all kind of violence equally.

The Chief Minister said we have all circumstantial evidences of this intelligence driven war that is aimed at weakening the state. He said some people are also becoming its part indirectly and unknowingly. He said they are advised not to become part of their propaganda tools.

The Chief Minister said door of dialogue is always open for those who want to surrender for peace otherwise no one will be allowed to spread violence. He categorically said the government will establish its writ no matter how strong measures will be taken. To a question, he said regarding missing person the government made a commission and 84 percent of the cases have been resolved, but, unfortunately in every dialogue the parties put other demands than staying focused on resolving this specific issue.

**Funeral prayers of martyred soldiers offered in Quetta:** The funeral prayers of the security personnel who were martyred while fighting with terrorists in different areas of Balochistan were offered at F.C Headquarters in Quetta.

According to the ISPR, Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfraz Bugti, Commander Balochistan Corps, IGFC Balochistan (North), IG Police Balochistan and other civil and military officials participated in the funeral prayer. After the funeral prayers, the dead bodies of the martyrs were sent to their native areas. They will be buried with full military honours.

Fourteen security personnel having fought gallantly made the ultimate sacrifice and embraced martyrdom during operations against terrorists in Balochistan. According to ISPR, security forces killed twenty-one terrorists involved in numerous heinous attacks against innocent civilians and security personnel in Balochistan.

## Rifts in PTI KP deepens

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is faced with escalating internal divisions as Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur has taken action by removing two MNAs, Atif Khan and Sher Ali Arbab, from their party positions.

Ali Amin Gandapur earlier had de-notified Junaid Akbar as Focal Person to the CM for Members National Assembly (MNAs) of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa following his support for Shakeel Khan, who was removed as minister for Communication and Works KP earlier for levelling corruption charges against the sitting KP government.

Atif Khan, who served as the President of the Peshawar region—encompassing the districts of Peshawar, Nowshera, Charsadda, Mardan, and Swabi—has been replaced by former District Nazim Mohammad Asim Khan. Meanwhile, Kamran Khan Bangash remains the General Secretary of the Peshawar region.

Similarly, MNA Sher Ali Arbab has been removed from his role as President of the Peshawar district, with Irfan Saleem appointed as his successor. Advocate Malik Shahab has taken over as the new General Secretary of the Peshawar district. PTI General Secretary Ali Asghar Khan has issued new notifications for these appointments in the Peshawar region and district, following approval from the Provincial Party President, Ali Amin Gandapur.

# Each penny of nation to be saved: Federal Cabinet

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday stressed that in view of the larger national interests, all ministers and institutions should take all possible decisions and initiatives that could save each penny of the nation.

He said that steps were being taken, on priority basis, to further improve governance and bring about institutional reforms in the country. "We are introducing digitization and smart management of institutions to modernize the country's system and harmonize it in accordance with the international requirements," the prime minister expressed these views while chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet.

In the meeting, the federal cabinet strongly condemned the terrorist incidents in Balochistan province on Monday and the cowardly attacks on unarmed civilians by terrorists. The cabinet prayed for the eternal peace of Shaheed officers and personnel of the security forces and unarmed civilians who were martyred in these attacks. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

It also directed for taking of complete action against terrorists involved in these incidents after their immediate identification. The prime minister appreciated the decisions taken by the finance minister, minister for

national food security, minister for energy and other relevant ministers and officials for ensuring uninterrupted supply of urea fertilizer for the upcoming Rabi crop.

An amount of 130 million dollars was saved in the national exchequer by halting the import of urea and by ensuring uninterrupted gas supply to urea fertilizer units for the upcoming Rabi crop. On the recommendations of the Ministry of Housing and Works, proposals were presented in the federal cabinet regarding the dissolution of Pak PWD, transfer of its staff and ongoing projects to other ministries and institutions.

The meeting was informed that on the directions of the prime minister, necessary maintenance staff and inquiries were being handed over to the concerned ministries and provincial governments to continue uninterrupted work on the ongoing development and PSDP projects tasked to PWD.

In this regard, the federal cabinet approved the recommendations of the ministry of housing and works. The cabinet was presented with the recommendations of the Rightsizing of the Federal Government Committee set up for Institutional Reforms, headed by the finance minister.

The cabinet was informed that in order to improve the performance of the federal government, proper use of manpower, removal of

unnecessary impediments in the policy-making and implementation of decisions, and to further strengthen the most important departments and bodies, the first phase of work on committee's recommendations about six ministries had already been initiated.

The meeting was further informed that in the light of the recommendations of the committee, a total of 82 government bodies related to these ministries were being merged and dissolved into 40 such institutions, in which digitization, smart management, efficient governance, transparent and speedy implementation of projects and better provision of facilities to the common man would be ensured.

The federal cabinet approved the recommendations of the committee and set up a committee to ensure the protection of the interests of the employees who were expected to be affected by the merger and dissolution of these entities. The meeting was given a detailed briefing on the progress on the ongoing austerity drive and implementation of measures under the prime minister's vision and directives to reduce government expenditure.

The federal cabinet nodded for the continuation of the austerity drive approved by the cabinet under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif during the previous tenure of his government.

further enhancing military and defence cooperation, people-to-people contacts, and cultural linkages to bring the two countries further closer. He said that Pakistan was encouraging the learning of the Chinese language which would greatly help promote people-to-people ties.

The President remarked that China Pakistan Economic Corridor was his initiative, envisioned during his previous tenure as the President of Pakistan. He said that enemies of Pakistan and China did not want our bilateral relations to flourish, adding the two countries should work closely to overcome shared challenges.

Highlighting the importance of Pak-China friendship, General Li Qiaoming said that the friendship between the two countries was unbreakable. He

added that both countries needed to work together to fight terrorism. He also condemned yesterday's terrorist attacks in Pakistan and offered his heartfelt condolences to the government and people of Pakistan over the loss of life.

Earlier, President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon General Li Qiaoming in recognition of his meritorious services rendered towards enhancing defence cooperation between Pakistan and China, during a special investiture ceremony held, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, today. The Chinese Commander thanked the President for the conferment of the Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) and said that the award was a testimony of the strong bonds between the two countries.

# The Frontier Post



KARACHI: A view of stagnant rain water at old city area during monsoon rain in the metropolis. ---APP Photo

## FBR denies rumors of any Amnesty Scheme

F.P. Report

KARACHI: It has come to the notice of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) that certain rumors are circulating on the social media regarding a purported upcoming amnesty scheme for regularizing smuggled vehicles.

FBR categorically denies these rumors and would like to make it clear that no such scheme is under consideration of the Federal Government at this time. The general public is therefore advised not to believe any such misinformation circulating in the social media or any other unverified sources.

## Minister reviews arrangements for National Games

KARACHI (APP): A country wide torch rally from Karachi to Peshawar-Gilgit will be organized in connection with the National Games while secretariat for the games to be set up at KMC Sports Complex, Sindh Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs, Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar, said on Tuesday.

He was presiding over a meeting held here to review arrangements with attendance of Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Sports Secretary Jalaluddin Mahar, Chief Engineer Aslam Mahar, General Secretary of Sindh Olympics Association Ahmed Ali Rajput, Asghar Baloch and others, said a statement issued here.

The meeting reviewed in detail arrangements related to the number of players, accommodation, transport, and the decoration of various places in the city of Karachi for promotion of the National Games. It is pertinent to mention that Sindh sports minister has proposed to hold the National Games at the end of January or the beginning of February 2025. Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar, addressing the meeting, said that Pakistan National Games would be setting grounds for more than 35 games including the archery, athletics, badminton, baseball, basketball, body building, boxing, cycling, fencing, football, hockey, kabaddi, karate, swimming, shooting and other games.

## Rainy forecast: Sindh govt readies for monsoon challenges ahead

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has announced the possibility of heavy rains across the province until August 31.

The Sindh government has completed its preparations to deal with any emergency situation, and the public is urged to cooperate with authorities in the event of any sudden developments.

In a statement, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that a rain emergency cell has been

established at the Chief Minister's House. In view of the monsoon rains, the Sindh government has appointed in-charges in 30 districts across the province.

The Sindh Chief Minister has directed all ministers, advisers, special assistants, and divisional commissioners to remain alert and active.

Senior Minister Memon also mentioned that there is a risk of flooding in coastal areas. Fishermen have been instructed not to venture into the sea. Necessary

machinery has been provided to towns for drainage, and the KMC and Water Board have already improved the drainage system.

He added that local bodies and elected representatives of the People's Party, including UC Chairmen, have been instructed to coordinate with the relevant administrations.

Additionally, the embankments from Hamal Lake to Manchar Lake are being reinforced, and monitoring of weak points is ongoing.

## SITE Association supports traders' August 28 strike call

KARACHI (PPI): SITE Association of Industry President Muhammad Kamran Arbi, Chief Coordinator Saleem Parekh, Senior Vice President Hanif Tawakkal, Vice President Farhan Ashrafi along with the entire Executive Committee, today endorsed viewpoint of the trade community and supported them in their strike call on August 28th as they prepared to shut down across the country.

In a statement issued, they said that they were part of the business com-

munity and as such, SITE Association of Industry was cognizant of their rational demands. They urged the government to take swift action to address the very legitimate and pressing concerns of traders and industrialists.

They demanded elimination of newly imposed taxes on traders, shopkeepers, industrialists and the general public besides ensuring immediate reduction of electricity tariffs.

The urged the need to renegotiate IPP contracts to best serve the national interest. They also

demand provision of prompt relief to the city of Karachi, which contributed significantly to the national exchequer in form of energy security, infrastructure, and overall improvement of law & order.

SITE members further said that the demands set out by the traders community were completely rational and justified and emphasized the need for urgent government intervention to alleviate the challenges faced by the business community and the people of Karachi.

## Tajir Dost Scheme will not be reverted: Chairman FBR

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, FBR, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial said that Tajir Dost Scheme would not be reverted and all steps would be taken for its fair and meaningful implementation.

He said that in a meeting today afternoon with traders at FBR House Islamabad pertaining to implementation of Tajir Dost Scheme, TDS.

The meeting was also attended by traders from Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Faisalabad, Multan and Gujranwala on video link. Prime

Minister's Coordinator on Tajir Dost Scheme Mr. Naem Mir and Mr. Abdur Rehman Khan from Karachi were also present in the meeting.

The Chairman invited the meeting by putting forth their reservations and recommendations for successful accomplishment of the TDS.

The participant traders, in reply, presented their apprehensions and recommendations. The chairman assured the traders that their justified demands would be fulfilled.

"Pakistan is amongst the only few countries in the world where retailers and

wholesalers donot pay any tax" said the Chairman while highlighting the lowered tax statistics in the country.

In reply to a query pertaining to market rates, the Chairman replied that market rates would be looked into in such a manner so that equitable tax collection be made from big and small traders. " We donot want to burdenise the small traders" clarified the Chairman in reply to a question.

The Chairman added that advance income tax is collected in various countries and a fair mechanism for collecting this tax here will also be made.

# CM directs Economic zone authority to attract, facilitate investment

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has decided to activate the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) in order to attract investment, facilitate investors, and ensure proper development at the Special Economic Zone.

"We have nine notified special economic zones, including those under the provincial and federal government as well as the private sector, but all of them need to be more productive with necessary facilities.

This he said while presiding over a meeting of the SEZA board at CM House on Tuesday. It was attended by Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Livestock Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Agriculture Rafiq Buriro, Asif Juma, CEO SEZ Faisal Mujeeb, Rehan Mujtaba, Faizan Ghori and others.

Shah said that the SEZA was responsible for preparing zone applications, selecting developers, and coordinating with federal and provincial authorities to develop infrastructure. "It has to facilitate the availability of public utilities to zone enterprises as a develop-

ment plan but all this would be possible when it would appoint professionals to carry forward its business," he said.

The meeting was told that there were nine notified special economic zones, SITE Larkana, in Sindh, including Khairpur, Dhabeji, BinQasim Industrial Park, Korangi Creek Industrial Park and Nausheroferoze Industrial Park of the federal government and Service Long March, PFB, Armstrong of the private sector.

The chief minister said that the SEZA has to work hard to attract investment in all these economic zones and the Khairpur Special Economic has a complete infrastructure that needs to be made fully functional, he said and directed the SEZA to assess the requirements and issues of all the economic zones so that they could be addressed for the strengthening the economy of the country.

The CM approved the proposal for the appointment of professionals, such as manager Accounts & Finance, Manager Admin & HR, Manager IT and Operations and Manager legal.

The meeting also decided that the Industries and Investment departments,

as well as SITE and SEZA, would collaborate to prepare a comprehensive plan for establishing small economic zones in every district and small industries at tehsil headquarters to promote economic activities and employment. "These proposals will be implemented in phases, but we need to have a comprehensive plan," the CM said.

The CM was told that

there were few applications for the establishment of private economic zones by the private sector. The CM directed the SEZA officials to scrutinize the applications and submit them with their proposals. "We are keen to promote the industrial sector and it was a very good move that the private sector was coming over," he said and vowed to encourage them and facilitate them.

### SENWA Co-operative Housing Society Ltd.

Sindh Secretariat No. 3, Old K.D.A Building Karachi. Ph: 021-99217993  
(Registration No. 2252/2009)

## PUBLIC NOTICE

SENWA Co-operative Housing Society urged alootees obtained free plot under Government of Sindh schemes should obtain forwarding letter in case of selling the property authority concerned, on Tuesday. In this regard a press release has been issued to the media alootees selling their plot obtained from Government of Sindh must approach SENWA Housing Society for provision of information regarding the purchaser. Moreover, all documents regarding sale and purchase must be provided to the authority concerned. The SENWA authority would initiate transfer process in this regard, the press statement added. The authority claimed that Communication and Works Department, Government of Sindh had started developments in the society for larger public interest.

### PROPERTIES AVAILABLE FOR RENT



- Sealed applications from well-reputed Parties/ Companies are invited seeking to take the following buildings/plots on rent in different cities.

| Sr.No. | Region | Site Name     | Open Area (sq ft) | Covered Area (sq ft) |
|--------|--------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1      | NTR-1  | RTTS Peshawar | -                 | 18,840               |
| 2      | NTR-1  | RTTS Swat     | 38,500            | 17,920               |

- The sites are best suited for educational institutes, corporate offices (permanent structure is not allowed).
- Documents can be collected from the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) **PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad**, after making a non-refundable cash deposit of **Rs. 200/-** for each site; during office hours **(09:00 AM to 04:00 PM)**. Regional Offices can also issue the documents located in Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan & Abbottabad.
- Interested parties can visit the sites during office hours before closing of business on **31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**.
- Sealed applications are to be submitted along with CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order equal to two months quoted rent made in the favour of the Senior Manager Accounts & Payments **PTCL PTCL NEST Office G-8/4, Islamabad**. Applications without CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order or partial amount will not be considered.
- Unsuccessful bidders' CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order will be refunded however incase the applicant withdraws from the offer PTCL reserves the right to forfeit the payment.
- Interested Parties/Applicants can deposit sealed applications before **5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by 04:00PM**, at the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) **PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad**.
- Only shortlisted applicants(s) will be called/entertained.
- PTCL reserves the right to accept/reject any or all applications at any stage without incurring any liability to the affected applicant(s) or any obligations to inform the affected applicant(s) of the ground for PTCL's actions.

**Note:** All Government Taxes will be applicable and will be paid by the winning applicant.

**Head of People Experience (North)**

PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad

**Contact Number:** 051-2270087/ 051-2273188

## PAKISTAN AIR FORCE BASE BHOLARI (HYDERABAD) INVITATION OF TENDERS FOR SUPPLY OF ANIMAL (HORSES) RATION CONTRACT FY 2024-25

- Sealed tenders (Technical (Without Price) and Financial (With Price)) are invited from reputable, well-experienced, financially sound and Income Tax Registered Pakistani Firms / Contractors for supply **Animal (Horses) Ration {Barley Crushed, Hay for Bedding, Dry Fodder (Bran), Dry Fodder (Gram Crushed), Dry Fodder (Oat Hay / Lucerne) and Dry Fodder (Salt Rock)}** for PAF Base, Bholari during the **Financial Year 2024-25 (01 October, 2024 to 30 June, 2025)**. Firms / Contractors which are not registered with PAF can also participate in tendering process and approach to PAF Base, Bholari for collection of Tender / Registration documents.

- Tender forms for Contract with special Terms & Conditions and other details can be collected from Catering Flight on submission of application for tender on letterhead, along with photocopies of NTN, GST, Professional Tax Certificate & attested copy of CNIC between **0800 Hrs to 1300 Hrs**. **Technical Tender** will be opened as per given schedule.

### Schedule for Opening of Technical Tender

| Base              | Date /Time for Collection of Tender Forms             | Technical Proposal Opening Date / Time | Contact Numbers  |
|-------------------|---|--|--|
| PAF Base, Bholari | 28 August, 2024 to 12 September, 2024 (0800-1300 hrs) | 12 September, 2024 (1330 hrs)          | O i/c S&T SQN - 022-9501500<br>O i/c Cat Flt - 022-9505221<br>AWO Ashraf Nadeem - 0320-8669286 |

- Opening of Tender.** The Tender Forms are to be submitted as per **PPRA Rule 36 (b) "Single stage – two envelope"** procedure (**Technical** (Without Price) and **Financial** (With Price)). Separate envelopes shall be marked as **"Technical Proposal"** and **"Financial Proposal"** in bold and clear letter to avoid confusion. After vetting of Technical bids, qualified bidders will be informed through Letters / Telephone about the venue, date and time for opening of financial proposal.

#### Note:

- Any Firm / supplier whose contract has been terminated / blacklisted by PAF / Defence /Govt Organization due to poor performance / un-ethical practices will not be eligible for taking part in bidding process for contracts.
- The Contract will have to be signed by the **Owner** of the Firm.
- Any information, if found incomplete / false at any stage, will result in immediate rejection of the application for the Tender, on technical grounds.
- Interested Contractors / Firms are to deposit a Bank Draft of Five Lac / 2% of total Tender value as Earnest Money in favour of **O i/c Accounts Sqn Bholari**.
- For further information & queries O i/c Catering Flight may be contacted as per abovementioned number given in schedule.

**OC Support Wing**  
**PAF Base, Bholari**

## Sheikh visits Sindh cities to mobilize support for Sept 8 rally

KARACHI (PPI) Haleem Adil Sheikh, President of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Sindh and former Leader of the Opposition Provincial Assembly of Sindh, embarked on a one-day visit to several cities, including Karachi, Hyderabad, Tando Allahyar, Mirpurkhas, Kunri, Umerkot, Ghulam Nabi Shah, and Khipro. He was warmly received by a large number of PTI workers at each location.

During his visit, Mr Sheikh participated in various rallies demanding the release of PTI Chairman Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other leaders of PTI. Accompanied by party leaders, workers, he also staged protests in front of the media at different cities.

In Hyderabad, he offered condolences to PTI leader Mir Sahib on the death of his daughter. In Kunri, he visited PTI's Central Joint Secretary

Haji Nisar Arain to express his sympathies on the passing of Arain's brother-in-law. Sheikh also extended his condolences to Muhammad Jam Memon in Kunri, whose wife and Dr. Dost Muhammad's mother recently passed away.

At Umerkot, Sheikh visited the residence of former PTI minority MNA Lalchand Malhi, where he met with PTI leaders and workers. From there, he proceeded to Ghulam Nabi Shah and Khipro, where he received a grand welcome from PTI supporters. In Khipro, Sheikh participated in a rally calling for the release of Imran Khan and Shah Mahmood Qureshi.

He also offered condolences to the family of GDA leader Faqir Khuda Bakhsh Dars, who was recently killed in a firing incident, and to Siddique Khaskheli of the Ghausia Jamaat on the death of his mother.

While addressing gatherings at various locations, Sheikh announced that a massive rally is scheduled in Islamabad on September 8, urging people from every city in Sindh to join. He emphasized that the visit was part of the mobilization efforts for the upcoming rally, highlighting the public's demand for the release of Imran Khan.

He also criticized the current government led by PM Shehbaz Sharif, accusing it of causing rampant inflation and economic hardship. According to Sheikh, without the release of Imran Khan and the restoration of the stolen mandate, political stability cannot be achieved in the country. He further stressed the importance of judicial independence for upholding the rule of law in Pakistan, noting that lawyers across the country have already begun a movement for this cause.



**KARACHI:** A view of stagnant rain water at old city area during monsoon rain in the metropolis. —APP Photo

## FBR denies rumors of any Amnesty Scheme

F.P. Report

KARACHI: It has come to the notice of the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) that certain rumors are circulating on the social media regarding a purported upcoming amnesty scheme for regularizing smuggled vehicles.

FBR categorically denies these rumors and would like to make it clear that no such scheme is under consideration of the Federal Government at this time. The general public is therefore advised not to believe any such misinformation circulating in the social media or any other unverified sources.

## PM orders to hold consultation with traders: Naeem

LAHORE (APP): Tajir Dost Scheme Chief Coordinator Naeem Mir said on Tuesday that Prime Minister had ordered to hold consultation with traders at all levels.

According to official sources, the Federal Board of Revenue Chairman had invited representatives of traders for dialogue at 3:00 pm today. He said, "We want to hold consultation with traders organizations before issuing new amended SRO." He further said that all objections on Tajir Dost Scheme were removed.

Naeem Mir said that representatives of traders must show responsibility and present their case on table. He said that all applicable proposals would be welcomed, adding that meaningless protest would yield no good results for the country and traders. There was no sense of strike when state was ready to talk, he added.

## PU awards five PhD degrees

LAHORE (APP): Punjab University (PU) has awarded PhD degrees to its five scholars after the approval of their thesis in various disciplines. According to PU spokesperson, Hina Maqbool D/o Sheikh Maqbool Elahi awarded PhD degree in the subject of Sociology; Ejaz Ahmed S/o Muhammad Sartaj in the subject of Philosophy; Shahid Rehman Khan S/o Ali Rehman in the subject of Polymer Technology.

## Rainy forecast: Sindh govt readies for monsoon challenges ahead

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon has announced the possibility of heavy rains across the province until August 31.

The Sindh government has completed its preparations to deal with any emergency situation, and the public is urged to cooperate with authorities in the event of any sudden developments.

In a statement, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that a rain

emergency cell has been established at the Chief Minister's House. In view of the monsoon rains, the Sindh government has appointed in-charges in 30 districts across the province.

The Sindh Chief Minister has directed all ministers, advisers, special assistants, and divisional commissioners to remain alert and active.

Senior Minister Memon also mentioned that there is a risk of flooding in coastal areas. Fishermen have been instructed not to venture into the sea. Necessary machin-

ery has been provided to towns for drainage, and the KMC and Water Board have already improved the drainage system.

He added that local bodies and elected representatives of the People's Party, including UC Chairmen, have been instructed to coordinate with the relevant administrations.

Additionally, the embankments from Hamal Lake to Manchar Lake are being reinforced, and monitoring of weak points is ongoing.

## Tajir Dost Scheme will not be reverted: Chairman FBR

F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chairman Federal Board of Revenue, FBR, Mr. Rashid Mahmood Langrial said that Tajir Dost Scheme would not be reverted and all steps would be taken for its fair and meaningful implementation.

He said that in a meeting today afternoon with traders at FBR House Islamabad pertaining to implementation of Tajir Dost Scheme, TDS.

The meeting was also attended by traders from Karachi, Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan and Gujranwala on video link. Prime

Minister's Chief Coordinator on Tajir Dost Scheme Mr. Naeem Mir and Mr. Abdur Rehman Khan from Karachi were also present in the meeting.

The Chairman initiated the meeting by inviting the traders for putting forth their reservations and recommendations for successful accomplishment of the TDS.

The participant traders, in reply, presented their apprehensions and recommendations. The chairman assured the traders that their justified demands would be fulfilled.

"Pakistan is amongst the only few countries in the world where retailers and

wholesalers donot pay any tax" said the Chairman while highlighting the lowered tax statistics in the country.

In reply to a query pertaining to market rates, the Chairman replied that market rates would be looked into in such a manner so that equitable tax collection be made from big and small traders. "We donot want to burdenise the small traders" clarified the Chairman in reply to a question.

The Chairman added that advance income tax is collected in various countries and a fair mechanism for collecting this tax here will also be made.

## Terrorists deserve no concession: Irfan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Parliamentary leader in the Senate, Senator Irfan Ahmad Siddiqui on Tuesday said terrorists does not deserve any concession and factors that provoke terrorism must be dealt with iron hands.

While speaking on the recent terror incidents in Balochistan, he said the recent violence showed hostile elements taking up arms against innocent civilians to shed their blood which was bleak moment for humanity.

Taking to the floor, Senator Irfan called the

government for a collective strategy at the Senate to probe the factors responsible for such kind of incidents.

Commenting on the members of the house's suggestions for talks with insurgents, he said that these elements playing in the hands of the country's enemies must be brought accountable to the constitution of Pakistan and made respectful to the flag of Pakistan.

Irfan said that it was the basic responsibility of the State to provide security to its residents and save their lives while unlikly during the previous regime the

terrorists were brought back and released from the jails that resulted in resurgence of crimes and terrorist attacks.

Siddique also called for the implementation of the National Action Plan devised in 2014 after the Army Public School attack for countering terrorism and extremism in the country.

He urged the need for bringing behavioral change through improved national curriculum, better use of mass communication and social media tools to disrupt inimical elements breeding extremism in the society and misleading the young generation.

## CM directs Economic zone authority to attract, facilitate investment

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has decided to activate the Special Economic Zone Authority (SEZA) in order to attract investment, facilitate investors, and ensure proper development at the Special Economic Zone.

"We have nine notified special economic zones, including those under the provincial and federal government as well as the private sector, but all of them need to be more productive with necessary facilities.

This he said while presiding over a meeting of the SEZA board at CM House on Tuesday. It was attended by Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan, Chairman P&D Najam Shah, Secretary Livestock Kazim Jatoi, Secretary Finance Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Agriculture Rafiq Buriro, Asif Juma, CEO SEZ Faisal Mujeeb, Rehman Mujtaba, Faizan Ghori and others.

Shah said that the SEZA was responsible for preparing zone applications, selecting developers, and coordinating with federal and provin-

cial authorities to develop infrastructure. "It has to facilitate the availability of public utilities to zone enterprises as a development plan but all this would be possible when it would appoint professionals to carry forward its business," he said.

The meeting was told that there were nine notified special economic zones, SITE Larkana, in Sindh, including Khairpur, Dhabaji, BinQasim Industrial Park, Korangi Creek Industrial Park and Nausheerofoze Industrial Park of the federal government and Service Long March, PFB, Armstrong of the private sector.

The chief minister said that the SEZA has to work hard to attract investment in all these economic zones and the Khairpur Special Economic has a complete infrastructure that needs to be made fully functional, he said and directed the SEZA to assess the requirements and issues of all the economic zones so that they could be addressed for the strengthening the economy of the country.

The CM approved the proposal for

the appointment of professionals, such as manager Accounts & Finance, Manager Admin & HR, Manager IT and Operations and Manager legal.

The meeting also decided that the Industries and Investment departments, as well as SITE and SEZA, would collaborate to prepare a comprehensive plan for establishing small economic zones in every district and small industries at tehsil headquarters to promote economic activities and employment. "These proposals will be implemented in phases, but we need to have a comprehensive plan," the CM said.

The CM was told that there were few applications for the establishment of private economic zones by the private sector. The CM directed the SEZA officials to scrutinize the applications and submit them with their proposals. "We are keen to promote the industrial sector and it was a very good move that the private sector was coming over," he said and vowed to encourage them and facilitate them.

## Govt put on notice over decision to close Utility stores

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Tuesday issued notices to the Federal government and other respondents for

September 4 on a petition challenging the decision to shut down utility stores across the country.

Justice Muhammad Raza Qureshi heard the petition filed by Muzammil Rafique. During the proceedings, the petitioner's counsel argued before the court that his client had been

serving in utility stores for the past ten years.

He argued that the utility stores not only pay billions of rupees in taxes but also earn Rs 2 billion in net profit. He submitted that the decision would result in the unemployment of 11,000 people.

He further submitted that the decision was a vio-

lation of the Companies Act, which outlines the complete procedure for shutting down a company.

He pleaded with the court to set aside the decision. The court, after hearing the initial arguments, issued notices to the federal government and other respondents for September 4 and sought a reply.

## Governor for resolving issues of traders

KARACHI (APP): Governor Sindh Kamran Khan Tessori has assured that the present government was committed to addressing the issues of industrialists and traders on a priority basis to boost industrial activity and trade.

He made these remarks during a conversation with industrialists from the Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industry.

Governor Kamran Tessori discussed the concerns of the industrialists, who highlighted the urgent need to resolve issues related to infrastructure, water, gas and electricity in the

industrial area. He assured them that he would take up these matters with the relevant authorities to find prompt solutions.

Later on, speaking to the media, Governor emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to enhance trade and suggested transforming friendships with other countries into trade partnerships. He stressed that Karachi, as the economic hub of the country, requires urgent attention to its issues, both present and future.

Kamran Khan Tessori also advocated for a strong and empowered local government system, calling it essential for resolving the city's problems.

He reaffirmed that the doors of the Governor House are always open for both the public and the business community, ensuring that the benefits of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) would soon be visible.

In response to a question, Governor Kamran Tessori stated that he is committed to addressing Karachi's challenges and will continue to raise voice for the city in every forum. He noted that economic improvements often attract conspiracies, but reassured that he is prepared to facilitate direct dialogue between industrialists, traders, and the Prime Minister.

**PAKISTAN AIRPORTS AUTHORITY**  
پاکستان ایئرپورٹس اتھارٹی

**CORRIGENDUM**

- Reference job advertisement published in the newspapers on Friday, 23rd August, 2024 vide **Situation Notice No. 03/2024**.
- Please amend to read the Age criteria for the posts of Civil Assistant (SG-05), Commercial Assistant (SG-05) and Cargo Assistant (SG-05) mentioned at Serial No. 04, 05 and 06 as below:-

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| <b>Age</b> | <b>Maximum 23 years (age relaxation shall be applicable as per rules)</b> |
|------------|---|

- Rest of the contents of the above mentioned advertisement shall remain same.

**SR. ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR HR (TM)**  
**HEADQUARTERS PAKISTAN AIRPORTS AUTHORITY,**  
**TERMINAL-I, JINNAH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT,**  
**KARACHI TEL: 021-99072067-8**

PID K.565/24

**تصحیح (Corrigendum)**

سوشل ویلفیئر ڈیپارٹمنٹ چارجرس کی فوڈ سپلائی ری ٹینڈر کا اشتہار بعنوان اعلان کردہ مورخہ 2024-08-21 کو روز نامہ فرنٹیر پوسٹ، انکیسپر، انکین، دنیا اور مشغری میں مشہور کیا گیا تھا۔ اس میں تصحیح (Corrigendum) نوٹ فرمائیں۔

ری ٹینڈر ہذا کی تاریخ 09-09-2024 سے بڑھا کر 17-09-2024 کر دی گئی ہیں۔

**ڈسٹرکٹ آفیسر**  
**سوشل ویلفیئر ڈیپارٹمنٹ چارجرس**

MF ID 231926

**PROPERTIES AVAILABLE FOR RENT**

- Sealed applications from well-reputed Parties/ Companies are invited seeking to take the following buildings/plots on rent in different cities.

| Sr.No. | Region | Site Name     | Open Area (sq ft) | Covered Area (sq ft) |
|--------|--------|---------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1      | NTR-1  | RTTS Peshawar | -                 | 18,840               |
| 2      | NTR-1  | RTTS Swat     | 38,500            | 17,920               |

- The sites are best suited for educational institutes, corporate estates (permanent structure is not allowed).
- Documents can be collected from the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) **PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad**, after making a non-refundable cash deposit of **Rs. 200/-** for each site; during office hours **(09:00 AM to 04:00 PM)**. Regional Offices can also issue the documents located in Peshawar, Dera Ismail Khan & Abbottabad.
- Interested parties can visit the sites during office hours before closing of business on **31<sup>st</sup> August 2024**.
- Sealed applications are to be submitted along with CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order equal to two months quoted rent made in the favour of the Senior Manager Accounts & Payments PTCL, **PTCL NEST Office G-8/4, Islamabad**. Applications without CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order or partial amount will not be considered.
- Unsuccessful bidders' CDR/Demand Draft/Pay Order will be refunded however incase the applicant withdraws from the offer PTCL reserves the right to forfeit the payment.
- Interested Parties/Applicants can deposit sealed applications before **5<sup>th</sup> September 2024 by 04:00PM**, at the office of the Manager (Estate Ops. & Financials) **PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad**.
- Only shortlisted applicants(s) will be called/entertained.
- PTCL reserves the right to accept/reject any or all applications at any stage without incurring any liability to the affected applicant(s) or any obligations to inform the affected applicant(s) of the ground for PTCL's actions.

**Note:** All Government Taxes will be applicable and will be paid by the winning applicant.

**Head of People Experience (North)**  
PTCL House, F-5/1, Islamabad  
**Contact Number:** 051-2270087/ 051-2273188



**LAHORE:** Students visiting rare historical cultural artwork and sculptures in the Historical Lahore Museum. —APP Photo

# Controlling rising population govt’s priority, says Liaquat



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Population Welfare, Malik Liaquat Ali Khan, stated that controlling the rising population is among the provincial government's top priorities, and serious measures are being taken in this regard.

As a public representative, delivering services to people's doorsteps is his mission. He emphasized the need to implement the National Action Plan on

family planning. Due to the lack of facilities in remote areas, the health department and private institutions should work together to provide services to the public.

He expressed these views during his address at a seminar titled "Family Planning in Pakistan," organized by the United Nations' subsidiary body, UNFPA, in Peshawar.

The seminar was attended by Secretary of Population Welfare Imad Ali Lohani, UNFPA representative Dr. Ghulam Farid, and other relevant

officials.

During the event, officials provided a detailed briefing to the Special Assistant on the challenges faced at the national and provincial levels concerning population control and the steps taken to address them.

They also highlighted the role of international organizations such as the World Bank, WHO, the health department, and other global institutions in ongoing population welfare efforts in the province. The Special Assistant noted that under the

National Action Plan, the provincial government was promised ten billion rupees, but not a single rupee has been received so far, resulting in a slow implementation of the plan.

Malik Liaquat stated that the provincial government considers the Population Welfare Department's program highly significant. As part of this, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Ali Amin Gandapur, has allocated 100 million rupees for raising awareness about this program on their recommendation.

He further emphasized that long-term family planning is crucial and that there is a need to collaborate with religious scholars to raise awareness among the public.

He added that the Population Welfare Department should remain in constant contact with the public to address this issue responsibly and encourage them to participate. Moreover, non-governmental organizations should share their data with the provincial government.



PESHAWAR: Picture shows traffic congestion on busy Ashraf Road. Such views are routine on roads of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Capital City. —INP photo

## Meeting discuss traffic issues in Peshawar

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: An important meeting was held at the Commissioner's Office in Peshawar under the chairmanship of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Excise and Taxation, Khaliq-ur-Rehman, to address traffic issues in the city.

The meeting was attended by the Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan, Member of the National Assembly Shandana Gulzar, Member of the Provincial Assembly Fazal Elahi, Commissioner Peshawar Riaz Mehsud, Secretary Excise Fayaz Ali Shah, Chief Traffic Officer, Secretary RTA, and Director of Transport.

During the meeting, it was agreed to develop a comprehensive plan to solve the growing traffic problems in Peshawar.

The Department of Transport was



tasked with collecting relevant data as a basis for formulating this plan in the next meeting.

It was also reiterated that there would be no compromise on traffic laws and that efforts would be made to ensure smooth traffic flow in Peshawar, aiming to address public concerns and make Peshawar an exemplary city in terms of traffic management.

Regarding rickshaws and loaders, it was highlighted that two-stroke rickshaws are illegal according to court orders, and a comprehensive strategy will be devised soon to address issues related to unlicensed rickshaws, stolen rickshaws, and other related problems. Further measures will be taken in the next meeting to develop a sustainable policy to resolve these issues.

## Newly posted Provincil Election Commissioner Saeed Gul welcomed Farewell lunch organized in honour of outgoing PEC



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Lunch was organized in the honour of transferred Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamshad and newly post-

ed Mr. Saeed Gul. All the officers of Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa headquarters participated. Joint Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa Aziz Bahadur in his address appreciated the services of the transferred Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Shamshad Khan and expressed good wishes to

the new Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. Saeed Gul. In his address, the Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. Shamshad Khan thanked all the officers and said that during his tenure, all the officers performed the office affairs in the form of an efficient team.

On this occasion, the new Provincial Election Commissioner, Mr. Saeed Gul thanked the officers for organizing the lunch. And said that he will do his best to solve the problems faced by the officers and staff.

Both the officers were presented with bouquets of flowers on this occasion.



PESHAWAR: Kashif Choudhry, President of All Pakistan Anjuman Tajiran, along with other leaders of trade organizations holding a press conference.

## Minister inspects construction work of slaughterhouse

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Livestock, Fisheries, and Cooperatives, Fazal Hakim Khan Yousafzai, visited the under-construction livestock slaughterhouse at Shah Alam Pul in Peshawar.

He emphasized maintaining high standards of quality and quantity in the

construction work and instructed that the project be completed within the stipulated time.

The Director-General of Livestock, Dr. Asal Khan, and other officials accompanied the provincial minister during the visit.

The minister was briefed on the progress of the slaughterhouse, where it was mentioned that most of the work would be carried

out using machines, and animals would be slaughtered using modern and scientific methods.

The construction is expected to be completed within a month, followed by the official inauguration. On this occasion, Minister Fazal Hakim Khan Yousafzai directed the officials to closely monitor the construction work and ensure that the

slaughterhouse is fully operational within the designated time, providing convenience to those involved in the livestock sector. He added that the provincial government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is taking comprehensive measures to provide facilities to the public and those associated with various sectors, including livestock.



PESHAWAR: A craftsman is giving final touches to a decoration item 'truck' at his workplace near the Dabgari area. — APP photo

## Kundi pays tribute to Security Forces

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, paid tribute to the security forces for their successful operation against the Khawarij insurgents in the Tirah Valley, merged district Khyber.

The Governor saluted the bravery and courage of the security forces for sending 25 Khawarij terrorists to their doom.

Faisal Karim Kundi stated that the high morale and determination of the security forces in eradicating terrorism is a source of pride for the entire nation.

The Governor expressed his deep respect for the martyrdom of four security personnel during the operation.

He extended his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyrs.

He prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and patience for their bereaved families.

Faisal Karim Kundi remarked that the security forces have made countless sacrifices in the war against terrorism.

## UNICEF delegation calls on KP Speaker

PESHAWAR (APP): A delegation of UNICEF led by country representative, Abdullah Fadal here Tuesday called on Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Babar Salim Swati and discussed operations of UNICEF in the province.

MPA, Taj Tarand, Secretary KP Assembly, Kifayat Afridi, Special Secretary, Waqar Shah and other concerned officials were present on the occasion.

The delegation discussed agenda of UNICEF in the province, offered support in formulation of policies relating to special children and women and holding of children parliament on the premises of provincial assembly to celebrate World Children's Day on November 20.

The delegation also offered assistance to increase capacity of standing committees that are concerned and related to operational ambit of UNICEF.

## Insaf Youth Wing delegation calls on Minister for Food

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru met with a delegation of the Insaf Youth Wing of tehsil Mardan in Peshawar on Tuesday.

The delegation was led by the Youth Wing's President, Asfandyar Shah. During the meeting, the minister emphasized that the youth are the most valuable asset of any nation and are pivotal to its development and progress.

Zahir Shah Toru highlighted that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf

(PTI) Imran Khan has always considered the youth as the frontline force of the nation.

Zahir shah Toru noted that the youth have consistently embraced Khan's vision with full dedication and passion.

The minister further stated that the future of a country rests in the hands of its youth. To empower them economically and to help them start their own businesses, Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has formulated a comprehensive loan program.

Toru emphasized that the provincial government is

also taking effective measures to equip the youth with modern technology, ensuring they are well-prepared to face contemporary challenges.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the preparations for the upcoming PTI rally scheduled to take place in Islamabad on September 8. The Youth Wing delegation expressed their full confidence in Imran Khan's leadership and his vision for the country, pledging to devote their energies towards the nation's progress under his guidance.

## Training on interfaith harmony held at Jinnah Law College



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: SALGAI Foundation organized a comprehensive Training Workshop on "Interfaith Harmony" at Jinnah Law College Peshawar, followed by a thrilling Badminton sports activity, "Shuttle of Peace."

The events aimed to promote unity and understanding among individuals from diverse religious backgrounds.

The workshop commenced at 10:00 AM with Moderator Amin Ullah Khan Kundi introducing Founder Yasir Shah, who presented SALGAI Foundation's mission, vision, and goals.

Lead Trainer Sultan Muhammad delivered a detailed talk on interfaith harmony, followed by a Q&A session. Participants

included students, teachers, journalists, lawyers, and SALGAI Foundation's youth leadership and team, representing different religions (Sikh, Hindu, Muslim, Christian) and genders.

After the Q&A session, Founder Yasir Shah presented shields to the Head of Institute, Jinnah Law College, and Lead Trainer Sultan Muhammad. Certificates were distributed among the participants and SALGAI Foundation team members.

The workshop concluded with a group photo session and lunch.

Following the workshop, SALGAI Foundation organized a badminton sports activity, "Shuttle of Peace," highlighting the role of sports in promoting interfaith

harmony. Hasnain Imad, a talented youngster and badminton player, led the activity. Players from different religions participated, showcasing their skills and sportsmanship.

Shields and medals were distributed among the players, and a special shield and medal were presented to Hasnain Imad. The event concluded with a group photo session.

The Interfaith Harmony Training Workshop and "Shuttle of Peace" badminton activity demonstrated SALGAI Foundation's commitment to promoting unity and understanding among diverse communities.

These events served as a testament to the power of dialogue and sports in bridging gaps and fostering harmony.



## In brief

### Two youths killed in Swabi F.P. Report

SWABI: At least two youths were shot dead over a dispute related to women in the vicinity of Yar Hussain police station in Swabi district, police informed on Tuesday. Police said the accused called the victims into an empty house and later shot them dead. The dead were identified as Jalal and Adnan, police said and added that both the victims were 22-years-old. The Yar Hussain police have registered a case on the complaint of the brother of the deceased Jalal and started investigation to nab the killers.

### Journalist shot dead in Ghotki

GHOTKI (INP): The police reported that the accused killed the journalist and fled the scene in Sindh Gothki district. The journalist's body has been shifted to Obaro Hospital. Police stated that at the time of the attack, journalist Bachal Ghanio had gone to his fields. The incident is currently under investigation. The son of the slain journalist said that his father had a longstanding enmity with some members of the community. He mentioned that although the enmity had supposedly been resolved, his father was still killed. A few years ago, the same opponents had also attacked his father. Murad Ali Shah takes on murder of Journalist Bachal Ghanio Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah has taken notice of the murder of journalist Bachal Ghanio in Ghotki. Murad Ali Shah has stated that the murderers of the martyred journalist should be arrested immediately and that the operation against the robbers in the area should be intensified.

### 2 robbers killed in encounter

FEROZEWALA (INP): Two robbers were killed and a cop injured in exchange of fire with police here on Tuesday. Arms, cell phones and looted cash were recovered from possession of killed robbers. According to details, a three-member gang of robbers was engaged in looting the citizens near Gulfishan Colony when police reached the scene. An encounter took place in which two robbers were killed while their third accomplice managed to escape. A police constable identified as Shehzad was also injured in firing of robbers who was shifted to hospital for treatment. Identity of killed robbers could not be ascertained and police recovered three pistols, two cell phones, Rs40,000 looted cash and a motorcycle from their possession. The bodies of killed robbers were moved to hospital for postmortem.

### Two perish in road mishaps

SHEIKHUPURA (INP): At least two people including a minor child were killed and 10 others injured in separate road accidents in different localities of Sheikhupura on Tuesday. According to details, the first accident took place at Lahore Road Chaudhry Stop where a vehicle crushed to death 60-year-old man and sped the scene. A truck ran over a motorcycle when it fell down on road after his shawl stuck in wheel of the bike at Lahore road near Mandiali toll plaza. The accident resulted in death of four-year-old Abu Baqar besides leaving his mother Asima 25, and father seriously injured. A speedy bus during attempt to save motorcyclist who suddenly appeared on road rammed into a container resulting in injuries to Moheed ur Rehman 32, Akhtar 44, Sidra 25, Yousaf 35, Nasir 30, Hamza 25, Kaneez Bibi 50, and Aftab 45.

# JUI-F intra-party election completes in Lower Dir

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Former emir of the JUI-F Sirajud Din was re-elected as district chief while Maulana Huzaifa as general secretary of the party for the next five years. The intra-party elections of the JUI-F were held at Timergara under the supervision of provincial election commissioner, Maulana Ahmad Ali Darwish and assistant Israr Marwat here the other day. Several aspirants including tehsil chairman Mufti Irfanud Din, Haji Javed Iqbal and others took part in the running out of which Sirajuddin was elected as district emir for the next five years, while Maulana Muhammad Huzaifah was elected as general secretary. A total of 545 members of the party general council exercised their right to vote. Speaking on the occasion Maulana Ahmed Ali

Darwish, said that after the completion of the elections of village councils and tehsils in the first and second phase of intra-party elections across the province, the series of elections continued at the district level and so far elections in 15 districts had been completed.

"In the next phase, the process of provincial and central elections will be completed", he said, adding that from the village council to the center, the intra party elections were being completed in a transparent manner. He said that 33000 men and women had got the JUI-F membership in Lower Dir. Later on the newly cabinet members were administered oath of their new responsibilities on the occasion.

**Traders' warning:** The Lower Dir business community on Monday announced a complete shutter

down strike against the imposition of taxes and inflated power bills today on Aug. 28. Talking to local journalists at the Timergara press club the Anjuman Tajiran Timergara president haji Anwarud Din and general secretary of Zeb City center Nasir Shah said the business community would never accept the imposition of taxes in Malakand division.

They said the traders' central body had announced a countrywide strike against the government on Sep. 28. They said the Lower Dir traders supported the call and would observe a complete shutter down strike. Meanwhile the Samarbagh and Talash traders also announced to fully support the central leaders on Sep. 28. They said that all big and small shops and markets in their areas would remain closed on that day.

## FIA arrests former SP for alleged corruption

## F.P. Report

LARKANA: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Sukkur region arrested former Superintendent of Police (SP) Gulzar Ali Sohu on the charge of selling government jobs for money and have transferred to Sukkur Central Jail.

The former office superintendent of Sindh police Gulzar Ali Sohu was arrested and transferred to Sukkur Central Jail while acting in Lahori Muhalla of Larkana city. He also used to share pictures on the media.

It has been learned from the sources that there are many people involved in the group of Grif Gulzar Ali Soho who used to illegally extort crores of rupees from the forced and needy people.

### Enrolment campaign

**started:** A vigil rally was held in Badeh taluka of Larkana district "Studying Sindh, will grow Sindh" in connection with the admission campaign in different schools.

In this regard, a vigil rally was taken out from Badeh Primary-I School to Hyder Chowk, the rally was led by Chairman of District Council Larkana Ajaz Ahmad Laghari, DEO Secondary Larkana Gulbahar Magsi, DEO Primary Anisur Rehman Jalbani, besides officials of the Education Department, PPP leaders, teachers, Chairman Town Committee Badeh, TEO Kandari. And others participated in the rally on this occasion.

At the spot, District Council Larkana Chairman Ajaz Ahmad Laghari said that this wonderful rally has been organized in connection

campaign in "Studying Sindh, will grow Sindh" with the admissions of newly younger children in public schools so that parents can trust public educational institutions to give their children like their children.

Enroll more and more in public schools, further he said that in the last few years, with the better strategy of the education department and the hard work and cooperation of the teachers, there has been a big increase in the enrollment of government schools, which they are happy about. He further said that soon the basic problems faced in government schools will be solved on a priority basis so that the architects of the future can serve the country and the nation with free and quality education.



UPPER DIR: KP Minister for Higher Education, Meena Khan Afridi sapling a plant during his visit to Government Degree College.

## Farmers trained to ensure high cotton yield

## F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab an awareness programs are going on for farmers to increase the production of cotton. An awareness seminar was organized by Fuji Fertilizer Company for better production of cotton. In which a large number of farmers participated.

The seminar attended by Head of Agri Services Hassan Raza Fuji Fertilizer Company said that Pakistan's lands are very suitable for cotton production, the largest part of Pakistan's export is cotton products. In 2022-23, export of cotton has earned more than 3.8 billion foreign exchange. The average production of cotton per acre in Pakistan is about 15 maunds per acre, while progressive farmers in Pakistan are getting 40-35 maunds of production per acre.

FFC's agricultural expert Hassan Raza said that through the balanced use of fertilizers in Pakistan. More than 50% increase in cotton production is possible. He

emphasized to the farmers that by adopting modern technology and balanced use of fertilizers in the light of the soil, cotton production can be significantly increased. He further informed that more than 4 million tons of FFC in Pakistan Along with composting, a team of agricultural experts across the country.

The center is also active for the practical training of Farmers. This seminar is also a link in the same chain. Head of Sales Fuji Fertilizer Ahmad Jawad urged farmers to double their paddy and cotton production by becoming part of FFC's agricultural training programme.

**AC visits Special Education School:** On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister, monitoring process is going on to improve the quality of education in educational institutions. In this regard, Assistant Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, Ali Samir paid a surprise visit to the Special Education School.

AC met with the children with hearing, vision, speech and physical dis-

abilities in the school and reviewed their educational performance. Assistant Commissioner Ali Samir also checked the teaching process of the children and checked the attendance of the teachers. He directed the teachers to educate and train the children according to modern requirements.

## Training session held

## F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Emergency Rescue Service 1122 here on Tuesday arranged training session in Aghos Center Gulabad to aware students about basic life-saving and safety procedures.

District Emergency Rescue Officer, Sanaullah taught students about life-saving techniques and procedures to meet emergencies. The students were told about fire safety drills, safety plan during calamities, first aid and resuscitation methods and fracture management.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Minister of Balochistan, Mir Sarfraz Bugti addressing a press conference.

## Journalists' role lauded

## F.P. Report

BANNU: Station Commander Bannu cantonment Brigadier Naveed Ahmad said that journalists should play their full role to show the soft image of Bannu to the world through the pen. He has taught love and peace, this is the reason why the people here have a hearty attachment to the country.

During the meeting with the delegation led by President Bannu Press Club Pir Niaz Ali Shah, Deputy Commander Garrison Colonel Saifullah, Colonel Asif and other military officials were also present. We have always tried to provide better opportunities to the people here at all levels and we will make it possible with the cooperation of the media.

Brigadier said that the people of Bannu have always promoted a positive attitude. And the people will make Milkar Bannu a cradle of peace so that the gifts and virtues of the warriors here can be highlighted in a better way. We should try at every level to make Bannu a city of flowers in the true sense and make every possible effort to restore the historical status here in which journalists can play a better role through the pen.

## Traders' meet DPO

## F.P. Report

TANK: A delegation of the district traders association on Tuesday called on District Police Officer (DPO) Aslam Nawaz Khan and discussed issues faced by them.

The delegation comprised Association President Azmat Ullah Khan, Sheikh Muhammad Rafiq, Badiul Zaman, Saleem Shehzad, Abdul Aziz, Manzoor Khan, Haji Allah Khan Mohsud, and Furman Mehsud. During the meeting traders highlighted security concerns in markets, an increase in theft incidents, and traffic issues.

They requested that the police increase patrolling in markets and take immediate measures to prevent theft. DPO Aslam Nawaz Khan acknowledged the traders' concerns and assured them that the police would take every possible step to ensure their protection.

He stated that a command room has been established for security monitoring, with CCTV cameras installed in markets for round-the-clock surveillance. He added that police patrolling would be increased, and special measures would be implemented for the protection of traders. The DPO also advised traders to install CCTV cameras in their shops and report any suspicious individuals or activities to the police immediately.

## MCCI rejects imposition of new taxes on traders

## Fazal Haq

MARDAN: Provincial general secretary Markaz-Tanzeem-e-Tajiran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and president of the Mardan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Zahir Shah has completely rejected the businessman-friendly tax imposed on small traders by the government, calling it a businessman-hostile tax and economic exploitation of business community.

Talking to the Media Zahir Shah added that today there will be a complete shutter down strike from Karachi to Gwadar and in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Zahir Shah warned that the government should immediately withdraw the decision on the cruel anti-trader tax or else the protest will continue indefinitely.

Zahir Shah said that the people and the business community are already bearing the unbearable burden of dozens of cruel taxes but the imported finance minister and the government, instead of reducing their royal expenses, are burdening small businessmen with more taxes, which we do not accept in

any way.

MCCI argued that the business community is the protection of the oppressed class under the burden of illegal taxes because the businessmen who are already tax filers in the list of FBR and paying billions of rupees in taxes every year have also been burdened which is further exploitation of the economic class.

The MCCI president added that the businessmen across the country are united against the cruel measures for their rights and are in touch with small business organizations across the province. He argued that this country is running on the taxes of the business community and the people, and the business community is happily paying taxes to the government, but instead of the interests and prosperity of the people and the business community, the tax money is being spent on government ministers and bureaucratic luxuries. He pointed out that small traders and people are already burdened by immense taxes, they do not have the power to pay thousands of millions of rupees

in taxes annually, this is forcing them to commit suicide and economic exploitation.

He rejected the new business-friendly tax scheme and demanded the government to immediately withdraw this cruel decision. "Instead of the drawing room, the government should solve such decisions with the representatives of the business community through consultation and all the agreements made with the IPPs of the previous periods should be canceled and they should be held strictly accountable", He argued.

Zahir Shah demanded that the illegal taxes should be removed from electricity bills and transparency should be brought in the implementation and system of taxes. Zahir Shah appealed to the business community to make today's strike a complete success and warned the government to refrain from imposing new cruel taxes and give relief to the people and businessmen in all taxes, otherwise the scope of the shutter down strike and the series of protests will be expanded further.

## PPP workers kick out interim cabinet members

## F.P. Report

PABBI: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Nowshera faces severe differences, no-confidence motion passed against three-members of interim organization with a heavy majority. District Senior Vice President Salim Khan Khokhar resigns from interim organization.

According to details, the PPP Nowshera workers' convention was held at the residence of Nizamuddin Khan in Jahangira, which was presided over by Nizamuddin Khan. The convention was attended by a large number of PPP workers from Nowshera, Pabbi, and

Jahangira tehsils. The convention passed a no-confidence motion against the three-member interim organization, including President Idris Khattak, General Secretary Falk Niaz, and Information Secretary Najeib Ullah Khattak, with a heavy majority.

The motion was presented by PPP Tehsil Nowshera President Malik Hidayat Khan, who alleged that Idris Khattak had secretly supported the Awami National Party, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Parliamentarians in the 2024 National Assembly elections in exchange for votes.

Another, Falk Niaz was accused of not running an election campaign for PPP's nominated candidates in the 2024 elections and violating the party's constitution. Najeib Ullah Khattak was accused of supporting PTI candidates instead of PPP candidates in the 2024 elections.

The convention expressed full confidence in the leadership of PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari. The convention was addressed by Salim Khan Khokhar, Saeed Ullah Khan, Hidayat Nawaz Khan Khattak advocate, Muhammad Farooq Khan Khattak and others.

## Commissioner pays visit to Tanda Dam

## F.P. Report

KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah paid a surprise visit to Tanda Dam and Fish Hatchery Kohat under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Program "Awami Agenda" where he met the staff posted by the Irrigation Department and asked about the safety measures taken for Tourists and especially Children in the Dam. He directed the authorities concerned to immediately remove the

deficiencies in the safety measures so that no fatal accident occurs in future.

It is to be noted that Tanda Dam, built some 55 years ago, is the biggest and oldest dam in Kohat, which is used only for irrigation purposes and irrigates thousands of acres of land. Similarly, about Rs.10 million is collected annually in the government exchequer from the fish contract.

Presently, the work on the expansion of Tanda Dam is also in progress. The commissioner

reviewed the ongoing expansion work and directed to complete it in time.

Meanwhile, Motasim Billah also inspected the offices of the Fisheries Department and the Fish Hatchery under the "Awami Agenda" where he was briefed in detail about the activities of the department in Kohat.

He specially praised the cleanliness standard maintained in the Offices and Hatchery. He also eulogized the professional abilities of its Head and his all other staff.

## D&SJ plants sapling under monsoon drive

## F.P. Report

BUNER: District and Sessions Judge (D&SJ) Buner Sumera Wali planted sapling in the premises of district courts under monsoon plantation drive and added that afforestation is key against climate change as well as global warming, on Tuesday.

Moreover, Additional District Judge II Javeria Sartaj Khan, Senior

Civil Judge Judicial Iftikhar Khan, DFO Arshad Khan, SDFO Syed Rahim Khan, President All Pakistan Judicial Employees Association Ahmed Gul and district courts employees also planted saplings on the occasion.

While contributing to the Monsoon plantation campaign the district & session judge Samera Wali in her message to the public said that

saplings help to keep the environment clean, moderate the climate and prevent soil erosion and generate oxygen.

D&SJ Buner said that it is a great source of good and blessings in the life and life hereafter. She continued that it is beneficial for humans and animals and to describe the praises and attributes of Allah. She asked, everyone should participate fully in the "One Man Two Trees" campaign.



## UN chief issues climate SOS

TONGA: United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has issued his latest climate SOS, calling on countries to "Save Our Seas" as he warned of a crisis of an "unimaginable scale" caused by greenhouse gases and rising sea levels.

Speaking at a gathering of Pacific Island regional leaders on Tuesday in Tonga's capital Nuku'alofa, he warned there was "no lifeboat to take us back to safety". "This is a crazy situation: Rising seas are a crisis entirely of humanity's making. A crisis that will soon swell to an almost unimaginable scale," he said. "The reason is clear: Greenhouse gases - overwhelmingly generated by burning fossil fuels - are cooking our planet. And the sea is taking the heat - literally."

Nuku'alofa is hosting more than 1,000 international delegates for the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders Meeting until August 30. Climate change and its impact on the Pacific's low-lying communities is high on the agenda at the gathering of regional officials, who lead some of the world's most imperilled countries. Guterres, who last attended the Leaders

Meeting in 2019, warned that with about 90 percent of people living within 5km (3 miles) of the coast, and an average elevation of just one to 1-2 metres (3.2-6.5 ft) above sea level, the "Pacific islands are uniquely exposed". He is also expected to visit Samoa while he is in the Pacific.

"Without drastic cuts to emissions, the Pacific Islands can expect at least 15 centimetres [6 inches] of additional sea level rise by mid-century, and more than 30 days per year of coastal flooding in some places," he said. "But if we save the Pacific, we also save ourselves."

The world must act and answer the SOS before it is too late." Among the Pacific Islands' most ambitious climate change mitigation efforts is the Pacific Resilience Facility. The "Pacific-owned and led" financial institution, which will support local communities to become more resilient to climate change, is scheduled to start operations in 2025 but is facing a severe shortfall in funding from international donors. Guterres repeated his long-standing appeal to "the biggest emitters", the Group of 20 (G20) nations, to financially support the

world's most climate-vulnerable countries. "We need a surge in funds to deal with surging seas," he said.

Guterres's comments came as two UN agencies published stark reports warning of worsening sea level rises. A World Meteorological Organization report on rising sea levels in the Pacific and a UN Climate Action Team report on surging seas in a warming world both "throw the situation into sharp relief", Guterres said.

The Climate Action Team report found that sea levels in Nuku'alofa had risen 21 centimetres (8.3 inches) between 1990 and 2020, more than twice the global average of 10 centimetres (3.9 inches). "Today's reports confirm that relative sea levels in the Southwestern Pacific have risen even more than the global average - in some locations, by more than double the global increase in the past 30 years," Guterres said. The UN General Assembly is set to hold a special session to discuss the existential threat posed by rising sea levels on September 25. — Aljazeera

## Mexico's police come under fire from drug cartels

TANGAMANDAPIO (AP): Mexico's traditional and Indigenous community police forces are coming under increasingly deadly fire from drug cartels, authorities said. Adrián López, the chief prosecutor in the western state of Michoacan, confirmed that gunmen linked to drug cartels shot to death seven members of the community police force in the town of Coahuayana over the weekend.

The community guards were killed just days after seven members of an Indigenous community police force were kidnapped, apparently by cartel gunmen, and put through "hell" in another Michoacan town before they were freed. In the face of cartel turf wars that have emptied towns in the Mexican countryside, many places have turned to "community police," who are relatively untrained members of the town who volunteer or are paid a small stipend to protect residents.

More common in Indigenous towns - which have centuries of experience in organizing and defending themselves - the community police are a more established and trusted force than the ephemeral "self defense" squads that flourished in Michoacan between 2013 and 2014 to fight the cartels but were quickly corrupted. But while they enjoy the trust of their fellow townspeople, the community guards can't match the firepower of the cartels that want their land.

López, the state prosecutor, said the attack in Coahuayana was related to battles by drug cartels to control the coastal area, a main route for landing seaborne shipments of cocaine. "This all involves the decision of the members of criminal groups to gain territory and carry out illegal activities, mainly drug smuggling," he said. Coahuayana (koh-why-YAH-nah), which sits on the Pacific coast near the neighboring state of Colima, is particularly attractive for the cartels; go-fast boats transporting cocaine from South America have a straight route here, but often dump floating bales of cocaine at sea with location devices, to be picked up and taken ashore.

"The area on the coast of Michoacan and Colima has been ideal for picking up packages of cocaine from South America," López said. "There have been innumerable seizures of packages of cocaine by the Navy." While nobody in Coahuayana would say which gang carried out the killings, suspicion immediately turned to the Jalisco New Generation cartel, which has long been active in the region.

The cartel is also suspected of being responsible for the kidnapping of seven community guards - six men and one woman - who were abducted last Tuesday and released in the Purepecha Indigenous township of Tangamandapio (tahn-gah-man-DAH-pee-oh) Michoacan.

KYIV (BBC): It was late at night on 7 May 2022 when a Russian missile hit a museum that was once home to Ukraine's 18th-Century poet and philosopher Hryhory Skovoroda. "The roof was completely blown off, the walls are burnt and only Skovoroda's statue survived. It's a miracle that it did," says Nastya Ishchenko, deputy director of the museum in the Kharkiv region of north-eastern Ukraine.

It is one of 432 cultural sites damaged in Ukraine since the start of the full-scale invasion on 24 February 2022, according to the UN's cultural organisation Unesco. The destruction of so much of their culture has not just pushed Ukrainians farther away from the Russian-dominated cultural space they shared for decades under Soviet rule. It has also awakened a hunger for their own culture, described by one daily newspaper as a "Ukrainian cultural boom".

In total, 139 religious sites have been hit, 214 buildings of historical or artistic interest, 31 museums, 32 monuments, 15 libraries and one archive. The management at the Hryhoriy Skovoroda Museum knew it might come under attack and most of its valuable artefacts had been evacuated to a safer location. There was no other potential target near the museum, so Ukrainians believe it was bombed simply because of his cultural importance. Ukraine's museums in areas occupied by Russia have faced a very different problem. The full extent of plunder by Russian troops came to light in the final days of the occupation of the southern city of Kherson.

Entire truckloads of artworks and historical artefacts were removed by Russians - ostensibly, for "safekeeping". The Kherson Art Museum says it has identified 120 artworks taken to Crimea - another occupied area of Ukraine. But the total number of artefacts the museum has lost is more than 10,000. In some museums in occupied parts of Ukraine, Russians removed exhibits for propaganda purposes. For example, an exhibition on Ukraine's modern history in

## Heritage under attack

# Ukrainians revive interest in culture



Berdiansk has been replaced with one glorifying the "special military operation" - the Kremlin's official name for the war against Ukraine. Last May, another aspect of modern Ukrainian culture came under attack with the destruction of the Faktor Druk printing house in Kharkiv, used by almost all Ukrainian book publishers.

Not every cultural building has been hit on purpose, although the attack on Faktor Druk, which killed seven people and destroyed 50,000 books, was widely seen as a targeted strike. Other buildings have been hit because of their proximity to other buildings or to make them unusable for Ukrainian officials or troops. One publisher described the destruction of books at Faktor Druk as leading to a decline in morale in society. And the disappearance of numerous cultural sites in Ukraine has placed its very social fabric under strain. They are vital for the cohesion and resilience of communities at a time of war, says the head of Unesco's desk in Ukraine, Chiara Dezzi Bardschi. "What I've seen is communities really asking for culture and their cultural centres. They recognise its importance for the community and they need it for their resilience. Culture is very important for healing trauma," she tells the BBC.

Ukraine's acting culture minister, Rostyslav Karandeyev, believes that

Russia is deliberately targeting the country's spiritual and historical symbols: "Not just military targets and critical infrastructure, but also anything that allows Ukrainians to speak of their own identity and statehood." As part of this policy, Russian forces have been removing and destroying Ukrainian books from schools and libraries in occupied areas, he told the BBC. But amid all the gloom, Nastya Ishchenko from the Skovoroda museum believes Ukrainians have also started to value more what is under threat from the Russian invasion. "It's like in a relationship: to understand what you've lost, it has to be taken away," she says. "We're uniting not around aggression or anger, but around cultural values which each of us will hand down to future generations. It gives us a ray of light." Den newspaper describes how bands, performers and writers are appearing, with new plays premiered and theatres full. Ukraine's numerous volunteers have not just provided vital provisions and supplies of clothing and medicines, but musical instruments too. "Children said that music helped them emotionally, it took them to a place where they don't hear bombs or sirens. It helps them enormously," UK-based musician Irina Gould told the BBC's podcast Ukraineast. "For them it's the best medicine, just to get away from reality and live in a world of beauty and happiness."

## Diseases spread in Gaza as sewage contaminates camps and coast

GAZA (BBC): The waters on parts of Gaza's Mediterranean coastline have started turning brown as health experts warn of the spread of open sewage and diseases across the territory. Satellite images, analysed by BBC Arabic, show what appears to be a large discharge of sewage spill off the coast of Deir al-Balah.

A local official told BBC Arabic displaced people in nearby camps are sending their sewage straight to sea. "It is because of the increase in the number of displaced people and many are connecting their own pipes to the rainwater drainage system," said Abu Yazan Ismael Sarsour, head of the Deir al-Balah emergency committee. Wim Zwijnenburg, an environmental expert from the Pax for Peace organisation, confirmed that wastewater appeared to be heading into the sea from nearby crowded camps, after examining the satellite pictures.

The sewage discharge in the images, captured on 2 August, covered an area of over 2 sq km (0.8 sq miles). Satellite images show the discharge first started appearing in June and that it grew steadily over the next two months. It is not clear if the coastal pollution is still growing as more recent satellite image are not available. Intensive Israeli bombardment has led to the collapse of Gaza's waste water management infrastructure, a UN environmental report concluded in June. The Israeli defence ministry body overseeing policy for the Palestinian territories, Cogat, told BBC

Arabic a dedicated humanitarian task-force had taken action to improve the sewage system in Gaza.

In recent months, Cogat co-ordinated the restoration of water wells and desalination facilities, as well as the extension of water pipes in Gaza, according to its statement. The BBC is not able to independently verify specific improvements to Gaza's sewage infrastructure. Israel, alongside Egypt, does not allow independent journalists into Gaza except on controlled and brief visits with the Israeli military. Health experts, though, are sounding the alarm about the spread of water-borne diseases, after a 10-month-old baby was partially paralysed after contracting polio - the first registered case in Gaza for 25 years.

UN and World Health Organization (WHO) officials also called for a two one-week ceasefires so they can vaccinate 600,000 children in Gaza. But observers say the delivery of vaccines would probably hit the same barriers affecting the flow of other humanitarian aid, making distribution slow and extremely difficult. The destruction of Gaza's health care system will also make any vaccination programme an enormous challenge. In a response to BBC Arabic, Cogat insisted there were no restrictions on medical aid.

In a later social media statement, Cogat said "an additional 60,000 polio vaccines will be delivered to vaccinate over one million children" in the coming weeks.

The charity Oxfam told BBC Arabic a quarter of Gaza's population had already become ill because of water-borne diseases. "We are seeing a catastrophic health crisis unfolding in front of our eyes," said Lama Abdul Samad, a water and sanitation expert at Oxfam. "Polio is a waterborne disease and it is directly linked to the sanitation situation." "The sanitation infrastructure has been damaged severely to the point that it is flooding the streets and the neighbourhoods, and people are basically living adjacent to puddles of sewage," she added. New photos and satellite images analysed by BBC Arabic illustrate how the problem of untreated sewage in Gaza has been getting steadily worse. The Sheikh Radwan Lagoon in northern Gaza, which was once a source of clean rainwater, appears to be overflowing with dirty water.

The lagoon has clearly been contaminated by raw sewage, Ms Abdul Samad said after assessing the pictures. Several Palestinians living nearby have complained to BBC Arabic's Gaza Lifeline emergency radio service of the overflowing waste water, stench and rodents coming out of the lagoon. "Raw sewage is running into our property because of the overflowing Sheikh Radwan Lagoon," Ibrahim Ramzi said. Meanwhile, Ghada al-Haddad, an aid worker in central Gaza, sent BBC Arabic a video from a makeshift camp where sewage had built up into a pond next to displaced people.

## Japan says China violates its airspace

TOKYO: Japan has said the violation of its airspace by a Chinese military spy plane was "utterly unacceptable", a day after the country scrambled jets and summoned a Chinese embassy official in Tokyo in protest.

Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday, Chief Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said the airspace breach - the first by a military aircraft - was "not only a sovereignty violation of Japan's sovereignty but it also threatens our security". Japan's military said that a Chinese Y-9 reconnaissance plane had been detected at 11.29am (02:29 GMT) circling above the Danjo Islands off the southwestern coast of Japan's main southern island of Kyushu for two minutes, and fighter jets had been scrambled to warn

the Chinese plane to leave the airspace.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs later said that it had summoned acting Chinese Ambassador Shi Yong to lodge a strong protest over the airspace violation, and demand China take preventive steps to avoid such incidents. There was no comment from the embassy on the incident. There were no questions on the incursion at foreign affairs ministry press conference. Hayashi said on Tuesday that Tokyo was continuing to monitor Chinese military activity near Japan and was fully prepared for any airspace violation.

According to Japan's military, it scrambled jets nearly 669 times between April 2023 and March 2024, about 70 percent of the time against Chinese military aircraft, although

that did not include airspace violations. Japanese defence officials are increasingly concerned about military cooperation between the Chinese and Russian air forces as well as China's increasingly assertive activity around Japanese waters and airspace. The two countries are involved in a long-running dispute over the Senkaku islands, known in China as the Diaoyu islands.

The uninhabited chain of islands and rocks lies about 190 nautical miles (352km) southwest of Okinawa, and have been controlled by Japan since 1895. China is also involved in disputes over sovereignty in the South China Sea where it has been increasingly assertive in pressing its expansive claim. — Aljazeera

## French in Russia on trial next week

MOSCOW (AP): The trial of a French citizen arrested in Russia on charges of unlawfully collecting information on military issues has been scheduled to begin next week, court officials said. The first hearing in the trial of Laurent Vinatier has been scheduled for Sept. 3, officials said. If convicted, Vinatier faces up to five years in prison.

Vinatier was arrested in the Russian capital in June as tensions flared between Moscow and Paris following French President Emmanuel

Macron's comments about the possibility of deploying French troops in Ukraine. Russian authorities accused Vinatier of failing to register as a "foreign agent" while collecting information about Russia's "military and military-technical activities" that could be used to the detriment of the country's security.

According to Russian news agencies, he has admitted guilt. Vinatier is an adviser with the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue, a Switzerland-based non-

governmental organization. The NGO in June said it was doing "everything possible to assist" him. The charges against Vinatier relate to a law that requires anyone collecting information on military issues to register with authorities as a foreign agent.

Human rights activists have criticized the law and other recent legislation as part of a Kremlin crackdown on independent media and political activists intended to stifle criticism of its actions in Ukraine.

# In Chicago's Little Palestine, locals protest and mourn amid Gaza war

CHICAGO: Standing outside his local mosque in suburban Chicago, Robhi Gharallah said Israel's war in Gaza is on everyone's mind in his neighbourhood. "We're praying. We're protesting. We're raising funds. We're doing all we can for Gaza," he told Al Jazeera. But Gharallah said there is one action he and his neighbours are uncertain about - and that is how to vote in the upcoming presidential election.

Gharallah lives in Bridgeview, Illinois, an area informally known as Chicago's Little Palestine. It sits in Cook County, home to an estimated 22,518 Palestinian Americans - one of the largest Palestinian communities in the United States. Sporting a cap with the colours of the Palestinian flag - red, white, green and black - Gharallah underscored that the Palestinian diaspora is a prominent presence in Chicago's cultural and business sectors.

But he said Palestinian Americans are facing a dilemma in the next election, with both the Republican candidate Donald Trump and his Democratic rival Kamala Harris showing staunch support for Israel. "There is no good in Ammar nor Amira," Gharallah said, using male and female names in Arabic to represent Trump and Harris. "We are American citizens, and we want to vote, but we don't know for whom. Whether you vote for this one or this one, it's the same thing. And if you don't vote, it's like you don't exist [politically]." Bridgeview was in the national spotlight this month, as the Democratic National Convention arrived in

Chicago. Just a day before Gharallah spoke to Al Jazeera, Harris appeared on stage at Chicago's United Center - only 24km (15 miles) away from Bridgeview - to accept the Democratic Party's nomination for the presidency. In her acceptance speech, she pledged to continue arming Israel. For Chicago-area Palestinians confronting the devastating war in their homeland, the convention served as an opportunity to bring awareness to their cause.

But residents and community advocates told Al Jazeera that the event was also a bitter reminder that the Palestinian identity continues to be vilified and pushed to the political margins, including by Democrats who claim to value inclusivity. They pointed to the Harris campaign's refusal to feature a Palestinian American speaker on the main stage of the convention. That exclusion, they said, added insult to injury, given the size of Chicago's Palestinian community. Jinan Chehade, 26, decried "the moral apathy and dissociation from the reality" she saw as Democrats gathered to celebrate Harris, while US bombs dropped on Palestinian civilians.

"That's why it's so important for us to bring people together and remind them that this is not normal, that we're not going to be filtered or drowned out," Chehade told Al Jazeera, as she sat at a Bridgeview cafe with a mural depicting the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. In Bridgeview, a town of 17,000 people, Palestinian symbols are almost never out of sight. At the cafe,

there were several paintings related to the war, including depictions of Palestinian victims such as Hind Rajab, the six-year-old girl who was stranded in her family's car and gunned down by Israeli tank fire before rescuers were able to reach her.

At the front counter, a map of historic Palestine - drawn with coffee beans - was arranged over the word "Palestine" spelled out in Arabic. Chehade, a lawyer and protest organiser, said that, while Chicago-area Palestinians have always had a strong sense of identity, the community has seen a "transformation" over the past 10 months, with pro-Palestinian activism reaching new heights.

"The thing about Palestinians, the first thing you'll know about them is they are Palestinian especially here because everybody is very proud to be representing Little Palestine," she told Al Jazeera. Like much of the suburban US, Bridgeview has broad stretches of urban sprawl: low-rise buildings and rows of shops connected and separated by multi-lane roads. But in Bridgeview's Little Palestine area, many of the businesses - restaurants, cafes, barbershops, jewellery stores and clothing boutiques - are distinguished by Arabic signs and Palestinian flags in their windows.

During the Democratic convention, some storefronts featured posters promoting the protests outside the United Center. "We will not surrender," read a mural above a store that sells hijabs and abayas, next to a bakery that raised

funds for Gaza by selling pins that say "Free Palestine". An electronic billboard outside a barbecue spot cycled through several slides: one calling for a ceasefire in Gaza and another showing a Palestinian flag in between advertisements for job openings. Motorists especially put their Palestinian identity on display in their vehicles, with flags, keffiyeh-patterned headrest covers, watermelon air fresheners and bumper stickers calling for an end to the occupation of Palestine. For many of the residents who spoke to Al Jazeera, being Palestinian is not just about the keffiyeh and merchandise.

They explained that it is an inherently political state of existence, one that requires them to constantly humanise and highlight the plight of Palestinians under occupation and bombardment in the Middle East. Sereen Atieh, a 20-year-old Palestinian American immigrant, said while Little Palestine feels like home, she has struggled with a deep sense of sadness since the start of the war on Gaza.

So she has turned to activism on her college campus. "All I can think about is my brothers and sisters being killed in Palestine," Atieh, draped in a Palestinian flag, told Al Jazeera at a protest outside the Democratic convention. "I've been trying to do everything I can to help people understand that this is not just a conflict but a genocide, where Israel is trying to remove the Palestinian identity." In Bridgeview, Mohammad Numan, who works in digital media and advertising, said people

in the community are trying to do everything they can to stand with their brethren in Palestine. "These are humans. They have dreams. They want to live. So we are with them until the last moment," Numan told Al Jazeera. When asked about Harris's support for Israel, Numan said Palestinian Americans will not support any politician who does not support Palestinian human rights. "We have a strong community. We stand together at every turn," he told Al Jazeera.

Several others vowed not to vote for Harris, but Illinois remains a solidly Democratic state. That means the Palestinian diaspora in Chicago does not have the same electoral sway as their fellow Arab Americans in Michigan, a key swing state, where even a small minority of voters can decide the outcome of the vote.

But what they lack in swing-state leverage, Chicago's Palestinian Americans make up for with advocacy and activism. Locals have led weekly protests for Gaza since the start of the war, and they organised demonstrations every day of the convention. While the Palestinian American community is concentrated in Bridgeview, they are prominent across the entire Chicago area, which is home to leading Palestinian rights organisations, including American Muslims for Palestine, the US Palestinian Community Network and Palestine Legal. Chicago is cosmopolitan and liberal, but that has not spared it the hate and violence that Palestinian Americans - and Arabs and

Muslims more broadly - have experienced since the outbreak of the war.

In October, six-year-old Wade Al-Fayoume was stabbed 26 times in a suspected hate crime in the Chicago area. The alleged perpetrator, a neighbour, shouted, "You Muslims must die", as he attacked Al-Fayoume, according to the boy's mother. His funeral was held at the Mosque Foundation in Bridgeview. Nouha Boundaoui, a 32-year-old local activist of Algerian descent, said she was fearful in the first few weeks of the war, especially as a Muslim woman who wears a hijab in public. "I can't speak for the whole community, but personally, I think being at the protests, organising and seeing just how much people have been activated in the last 10 months has made me feel safer," she told Al Jazeera.

Other communities have shown solidarity with the Palestinian Americans in Chicago. Nader Ihmoud, the editor-in-chief of the Chicago-based Palestine in America magazine, said Israeli atrocities in Gaza have pushed more Americans to be sympathetic to Palestinians and learn more about the issue. Still, with political rhetoric heating up ahead of the elections, anxiety persists in Chicago, and Ihmoud says the city's visibility as a home for the Palestinian diaspora makes it vulnerable to violence. "Freaks come out at night," Ihmoud told Al Jazeera. "And right now, these next months, I consider them political darkness." — Aljazeera

**The Frontier Post**

Rehmat Shah Afridi (Late)

Founder

**Bilal Shah Afridi**

Chief Executive

**Jalil Afridi**

Managing Editor

Printed and published by Mahmood Afridi at Moraka's Printers, 27 Abdara Road, University Town, Peshawar.

Peshawar Office: 091-5700095, 0300- 9009001

Peshawar Fax: 091-5703687, Post Box No. 573

E-mail: fppeshawar@thefrontierpost.com

Lahore Office: 0335-4026284

Email: fplahore@thefrontierpost.com

Islamabad Office: 0321-5066253

Email: mahmoodafridi@thefrontierpost.com

Karachi Office: 021-32213411, 0300-8340907

Email: fpkarachi@thefrontierpost.com

USA and Canada Toll Free Number 1-800-5905747

## Free-trade deals are the surest way to global prosperity

**I**N an era of increasing globalisation, it is worth considering that as far back as 1860 some countries were already experimenting with free-trade agreements to increase prosperity. In January that year, the Cobden-Chevalier Treaty between France and the UK axed tariffs on a range of goods; the idea was so popular that it ushered in what American academic and diplomat Stephen Krasner called a "golden age of free trade" in Europe.

Fast forward to the present day, and news that the UAE's non-oil foreign trade hit a record Dh1.4 trillion (\$381.5 billion) in the first six months of 2024 shows how a series of free-trade deals the Emirates struck with international partners in recent years is bearing fruit. According to Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Vice President and Ruler of Dubai, the figures reveal that exports in six months have equalled what the UAE used to export in an entire year before the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the past couple of years, the UAE has signed a series of comprehensive economic partnership agreements, or Cepas, with fast-growing economies in Asia, the Middle East and Africa; these have helped to boost volumes of non-oil foreign trade. In fact, the Emirates' Cepas programme is expected to grow the country's exports by 33 per cent and contribute more than Dh153 billion to gross domestic product by 2031. However, this was not an overnight success – considerable planning and negotiating has gone into striking these deals. They are also a result of a wider strategy to strengthen ties.

Although the UAE signed its first Cepas relatively recently – with India in February 2022 – the country's Cepas approach has long been embedded in strategic frameworks such as Projects of the 50, its programme for sustainable development. Nor are these agreements the country's first foray into free-trade initiatives; in 2007, the UAE became a signatory to the World Trade Organisation's Information Technology Agreement, a treaty signed by 78 states that seeks to eliminate tariffs on IT products.

As the UAE continues to complete deals to remove or reduce tariffs and customs duties, improve market access and set up dispute resolution mechanisms, a number of economies are moving in a worrying direction. Under presidents Donald Trump and Joe Biden, the US has taken strong action against what it perceives as trade threats to its economy, such as May's introduction of tariffs on more than a dozen Chinese imports, including 100 per cent duties on electric vehicles from China.

There are reasons why some countries are currently wary of trade liberalisation or integrating their economy with foreign partners. The financial crisis of 2008 and the Covid pandemic both fuelled suspicion of globalisation and the perceived weaknesses of integrated supply chains. Acute shocks, such as the Houthi attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea, can also make countries more insular in their trade politics. However, this comes at a cost. In April, the International Monetary Fund warned policymakers that they should avoid protectionist measures "as these are likely to trigger retaliation from trading partners and can generate welfare losses".

In fact, it is trade liberalisation – such as that seen with Cepas deals – that offers the most rewards. In 2017, the World Bank suggested that the rapid globalisation seen since the 1990s grew average incomes by 24 per cent globally, leading the global poverty headcount ratio to fall from 35 per cent to 10.7 per cent. In April, the WTO said increased international trade between 1995 and 2022 "has coincided with a sharp reduction in global poverty".

The benefits that come with responsible free trade are clear, and so more Cepas are in the works. These will drive growth, further diversify the economy and boost the UAE's domestic sector.

Local manufacturing is a good example of this; earlier it was announced that the UAE's industrial sector would receive an additional \$6.3 billion in funding, backed by major companies. For these companies to export profitably, unfettered access to foreign markets will be vital.

Of course, free trade requires much planning and balancing of relations. But if managed correctly, the kind of economic and political ties forged by such Cepas deals can generate more prosperity for all.

**Important Notice**

The Frontier Post will not be responsible for the comments in the articles and letters. The Frontier Post requests the writers of articles and letters to please make sure that they write their email addresses and mention the names of the cities, towns, districts or tehsil of their residences at the bottom of their articles and letters.



## Knesset's rejection of Palestinian state further alienates Israel's allies

Yossi Mekelberg

**I**N an utterly unnecessary act of defiance, Israel's parliament, the Knesset, last month voted by a decisive majority to reject the establishment of a Palestinian state and, with it, the notion of a two-state solution to the more than century-long Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It was an empty gesture that further damaged Israel's already badly dented international reputation, which has suffered immensely as a result of the way it is conducting its war in Gaza and its delaying tactics over reaching a ceasefire deal there, as well as for its moves to expand the settlement policy while turning a blind eye to settler violence against Palestinians.

What was the purpose of tabling and passing a resolution that states that "the establishment of a Palestinian state in the heart of the Land of Israel would constitute an existential threat to the State of Israel and its citizens, perpetuate the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and destabilize the region?" Beyond defying those in Israel and across the world who support Palestinian statehood, it was a populist move to push into a corner the centrist and more left-wing parties, but even more the parties that represent the Palestinian citizens of Israel, in what amounts to some sort of distorted loyalty test in the midst of a war.

Those far-right coalition members who tabled the resolution equated support for the establishment of a Palestinian state with treason or treachery, which is extremely problematic, especially at a time of war. The absurdity of this Knesset resolution, passed by 68 votes to nine, is that it altogether rejects the establishment of a Palestinian state, even as part of a negotiated settlement with Israel, and hence

enshrines a situation of perpetual conflict — and not only with the Palestinians.

For the Likud party and its coalition partners, their explicit rejection of the idea of a Palestinian state came as no surprise, but for a party such as Benny Gantz's National Unity, which fashions itself as an alternative to Likud, it raises the question: In what sense is it a genuine alternative to the current government? Moreover, and even more shamefully, opposition leader Yair Lapid's center-left Yesh Atid party abstained on the vote, even though only two years ago, during his short stint as prime minister, he stated from the podium of the UN General Assembly: "An agreement with the Palestinians, based on two states for two peoples, is the right thing for Israel's security, for Israel's economy and for the future of our children."

Even the more left-leaning Labor Party followed suit by abstaining, thereby choosing not to make a stand in favor of the kind of peace agreement that its own leaders once aspired to in the Oslo Accords. The only groups to oppose the resolution were lawmakers mainly representing the Palestinian citizens of Israel, namely the Ra'am and Hadash-Ta'al parties.

The right, including the ultra-Orthodox parties, no longer surprise anyone and they did not disappoint their supporters with their opposition to a historic compromise with the Palestinians that would lead to peace between the two peoples. That is what we have learned to expect of them and that is who they are.

However, we are entitled to feel deeply let down by Israel's centrist parties and those who speak in the name of peace and liberal progressive ideas. While in the midst of the worst crisis

in the nation's history, they have spinelessly refused to present a vision that could free their country from the prison of never-ending war and guide it toward a different future that presents some hope.

Israeli society and politics have undeniably changed since the horrendous events of Oct. 7, 2023, and the collective trauma inflicted by the atrocities of Hamas will linger on for a long time, leaving little room for the revival of a peace camp that calls for a two-state solution as the best way to advance security for all and as a moral imperative. But what nobody needed at this time of ongoing bloodshed and destruction was an unnecessary, extremely damaging and provocative act by the Israeli legislature.

Furthermore, more than ever, Israel at this juncture desperately needs the support of its friends and allies, yet instead it constantly alienates them as it tells them, and the rest of the world, that it overwhelmingly opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state. In which case, the only conclusion — that is also based on what is taking place on the ground in the West Bank and in Gaza and on the statements of Israeli officials — is that Israel is on the march toward annexation of at least the West Bank.

This Knesset resolution, which passed with hardly any objections and none at all from the Zionist parties, is as good as declaring that the objective of the Israeli state is a one-state solution under its complete control. And with the Palestinians living there, especially those in the Occupied Territories, deprived of the same political, human and social rights bestowed on the Jewish population. How, then, can Israel possibly fend off the many accu-

sations of apartheid already being leveled at it?

Ironically, there is a huge discrepancy between politicians from the Zionist parties and the people who vote for them. Even in the immediate aftermath of Oct. 7, more than a third of the Jewish population, according to the Israel Democracy Institute, supported peace based on a two-state solution. And, early this year, a survey commissioned by the Geneva Initiative presented the question: "If an agreement was signed with US support that included: return of the hostages, agreement to establish in the future a nonmilitarized Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, and total normalization between Israel and Saudi Arabia, would you support or oppose this agreement?" More than 51 percent of those asked replied in the affirmative. In other words, many Israelis have not closed the door on this option and they see the potential for peace, security and regional integration should such a solution come to fruition.

For now, the most pressing issue is to reach a ceasefire in Gaza that would gradually see the end of the killings and devastation of the last 10-plus months and the return of the hostages. Nevertheless, a ceasefire could and should be only a first step toward an eventual and comprehensive peace between the Israelis and Palestinians that ensures everyone's security and rights, while the reconstruction of Gaza is established as a top priority, as is rebuilding relations between the two peoples.

In order to achieve this, I have yet to see a better way forward than the two-state solution. However, those who stood against it in the Knesset or even cowardly avoided the vote have been severely restricted in an effort to encourage the refugees to return to

## Arakan Army's wrath a new threat to the Rohingya

Dr. Azeem Ibrahim

**T**HE Rohingya people, one of the world's most persecuted minorities, are once again being forced to flee their homes in Myanmar's Rakhine state. This time, however, the threat is not only from Myanmar's military, but also from armed rebels within their own homeland. As the Arakan Army, an ethnic Rakhine insurgent group, tightens its grip on the state, the Rohingya are caught in the crossfire, facing renewed violence, displacement and a desperate struggle for survival.

Having seized control of much of Rakhine state from the military, the Arakan Army has turned its wrath on the Rohingya. Reports from the region are harrowing: villages shelled, homes burned and men rounded up in what appears to be a systematic campaign of violence and intimidation.

The Arakan Army, which claims to be fighting for greater autonomy for the Rakhine people, has accused the Rohingya of collaborating with the Myanmar military, using this as a pretext for its brutal actions. But the Rohingya have been conscripted by force into the military's ranks, coerced into fighting against the Arakan Army. In this deadly conflict, the Rohingya are not combatants but pawns, manipulated by both sides and left with little choice but to flee.

With their homes destroyed and their lives in danger, thousands of Rohingya have taken to the seas in search of safety. These dangerous boat journeys are a last resort, a desperate attempt to escape the violence in Myanmar. But for many, the journey ends in tragedy. Overcrowded and ill-equipped boats capsize, claiming the lives of men, women and children who had hoped to find refuge across the border.

For those who do manage to reach Bangladesh, the reception has been far from welcoming. The country, already overwhelmed by the influx of nearly a million Rohingya refugees who fled the 2017 massacres, is struggling to cope with the new arrivals.

Bangladesh's security forces, overstretched after weeks of unrest that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, have turned back many boats, leaving the refugees to face the perilous return journey to Myanmar.

The new interim government in Bangladesh, led by Mohammed Yunus, has pledged to continue supporting the refugees. However, even Yunus, a Nobel laureate known for his humanitarian efforts, will find it politically difficult to absorb any additional refugees, especially as Bangladesh grapples with its own political uncertainty. The country is in the midst of a volatile transition, with widespread unrest and a deeply divided populace. The arrival of more Rohingya refugees could exacerbate these tensions, making it even harder for the government to provide adequate support.

Bangladesh has already imposed harsh measures on the Rohingya refugees, most of whom arrived after the brutal military crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. Work, travel and education have been severely restricted in an effort to encourage the refugees to return to

Myanmar. However, repeated attempts at repatriation have failed due to the lack of guarantees for their safety. The ongoing conflict between the Arakan Army and the military in Rakhine state has only made the prospect of return even more dangerous.

The Rohingya crisis is not limited to Myanmar and Bangladesh. As the violence in Rakhine state escalates, Rohingya refugees are also likely to seek safety in other regional countries. Nations such as Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, which have previously received waves of Rohingya refugees, may soon find themselves facing a new influx. The burden of this crisis is one that must be shared by the region as a whole, rather than borne by Bangladesh alone.

Amid this escalating crisis, the silence of Myanmar's national unity government is deafening. This coalition, which represents the ousted civilian government and seeks international recognition as the legitimate government of Myanmar, has largely remained silent on the attacks against the Rohingya by the Arakan Army. This is particularly troubling given its stated commitment to a federal, democratic Myanmar that respects the rights of all its people.

The national unity government's primary focus has been on gaining recognition from regional and international bodies, particularly the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, as the legitimate government-in-exile. However, this should not come at the cost of turning a blind eye to the atrocities being committed against the Rohingya. ASEAN's member states and other nations must use their influence to ensure that the national unity government publicly denounces the Arakan Army's violence and takes steps to protect the Rohingya.

The international community must act swiftly to address the Rohingya crisis, which is rapidly spiraling out of control. Diplomatic pressure should be exerted on both the Arakan Army and the Myanmar military to cease their attacks on civilians, including the Rohingya.

Humanitarian assistance must be increased for those who have fled to Bangladesh and other countries, ensuring that they receive the protection and support they desperately need.

Furthermore, the national unity government must be held accountable for its silence. The international community, including ASEAN, should demand that it uphold its commitment to human rights and speak out against the violence being perpetrated against the Rohingya. Recognition of it as Myanmar's legitimate government should be contingent on its willingness to protect all of Myanmar's people, including the Rohingya.

The Rohingya have suffered for far too long. It is time for the world to stand up for their rights and ensure that they can live in safety and dignity, free from the fear of violence and persecution. The plight of the Rohingya is not just a regional issue, it is a test of our collective humanity. The world must not fail them again.

## Why some people are volunteering to be infected with diseases

Laura Goodwin

**S**CIENTISTS are hoping that access to more than 1.6 million brain scans collected from patients across Scotland could help predict a person's risk of dementia.

A team of 20 researchers from the universities of Edinburgh and Dundee have been given unprecedented permission to view a huge number of anonymous scans gathered from across the Scottish population over a decade.

It is the first time scientists in the UK have had access to such large volumes of valuable data. They will use artificial intelligence (AI) to analyse the scans to see if there are patterns or signs of dementia.

Dementia is characterised by the build-up of

different types of protein in the brain, which damages brain tissue and leads to cognitive decline.

Molecular and cellular changes to the brain usually begin many years before any symptoms occur.

The researchers hope that by studying such a large number of brain scans they can develop tools that will help radiologists with early detection.

The scientists have been given permission by NHS Scotland to use 1.6 million CT and MRI images collected during routine clinical care between 2008 and 2018.

Previous research has been limited by access to much smaller numbers of scans.

The decision to grant permission to study so

many scans was taken by NHS Scotland's Public Benefit and Privacy Panel for Health and Social Care, whose role is to make sure applicants have thought through the public benefit and privacy implications.

All of the scans will be anonymised so researchers know nothing about the patients whose scans they are studying.

A patient being informed they are at risk of developing conditions such as Alzheimer's could help them make changes to slow down progress of the disease.

Former journalist Willy Gilder, who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's three years ago, said: "If you know you're at risk, you can make changes

that are going to improve your brain health."

The 71-year-old, from Edinburgh, said: "Because I was diagnosed early, I know that keeping very mentally active, for example, is going to help me."

"There are also treatments coming down the line for Alzheimer's that are exciting, but they work in the early stages of the disease, which is why early diagnosis is so important."

The latest research project is called ScanDan (Scottish AI in Neuroimaging to predict Dementia and Neurodegenerative Disease) and forms part a global research collaboration called NEURii.

Prof Emanuele Trucco,

an expert in AI and medical imaging at Dundee University, said: "Scotland and the UK are at the forefront of clinical data research."

"This new data set will be of great use to neurological researchers."

Prof Trucco said the scientists did not know exactly what they were looking for but because it was such a large number of brain scans he was confident they would be able to identify patterns associated with dementia.

"So if we see your brain, even if we are not entirely sure what we are seeing in the first instance, I can still predict whether you are at risk," he said.

The team said they would have a better understanding of the technology's potential by

early next year but that it would take another few years to develop a product that could be used in practice.

Prof Will Whiteley, of Edinburgh University's centre for clinical brain sciences is co-leading the project. He said: "Currently treatments for dementia are expensive, scarce and of uncertain value."

"If we can collect data from a large group of people at high risk, who then give their consent to take part in trials, we can really start to develop new treatments."

"Using these images needs a lot of permissions so we have gone through a whole process with Public Health Scotland to take account of all the confidentiality and legal arrangements that are needed to use these."

# Israel awaits Iran’s retaliation following Hezbollah strikes

ISRAEL and Hezbollah traded punches on Sunday in what was described as the most violent exchange between the two sides since Oct. 7. Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah said the early-morning firing of more than 300 Katyusha rockets at northern Israel and the occupied Golan Heights was followed by the launching of several drones that hit carefully chosen and sensitive military targets close to Tel Aviv. In a speech on Sunday evening, he declared that the attack was the party's response to last month's assassination by Israel of top Hezbollah military leader Fouad Shukr in Beirut's southern district.

He indicated that the operation concluded the party's retaliation for the assassination but that it reserved the right to carry out further attacks in the future. Meanwhile, Nasrallah said that Hezbollah will continue to engage Israel in the north within the rules of engagement in support of Palestinians in Gaza, adding that only an end to the war there would stop the hostilities with Israel.

Nasrallah admitted that Israel had carried out what it called a preemptive strike against Hezbollah positions in Lebanon, but he debunked Israeli claims that it had destroyed thousands of missiles or undermined the party's plans to launch a retaliatory attack on Israel.

He revealed that

Hezbollah had chosen the military-run intelligence base of Gilot, a few kilometers north of Tel Aviv, as its primary target, adding that the operation was successful. But Israel has denied that the base was hit and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that the army had intercepted most of the drones and missiles. Israel had earlier said that its response to the Hezbollah threat was also concluded, while Netanyahu said that Sunday's showdown "was not the end of the story." Hamas and Iran praised Hezbollah's attack, with the Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman tweeting: "The Israeli terrorist army has lost its effective offensive and deterrent power and now must defend itself against strategic strikes."

Hezbollah's retaliation for Shukr's assassination took 25 days to happen, but Nasrallah argued that the delay was due to coordination with Iran over the timing and shape of the attack. Iran had vowed a harsh and painful response after the assassination of Ismail Haniyeh, the top Hamas political leader, in Tehran on July 31. Nasrallah added that the delay was also linked to the Gaza ceasefire negotiations, which took place in Doha and Cairo over three days in mid-August.

Israel has been bracing for a strike or series of strikes from Hezbollah, Iran and the Houthis. The US assembled a sizable naval presence in the Eastern Mediterranean to warn all three. Nasrallah alluded to the US military

## Osama Al-Sharif

presence in the region as having influenced the decision to launch its large-scale attack on Israel.

After Sunday's exchange, both sides clearly agreed to avoid a full-scale war. For Nasrallah, the calculated response brought an end to weeks of speculation and fear, not only in Israel but also in Lebanon. By hinting that the attack was successful, Nasrallah managed to take his party out of the current crisis between Israel and the US, on the one hand, and Iran on the other.

While there was relief in Israel that the specter of thousands of Hezbollah missiles raining down on Israeli towns was over, there was frustration that the military and the political leadership had failed to agree on a plan to neutralize Hezbollah's threat once and for all. There was also an admission that the only way to return tens of thousands of Israelis to their homes in northern Israel, other than open war with Lebanon, was to reach a ceasefire deal in Gaza.

To underscore such a point is the fact that Hezbollah resumed firing rockets and launching drones at the north almost immediately on Sunday in response to the Israeli shelling of southern Lebanon and the targeting of resistance officials and fighters in Lebanese cities and towns. But for most Israeli analysts, it was Hezbollah that won Sunday's battle because it still possesses the

capabilities to strike military targets in northern Israel and the Golan Heights, while keeping thousands of displaced Israelis from returning to their homes.

The US chose not to get involved in this latest confrontation. Instead, it announced that it is pushing all parties meeting in Cairo to reach a ceasefire agreement.

This leaves Tehran in an awkward position. With Hezbollah now watching from the sidelines, it is yet to fulfill its threat to punish Israel for Haniyeh's killing.

Late on Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi reiterated his country's planned retaliation for Israel's assassination of Haniyeh, saying it would be "measured."

In a post on X, Araghchi wrote: "Iran reaction to Israeli terrorist attack in Tehran is definitive and will be measured & well calculated." "We do not fear escalation, yet do not seek it — unlike Israel," he added.

The same sentiment was echoed by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, who had declared Iran's right to respond to Israel's violation of its sovereignty. Haniyeh was killed hours after Pezeshkian's inauguration, which put the moderate leader in a tough spot. He had campaigned on the grounds of normalizing ties with the US, but the Israeli attack gave Iranian hard-liners an excuse to push their agenda back to the forefront.

The US does not want an all-out war in the region that

would spiral into geopolitical chaos like that in Ukraine. Also, with fewer than 70 days to go until the highly controversial and crucial US presidential election, a regional war would quickly become a liability for the Democratic Party's candidate, Kamala Harris, who is also Joe Biden's vice president.

Several Arab and European officials have delivered messages from the White House to Iran to avoid a new crisis. But Tehran cannot ignore Israel's direct violation of its sovereignty and the humiliation of having a state guest killed on its territory.

A repeat of April's direct and massive missile and drone strikes on Israel may not take place this time. Instead, Iran will likely retaliate differently and indirectly to avoid a united US-Israeli response.

But the US knows that stopping the war in Gaza will give Tehran and its new president an honorable exit from a mess created by a reckless Netanyahu.

This is why President Biden should exert pressure on Netanyahu to embrace a deal on Gaza. By doing so, he can save tens of thousands of Palestinian lives, the vast majority of whom are innocent and hapless civilians, while defusing a regional war and ending Hezbollah's threat to northern Israel, at least for now. Israeli leaders know this, but Netanyahu remains the only obstacle to any true — and the entire world knows this by now.

# China, Russia can look forward to a brighter future

Olga Migunova

MORE than a month has passed since the end of the third plenary session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, but experts across the world are still discussing and analyzing its outcomes and their likely impacts on the world, the global economy and global governance system in particular.

There is an explanation for that: the third plenary session is usually devoted to the economy, and everything that happens in the Chinese economy today directly affects the macroeconomic situation in the world.

China is a stabilizing factor in global economy

China is a stabilizing factor in the global economy, because its contribution to global economic growth has long been, according to China's Ambassador to Russia Zhang Hanhui, more than 30 percent. The stability of the Chinese economy is vital to the sustainability and progressive development of the global economy, the growth of global trade and cross-border investment. On the other hand, the decline in business activity is a sign of a future slowdown in economic growth.

That's why the world cannot afford to remain indifferent to news from China or not assess its development prospects.

The plenum was one of the main events in China's domestic politics this year, and its decisions can be considered among the most important in the history of the CPC. Many analysts have called it epochal, and I agree with this assessment.

The two other epoch-making third plenums were the third plenum of the 11th CPC Central Committee in 1978 which changed the course of history by launching reform and opening-up in 1978, and the third plenum of the 18th CPC Central Committee in 2013 which consolidated the policy of reform and opening-up.

The third plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee was held at a key historical moment — at a time when the country is advancing Chinese modernization to realize national rejuvenation and is on the road to building a great modern socialist society that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious, and beautiful.

On this journey, however, China has been facing unprecedented challenges due to disruptions in the once strong industry and supply chains both within and outside the country. The disruptions can be attributed to the deterioration in the international landscape, because of increasing geopolitical uncertainties, the trade protectionist policies of and the rising anti-globalization sentiments in some economies.

That's why the resolution of the third plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee was prepared carefully, without unnecessary haste.

The plenum updated the strategy for further deepening reform comprehensively to advance Chinese modernization, and realize the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. The main goals and directions, and timeframes for the comprehensive deepening of reform have been

formulated. In particular, the plenum has decided to complete more than 300 key reform measures by 2029.

The importance the country attaches to these measures can be gauged from the fact that the Party guided by the top leader spent seven months preparing the draft documents after intense discussions, consultations and exchange of opinions. Taking into account the importance of a correct understanding of the resolution of the third plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee, the explanations of the main provisions of the document are devoid of unnecessary discrepancies.

China, Russia cooperation not targeted at third parties

Contrary to what some Western media reports forecast about the outcome of the resolution against the backdrop of the unfolding US sanctions on Chinese entities, China has decided to focus on the domestic market to achieve sustainable growth and, at the same time, continue to deepen cooperation with other economies, seeking new points of common development. As is clear from the plenum's resolution, China will not succumb to the pressure of Western sanctions, nor will it isolate itself from the rest of the world. In fact, China has made it crystal clear that it is committed to advancing high-level opening-up and expanding economic and trade relations with other economies.

China's aim is to develop a more efficient socialist market economic system which focuses on expanding opening-up and promotes peaceful global development. Chinese President Xi Jinping has said for China and the United States, turning their back on each other is not an option, stressing it is unrealistic for one side to remodel the other, and conflict and confrontation have unbearable consequences for both sides.

Meanwhile, Russian-Chinese economic cooperation is opening up new avenues of cooperation and common development, especially because Russia-China relations are based on mutual trust and mutual respect.

The bilateral relationship is based on the principles of equal partnership and mutual benefit. And the partnership got a boost during Chinese Premier Li Qiang's just-concluded visit to Russia, during which both sides promised to strengthen trade and investment while simplifying the visa regime.

Russia is among the leading economies of the world. It is a fairly large market with high purchasing power, and a resource-sufficient economy with high scientific potential. Also, the Russian and Chinese economies are complementary, which means Russia and China are beneficial to each other.

That means the two countries are more likely to find more common development grounds and achieve new breakthroughs in fields such as science and technology including information and telecommunications technology, artificial intelligence, digitalization, quantum computing, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals; and cultural exchanges; education; environmental protection; and low-carbon development.

No wonder the two countries have worked out plans to create new growth drivers by deepening cooperation between their development institutions. And the "creation of a unified national market" and "expansion of institutional openness" in China, as stated in the plenum's resolution, will help implement these plans.

What about the US strategy of imposing sanctions on Chinese entities, including Chinese multinational companies such as Huawei, and punitive tariffs on Chinese products including Chinese-made electric vehicles (EVs), EV batteries and solar photovoltaic products to check China's rise? Or the harsh sanctions against Russian companies and entities to weaken Moscow?

The US' antagonistic policies toward China and Russia will only strengthen the bond between the two neighbors and help accelerate the development of a truly multipolar world order. The US' sanctions and aggressive measures against Chinese and Russian entities may also prompt the two countries to intensify their efforts to establish a permanent, more efficient and hassle-free trade-settlement mechanism over which Western sanctions will have no effect.

Russia and China have been working together to create such a mechanism, using, among other things, the institutional instruments of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS. Such efforts are entirely in line with the global trend of multipolarity and democratization of international relations, which will also enrich the Russia-China comprehensive strategic partnership of coordination for a new era.

Amid all this, both Moscow and Beijing have made it clear that their partnership does not have an anti-West orientation. The two neighbors, unlike the US, are not looking for a "common enemy" and do not want to engage in zero-sum games, in which one country's gain is necessarily another country's loss. Instead, both countries are committed to promoting common development and realizing common prosperity.

More importantly, the heads of our two countries have reached strategic agreements on radically deepening mutual cooperation between our countries. Last year's amount of \$240 billion is far from the limit of annual trade turnover between our countries, already in the first half of this year its growth was noted compared to the previous year.

It is symbolic that the bilateral relations of strategic partnership between our countries are getting a new boost precisely on the 75th year of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Moscow and Beijing.

The updated strategy of comprehensive Chinese modernization adopted at the third plenum of the 20th CPC Central Committee brings more opportunities. Russia and China can thus look forward to a brighter future despite all the tricks of the US-led West, including economic and other unfair and uncalled-for sanctions aimed at restraining China and Russia.

# Divided Libya faces new threat

Hafed Al-Ghwel

LIBYA remains embroiled in a state of political fragility, which is being exacerbated by a new "war" among its litany of belligerents that now seek to undermine key institutions, particularly the central bank and the National Oil Corporation. This new warfare, characterized by insidious maneuvering as an alternative to disastrous kinetic warfare, has emerged as rival factions struggle over control of the nation's vital oil resources and revenues, as well as influence over the institutions that control them.

This struggle signifies more than just a bureaucratic tug of war; it marks the latest phase in a decade-long endeavor by Libya's nonstate armed factions to solidify state capture by drawing the essential pillars of the country's economy into their competing spheres of influence. Thus, control over the central bank and oil company — the equally troubled state-owned enterprise that dominates Libya's oil and gas sector — is now a battlefield where political elites vie for dominance, threatening an already fragile relative peace.

The central bank has long been one of the few institutions to unite Libya's east and west. However, recent moves to oust the bank's governor, Sadiq Al-Kabir, reflect deeper political machinations. The UN-recognized government in western Libya, led by Prime Minister Abdul Hamid Dbeibeh, and the eastern parliament under Khalifa Haftar both see the bank's leadership as crucial to their power.

Analysts predict that ousting Al-Kabir could sever

Libya's access to international markets, further crippling its economy. Such a scenario would have dire ripple effects, paralyzing government salaries and essential services that millions of Libyans depend on. Additionally, manipulating the bank's resources would also allow either faction to keep funneling public funds into sprawling kleptocratic networks, unchecked by a war-weary public and an exasperated international community not keen on a return to open conflict.

Rather, the preferred status quo is the current political climate — an uneasy peace between two equally matched foes that recognize the futility of leveraging violence to achieve their objectives. However, Libya's quarrelsome ruling elites have yet to forgo their ambitions to usurp their rivals by any means possible.

Recently, this has manifested itself in covert strategies aimed at delegitimizing and destabilizing the institutions that manage the country's primary export — oil. Last week's blockade of Libya's largest oil field by Haftar and subsequent militia deployments around the central bank's Tripoli headquarters are eerie reminders of familiar strategies prior to the October 2020 UN-brokered ceasefire, with disruptions at key locations and threats of violence leveraged to drive bargains where discourse fails.

Although self-defeating, such escalations remain relatively effective, illustrating how crucially intertwined oil revenues and financial control are when it comes to Libya's power dynamics. As the mudslinging escalates in

Libya's east-west divide, the country's ruling elites double down on sidelining legal norms for political expediency, ultimately diminishing the linchpin role of key institutions in fostering unity between east and west.

While Libya has avoided large-scale conflict since the October 2020 ceasefire, reduced prospects for national elections have, on the other hand, left power in the hands of the inherently corrupt and deeply compromised. Foreign fighters and entrenched militias continue to erode Libya's infrastructure and economic prospects, while the struggle for control over key institutions foreshadows an intensifying structural destabilization. The ensuing power vacuum is already responsible for the current environment of relentless greed as elites prioritize self-preservation over restoration and national stability.

The result is an increased intensity of episodic troubles of the constant power struggles, militia deployments outside key institutions and, more recently, the kidnapping of the central bank's IT director, which has even prompted dire warnings from abroad. For instance, the US special envoy to Libya has called threats to the central bank's staff and operations unacceptable in a rare show of international concern over events in Libya beyond impromptu reactions to the UN envoy's periodic updates to the Security Council.

Of particular concern is the escalating power of non-state actors over the national treasury and the oil sector, which threatens the nation's

fragile economic structure. This shift toward decentralized control worsens existing divisions and fuels rampant corruption, which has become endemic. Despite numerous interventions and diplomatic efforts, international actors have consistently failed to bridge Libya's internal rifts or deter its entrenched factions from pursuing state capture.

Libya's oil sector, already hobbled by corruption, also finds itself enmeshed in a web of regional exploitation, complicating efforts to establish transparency and accountability in this vital sector, which is responsible for more than 90 percent of Libya's gross domestic product. This convergence of domestic and international interests, manifesting through illicit activities and economic plundering, are glaring examples of Libya's debilitating kleptocracy, as domestic grievances and global complicity deepen the country's crises. It is very unlikely the global community will be as engaged, adequately equipped and highly motivated to address the current standoff beyond finger-wagging and penned rebukes.

However, as the quiet war on Libya's institutions enters a new phase, self-interested middle powers are as emboldened as ever to preserve the quagmire as a means of asserting their own extraterritorial designs. This meddling is further exacerbated by the stunning ineptitude of more influential actors like the US and the EU, which consistently fail to find and speak with one voice concerning Libya's milieu.

Meanwhile, there is grow-

ing momentum at the UN Security Council to unfreeze Libya's assets, which could potentially flood the country with billions of dollars, empowering its sprawling kleptocracy and further entrenching the ruling elite. The ramifications of this influx of cash for Libya's immediate neighborhood would be significant. Unchecked financial resources would likely sponsor spoilers, prompting renewed conflict, humanitarian catastrophes and mass migration.

Unfortunately, credible political and economic reforms will always remain elusive when power rests in the hands of individuals with little incentive to change. The failure to hold national elections has crippled Libyan governance almost permanently. The UN-brokered deal that installed Dbeibeh and created the Presidential Council was meant to unify the country, but political authority remains fragmented, combative and ineffective. The anticipated elections that never took place have since left Libya's institutions, particularly the central bank, caught in the crossfire.

As political elites and militia factions conspire to undermine each other, Libya's ability to effectively manage oil and its ensuing revenues will remain compromised. The failure to foster a robust environment to establish a stable and unified government is now not only jeopardizing Libya's future, it is threatening to destabilize the region, which could spark difficult conversations on mounting a daunting, yet essential, forceful intervention to restore Libya.

## Michael Jansen

reiterated Israel's commitment to the latest American proposal regarding the release of our hostages — taking into account Israel's security needs, which he insists on firmly." No mention was made of a ceasefire which is, for Hamas, Palestinians, and the international community the primary goal of Biden's proposal. Netanyahu is reluctant to commit to a temporary ceasefire until he has assurances that once this ends, Israel can return to its offensive to eliminate Hamas. This is at odds with the Biden plan's provisions and expectation that a temporary ceasefire would lead to a permanent ceasefire and an end to the war.

Hamas also insists that Israel must withdraw from all of Gaza. Netanyahu told families of captives that Israeli troops will not withdraw from the strategic Philadelphi corridor on the Egypt-Gaza border (which Egypt also demands) and the Netzarim corridor which bisects Gaza. In response, an unidentified US official accused Netanyahu of

"making maximalist statements" that are "not constructive to getting a ceasefire deal across the finish line." Netanyahu also seeks to create a wide buffer zone on the Gaza side of the strip's border with Israel. The Israeli army has blown up and bulldozed homes and other structures and cleared farmland for the proposed buffer zone.

In violation of the plan's provision of freedom of movement for Gazans, Netanyahu insists on screening Palestinians seeking to cross from southern to northern Gaza. He argues this would prevent armed Hamas fighter to return to the north and attack Israel. He seeks to veto the release of high-value Palestinian prisoners — like Fatah's Marwan Barghouti and the Popular Front's Ahmad Sadat — and deport those who have killed Israelis. He has rejected the US suggestion that the Palestinian Authority could operate the Rafah-Egypt passenger and goods crossing. Egypt closed the crossing after Israel occupied the Rafah

area in May. This blocked the entry of thousands of humanitarian aid lorries and prevented hundreds of wounded and sick Palestinians from securing life saving care outside Gaza.

Netanyahu has adopted this strategy for personal and political reasons. He is determined to keep himself in office for as long as possible. By claiming he must stay in office to wage the war, he postpones investigations over Israel's failure to predict and pre-empt Hamas' October 7th attack on Israel. He offers the same argument to stall testifying at his ongoing trial for fraud, bribery, and breach of trust which could mean fines and jail time.

Instead of de-escalating and avoiding war, Netanyahu has cultivated escalation by Hamas' allies — Iran, Lebanon's Hizbollah, Yemen's Houthis, and Iraqi Shia militias — by carrying out attacks and assassinations in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran. So far, Israel's antagonists have hesitated to launch major retaliatory strikes in order to avert all-out war. They have

said they could renounce retaliation if there is a ceasefire in Gaza. This is a wise policy because Israel could inflict devastation on Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq, and Syria, particularly since the US has deployed naval vessels and war planes to protect Israel at a time its enemies need protection from Israel.

Netanyahu has long sought to drag its ally the US into a war against Iran on the assumption that the US, the global hyper-power and Israel, the regional superpower, would be victorious.

He began his campaign to promote Iran as the Middle East's main menace at least 15 years ago. During his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2012, he presented a cartoon of a nuclear bomb which he claimed Iran could build if its nuclear programme was allowed to proceed. Netanyahu drew a red line across the bomb to press the international community to intervene and prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb although Iran has repeatedly denied his accusation.

In March 2013, Oman mediated secret talks between the US and Iran on its nuclear programme. These covert contacts launched serious negotiations which produced the 2015 agreement limiting Iran's nuclear programme in exchange for lifting sanctions. This was signed by the five permanent Security Council members — the US, France, Britain, China, and Russia — and Germany. Netanyahu vehemently opposed the agreement which was overturned by his good friend Donald Trump in May 2018. During 2021-23, Netanyahu renewed his rejection when the Biden administration was engaged in negotiations to restore the deal.

While these negotiations failed, Iran's new reformist President Masoud Pezeshkian has called for revival of the nuclear deal, lifting sanctions which have crippled Iran's economy. As he vowed to cultivate good relations with the West, Netanyahu can be expected to do everything possible, including launching a regional war, to prevent this from happening.

# Gaza, peace talks have been repeatedly sabotaged

THE outcome of yesterday's escalation between Hizbollah and Israel has, as usual, been obscured by the fog of war. Israeli claims to have struck 100 Hizbollah rocket launchers ahead of a major missile and drone strike on key intelligence bases in central Israel. Hizbollah argues it hit 11 Israeli military targets in the first phase of its retaliation operation for Israel's assassination of military strategist Fuad Shukr in Beirut last month. Damage assessments were not promptly forthcoming from either side. At this stage in the risky war games they are playing, neither wants full-scale regional conflict.

Independent of the fog of war produced by this flare-up, fog has enveloped Gaza ceasefire talks during which Qatari, Egyptian, US, and Israeli negotiators have been trying to produce a deal to end Israel's 10-month push on war on Gaza. Despite the US involvement as a mediator, Washington has failed to use the leverage it possesses to get Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to

agree to President Joe Biden's May 31st plan. This accusation has been made by Israel's negotiators, Israeli media and US diplomats and commentators.

Between November 24th-30th there was a temporary ceasefire between Hamas and Israel and 105 of Hamas' 253 captives were released in exchange for 240 Palestinian prisoners. While there were negotiations in Qatar for an extension, on December 1st the ceasefire broke down. Hamas accused Israel of refusing to continue the captive/prisoner exchanges, hostilities resumed, Israeli negotiators left Doha and Hamas announced there would be no more releases until the war ended. The US blamed Hamas not Netanyahu for the breakdown. When there were rising international demands for a ceasefire, Biden vetoed three Security Council ceasefire resolutions. If Netanyahu had agreed to any one of them, Biden would have voted in favour.

The situation changed on May 31st when Biden launched his three-phase ceasefire/release plan which

he called an "Israeli plan," perhaps, with the aim of bringing Netanyahu on board. This has not worked. Hamas signed on to the Biden plan on July 2nd but Netanyahu has repeatedly sabotaged negotiations to end the Gaza war and secure the release of the remaining 109 Israeli captives. Israel's negotiators have reported that while in Cairo or Doha they would put forward Netanyahu's terms but when they returned home he would add conditions he knew would not be accepted by Hamas.

Frustrated over Netanyahu's tactics, the Biden administration drafted "bridging proposals" which it presented to Israel and Hamas last week. When US Secretary of State Antony Blinken arrived in Tel Aviv, he said Israel had accepted the proposal, but Hamas had not. Hamas argued the US had merged Israel's demands with Biden's original deal. This was a deliberate distortion of reality, deepening the fog of peacemaking.

Netanyahu's office issued the following statement: "The prime minister



# BF gains support of PBF for SCCI' elections

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Businessman Forum (BF) has gained support from the Pakistan Business Forum for the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry 2024-26.

It is stated during a meeting of Businessman Forum delegation led by former president FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour with office bearers of the Pakistan Business Forum (PBF) here on Tuesday.

On the occasion, from the Pakistan Business Forum (Jamaat e Islami) central senior vice president Bahrullah Khan, Haji Muhammad Aslam, Khyber Bazar President Khalid Mehmood, PBF Peshawar district president Khalid Gul Mohmand, General

Secretary Haji Abid, Haji Saifullah, Naemur Rehman, vice president Bakht Roz Safi, senior vice president Fazal Malik, vice president Pepal Mandi Noorad, vice president Fawara Chowk (Cantt) M Waqas, vice leader Hassan Khan Shinwari, JI General Secretary district Peshawar Hidayatullah, vice president Ahmad Farooq along with other office bearers and members of PBF were present.

Whereas, the delegation of Businessman Forum consisted on Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry senior vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Anjuman e Tajran Lifetime president Haji Muhammad Afzal, Anjuman e Tajran Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chairman SHuakat

Ali Khan, former president of the chamber Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former SCCI' SVP Shahid Hussain, former vice presidents of the chamber Inayat Khan, Javed Akhtar and Nadeem Rauf and others members.

Leadership of the PBF assured the delegation of Businessman Forum for full cooperation and support of SCCI election 2024-26.

The PBF leaders said Businessman Forum had played a vital role in resolution of traders' issues by effectively taking up with relevant authorities. They furthermore said the BF is the only platform which is fully capable to address the business community issues.

Ghazanfar Bilour said the business community were faced with difficulties

in the prevailing circumstances.

He said chamber doors are always open for the business community.

Former FPCCI chief said that the Businessman Forum believes in the selfless service of the business community and today the expression of full confidence in the Businessmen Forum shown by the PBF and other traders organisations and Associations, is a testimony and prove that BF is the only representative platform of the business community which have the potential to solve their problems.

He said that the BF has served the business community for the past 24 years and vowed to continue the service in the future as well with this passion.



PESHAWAR: Former president FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour in a group with PBF (JI) central senior vice president Bahrullah Khan, Haji Muhammad Aslam and others office bearers. Senior vice president SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi also present on occasion.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where nine ships, MSC Silvia, MSC Positano, APL Antwerp, SSL Brahmaputra, Yateeka, Inlaco Express, GW Mathil De, Amorgos and Marangas Asclepius carrying Container, Palm oil, DAP, Coal and LNG, berthed at Container Terminal, Liquid Terminal, Grain Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, Electric Power Terminal and Elengy Terminal respectively on Monday.

Meanwhile four more ships, Maersk Denver, Sino Wisdom, Hafnia Excelsior and Golden Denise carrying Container, Palm oil, Mogas and Chemicals are arrived at outer anchorage port during last 24 hours.

A total of fifteen ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them six ships, MSC Silvia, APL Antwerp, SSL Brahmaputra, Chemroute Pegasus, Bolan and Serenity Gas left the port on today morning while another liquified Natural Gas carrier 'Asklipos' are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 238,377 tonnes, comprising 210,875 tonnes imports cargo and 27,502 tonnes export cargo carried in 5,712 Containers (4,110 TEUS Imports& 1,602 TEUS Export) was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 06 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them three ships, Maersk Denver, Lydia and Tivoli Park carrying Container, Mogas and Chemicals are expected to take berths at QICT, FOTCO and EVTL respectively on today, Meanwhile two more Container ships, Maersk Cape Town and X-Press Mekong are due to arrive at port on Wednesday.

## BankIslami's PBT surged by 66.2% F.P. Report

KARACHI: BankIslami continues its growth trajectory, delivering substantial returns to its shareholders with a remarkable 66.2% increase in profit before tax for the half-year ended 2024. The Bank's profit before tax reached Rs. 13.8 billion, while its post-tax profit surged to Rs. 7.1 billion, reflecting a robust 32.1% growth.

Despite challenging market conditions, BankIslami remains steadfast in its commitment to financial excellence.

A key highlight of this period was the significant rise in non-fund-based income (NFI), which grew by nearly a billion rupees compared to the same period last year.

The NFI ratio to total income also improved, rising to 10.5% from 8.9% in the previous year, underscoring the Bank's strategic focus on diversified revenue streams.

## Stock Exchange loses 486 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) shed 486.82 points on Tuesday, showing a negative change of 0.62 percent, closing at 78,084.24 points against 78,571.06 points on the last working day.

A total of 591,511,522 shares were traded during the day as compared to 512,337,206 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 17.177 billion against Rs 18.894 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 436 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 163 of them recorded gains and 222 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 51 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 74,333,884 shares at Rs 11.57 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 47,382,319 shares at Rs.1.26 per share and Cnergyco PK with 43,914,580 shares at Rs 3.98 per share.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.56.87 per share price, closing at Rs 625.57, whereas the runner-up was Mari Petroleum Company Limited with a Rs 50.90 rise in its per share price to Rs 3,301.72.

PIA Holding Company Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs.73.63 per share closing at Rs 847.50 followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 46.99 decline to close at Rs 7,388.00.

**Rupee gains 09 paise against dollar:** Pakistani rupee on Tuesday appreciated by 09 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.32 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.41.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.50 and Rs 280 respectively.

The price of Euro decreased by 37 paise to close at Rs 310.87 against the last day's closing of Rs 311.24, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen lost 02 paise and closed at Rs1.91, whereas an increase of 24 paise was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs367.59 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 367.35. The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal decreased by 03 paise each to close at Rs75.77 and Rs74.17 respectively.

## Export of footwear increases 2.62% in July

ISLAMABAD (APP): The export of footwear from the country witnessed an increase of 2.62 percent during the first month of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to the exports of the corresponding last year. The country exported footwear worth US\$ 11.793 million during July 2024 as opposed to the export of US\$ 11.491 million during July 2023, showing growth of 2.62 percent, according to the data released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Among the footwear products, the exports of leather footwear witnessed a decrease of 1.24 percent, from US\$ 9.570 million to US\$ 9.452 million during the month under review. The canvas footwear exports also decreased by 43.64 percent by going down from US\$ 0.286 million last year to US\$ 0.161 million, the PBS data revealed.

## IBA Karachi organizes first workshop



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi hosted its first workshop on 'Structure of Undergraduate Education', in collaboration with the Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), organized by School of Economics & Social Sciences (SESS).

The workshop brought together faculty members from leading universities in Pakistan to a common platform to initiate a dialogue on the evolving structure of undergraduate education in the context of changing global paradigms. The session was hosted by Dean SESS, Dr. Asma Hyder, and Dean and Professor, AKU-IED, Dr. Farid Panjwani.

Dean SESS, Dr. Asma Hyder initiated the dialogue while emphasizing the sig-

nificance of undergraduate education. "In today's complex society, the changes are huge enough to call educators to start thinking about their impact at all levels of education, posing questions of a fundamental and philosophical nature including its purpose, relevance and structure. In the proposed workshop, we wish to raise these questions focusing on undergrad-level education," said Dr. Hyder.

During the discussion Dr. Panjwani said, "Undergraduate students are at a stage of idealism and creativity, making it the profound responsibility of universities to nurture their potential through critically progressive and historically grounded education. This demands regular reflection on the nature of this education, ensuring it remains fit for purpose. Educators must rethink the purpose,

relevance, and structure of undergraduate education to prepare students for an uncertain and complex future." The sub-themes for the workshop were: (i) Skills Vs. Theoretical Knowledge/Learning (ii) The Emergence of AI: Challenges and Opportunities (iii) Specialization Vs. Inter-disciplinarity (iv) Joint Degrees, Courses and Co-teaching (v) Conflict, Control and Academic Freedom. The workshop organizers apprised that this is the first session and several other such sessions are planned intending to propose a stronger and more viable structure of undergraduate education in Pakistan. The faculty members from IBA, AKU, LUMS, Habib University, NED and a few other public sector universities participated in this workshop.

## IBA, Bank Alfalah and Stanford launch Design Thinking Program



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi, and Bank Alfalah, partnered to introduce the Design Thinking Program in Pakistan. In collaboration with Stanford Life Design Lab, this innovative initiative aims to equip management professionals and senior executives with the powerful tools and mindset of Design Thinking. The collaboration was officially launched at a curtain-raiser event held at the flagship Bank Alfalah Islamic Branch in Sky Tower, attended by key stakeholders from both organizations.

Design thinking is a methodology focused on understanding user needs, generating creative solutions, and developing prototypes, which has proven to be a catalyst for innovation and problem-solving. Organizations that embrace this methodology often witness significant improvements in revenue, customer satisfaction, and employee engagement.

Executive Director, IBA Karachi, Dr. S Akbar Zaidi expressed his enthusiasm for the collaboration and shared that "We are delighted to partner with Bank Alfalah and Stanford Life Design Lab to introduce Design Thinking to our stu-

dents and the business community. This program will equip our graduates with the skills they need to become future leaders and innovators."

Recognizing the transformative potential of Design Thinking, Bank Alfalah is spearheading this initiative by becoming the first organization in Pakistan to implement the program within its senior management. By partnering with IBA Karachi and leveraging Stanford Life Design Lab's expertise, Bank Alfalah aims to foster a culture of innovation and enhance its ability to deliver exceptional customer experiences.

President and CEO,

Bank Alfalah, Atif Bajwa stated "We are excited to collaborate with IBA and Stanford Life Design Lab to bring Design Thinking to Pakistan." He expressed "This partnership aligns with our vision of driving innovation and creating customer value. By equipping our leadership team with Design Thinking skills, we are confident in our ability to stay ahead of the curve and deliver exceptional results."

Group Head, Islamic Banking Group, Bank Alfalah, Dr. Muhammad Imran emphasized the importance of innovation in the banking industry, stating, "Design Thinking is a powerful tool that can help us better understand our customers' needs and develop solutions that meet their expectations. We are committed to leveraging this methodology to create innovative financial products and services."

This partnership between Bank Alfalah, IBA, and Stanford Life Design Lab marks a significant milestone in Pakistan's journey towards a knowledge-based economy. This collaboration will contribute to the country's economic growth and development by fostering a culture of innovation and creativity.

## Hamdard Foundation Pakistan launches plantation campaign



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP) has launched an inter-provincial plantation campaign in August to support the Commissioner Karachi's plantation drive. Thousands of plants of various species will be planted across different districts in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar. Additionally, the installation of thousands of artificial nests on trees has begun in Lahore to protect local birds, which are severely impacted by pollution and climate change.

The campaign's opening ceremony took place yesterday at Allahwali Chowranghi, Karachi, near

Hamdard Corporate Head Office. Syed Ghulam Mehdi Shah, Additional Commissioner of Karachi, attended as the chief guest and officially inaugurated the drive by planting trees with the students of Hamdard Public School. The event was also attended by Syed Muhammad Arsalan, Director of HFP, Assistant Commissioner Bilal Alvi, senior police officers and people from different walks of life. The students, along with the distinguished guests, distributed seeds of various aromatic and fruit plants at Tariq Road Chowranghi to encourage thousands of citizens to participate in tree planting.

Syed Muhammad Arsalan while talking to media representatives said that it was a long-standing tradition of Hamdard Pakistan to actively participate whenever provincial or local governments launch a plantation drive.

"Hamdard Pakistan, including all its subsidiaries and affiliated institutions, has cultivated and maintained thousands of plants in Karachi, Lahore, Peshawar, Rawalpindi/Islamabad, Madinat-ul-Hikmah, Hamdard Public School, Hamdard University, and at Hamdard Factories. It is Ms. Sadia Rashid's mission to see a pollution-free and green Pakistan." He also emphasized the importance

of proper care for the plants to ensure they grow into trees.

In a statement released yesterday HFP said: "During this important initiative, HFP is also distributing seeds of various plants as gifts to encourage people to participate in this noble cause and fulfill their religious duty. Pakistan is among the countries most affected by climate change, making large-scale plantation essential. This movement aims to raise awareness that planting trees not only improves the environment but is also crucial for our survival. In the first phase, plantation drives and the installation of artificial nests for birds are being carried out in Karachi, Lahore, and Peshawar, as these cities are severely polluted. Climate change is impacting the birds around us, causing many species to become endangered. During the campaign, bird nests will be placed in trees at various locations to provide habitats for birds to nest and live. This effort not only protects the birds but also contributes to a healthier environment. It is our responsibility to save our native birds from extinction."

## Markets mixed as traders eye US rate cut

PARIS (AFP/APP): European stock markets mostly rose, Asian equities diverged and oil prices eased Tuesday as investors focus on the prospect of a long-awaited US interest rate cut and Middle East tensions.

Traders have been more cautious this week after US Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell sent markets soaring on Friday when he signalled that a rate cut was coming as

inflation is cooling.

Powell was followed Monday by the head of the San Francisco Fed, Mary Daly, who said it was "hard to imagine" not cutting next month.

Investors will pore over a clutch of US indicators later this week for clues about the size of the promised rate reduction, which the Fed is expected to deliver at its next meeting on September 17-18.

US second-quarter economic growth figures are due Thursday, followed by the Fed's preferred gauge of inflation on Friday and jobs data next week.

Traders are also eagerly awaiting the latest earnings results from chip titan Nvidia, which will be released Wednesday and could provide more clues about demand for the hardware powering the AI boom.

While European stocks were mostly higher on Tuesday, "direction could be lacking ahead of Nvidia results later in the week", Jane Foley, head of foreign exchange strategy at Rabobank London, told AFP.

She said the markets are also seeking "more clarity from US economic data about the amount that the Fed may be prepared to ease in September and in the coming months".

London's FTSE 100, which closed for a bank holiday on Monday, and Frankfurt's DAX were up while the Paris CAC 40 was flat.

In Asia, Hong Kong rose despite losses in the tech sector that came after Temu owner PDD posted disappointing revenue figures and warned on the outlook for future growth.

The e-commerce firm's shares, which are listed in

New York, tanked a record 28.5 percent, wiping tens of billions off its market capitalisation.

In Hong Kong, rivals Alibaba and JD.com both sank around four percent.

Tokyo and Mumbai rose but Shanghai, Seoul, Sydney and Taipei slipped.

Investors are also pointing tensions in the Middle East after Sunday's exchange of fire between Iran-backed Lebanese mili-

tant group Hezbollah and Israel raised fears of a broader conflict. Crude prices eased slightly but held most of Monday's gains of at least three percent, with Brent, the international benchmark, sitting above \$80 per barrel.

Traders were also jolted by news that the eastern-based administration in oil-rich Libya will close fields under its control and suspend production and exp-

orts "until further notice".

"A mix of geopolitical tensions, volatile oil prices, and mixed economic data has created a complex and uncertain backdrop for global financial markets," said Luca Santos, currency analyst at ACY Securities.

"While the initial response has been one of caution, the evolving nature of these risks means that market conditions could change quickly," Santos said.



In brief

Shaheens training session cancelled

ISLAMABAD (APP): The afternoon training session of Pakistan Shaheens and Bangladesh 'A' scheduled to take on Tuesday has been canceled due to rain here. The training session was to take place from 2:30 pm to 5:30 pm. Both the teams will play the second 50-over match on Wednesday. Pakistan Shaheens lead the three-match one-day series 1-0.

Chelsea to sign Penders

LONDON (AFP): Belgian goalkeeper Mike Penders will join Chelsea from Genk next year in a deal worth a reported 20 million euros (\$22 million, £17 million), the Blues announced on Tuesday. "Penders, a Belgium Under-19 international, will join Chelsea from next summer after agreeing a contract with the club until 2032," Chelsea said in a statement. The 19-year-old will remain with Genk for the rest of the season. He joins a long list of 'keepers on the books of the English club. Chelsea already have seven senior goalkeepers under contract. The club's policy of snapping up young talent from around the globe in the two years since a takeover fronted by LA Dodgers co-owner Todd Boehly has been questioned. Chelsea have over 50 players on their books with many big names not even training with Enzo Maresca's first-team squad. Raheem Sterling, Romelu Lukaku and Ben Chilwell, who cost the club over £200 million in transfer fees, are among those who have been frozen out and told to find moves before the end of the transfer window. Chelsea have won two of their first three games under Maresca after losing their season opener 2-0 to Premier League champions Manchester City.

Stone replaces injured Wood

LONDON (AFP): Ollie Stone has been recalled to the England side for the first time in three years as the replacement for Mark Wood in the only change for the second Test against Sri Lanka. Wood has been ruled out for the remainder of the series after suffering a thigh injury during England's five-wicket win in the first Test at Old Trafford. Stone, a Nottinghamshire seamer, has got the nod over 20-year-old left-arm paceman Josh Hull, who received his first call-up to the squad after Wood's injury. Stone has had to battle back from his own injuries, including an anterior cruciate ligament tear suffered when celebrating a wicket. "Unfortunately with the nature of being a bowler, you are going to pick up injuries here and there. It's been disappointing, stop-start throughout my career," said the 30-year-old. "This year especially, I've tried to just not look too far ahead. I love playing the game and I just knew that if I go out there and produce those performances, this call might come." England are rejuvenating their pace attack following the retirements of veterans Stuart Broad and James Anderson. England have also lost captain Ben Stokes for the series with a torn hamstring suffered during The Hundred. Stone, though, is hoping to replace the express pace that Wood has offered so far this summer, including a 3-0 series win over the West Indies. "It's been pretty frightening the way he's been bowling," added Stone. "Hopefully, I can go out there and try and touch his speeds. He's obviously up there with the fastest in the world so I'm not sure if I'll match it but I'll give it a good shot." The second Test of the three-match series begins at Lord's on Thursday.

# Pakistan-Bangladesh 2nd Test PCB announces free entry for students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced free entry for students for the second Test match between Bangladesh and hosts Pakistan, scheduled to take place at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium from August 30 to September 3.

The students are required to be in their uniform and bring their educational institutions cards to enter the stadium. They will be able to witness the live action from any of the VIP enclosures – Imran Khan and Javed Miandad (subject to availability of seats) and premium enclosures – Miran Baksh, Shoaib Akhtar, Sohail Tanvir and Yasir Arafat.

The decision was made to encourage students to come and witness exciting game of cricket between the two sides. Bangladesh are leading

the two-match Test series 1-0, after defeating the hosts by 10 wickets in the first Test match which concluded on Sunday. The series is part of the ICC World Test Championship 2023-25.

The free entry policy for students does not apply on the seating capacity in PCB Gallery or Platinum Box.

Earlier, the PCB had announced free entry for the fans on the fourth and fifth days of the first Test match at the same venue.

Meanwhile, the fans can purchase tickets for the second Test online at PCB.tcs.com.pk or from the physical ticket booth located at Aviation Ground, opposite Rescue 1122, Rawal Road and also at the designated TCS express centres.

The tickets for the premium enclosures will be available for PKR

200, while VIP enclosures tickets will be priced at PKR 500 on weekdays and PKR 600 on weekends.

The Gallery pass, which includes lunch and tea, is priced at PKR 2,800. The Platinum box, which also includes lunch and tea, is available for PKR 12,500. Additionally, a full hospitality box can be reserved for PKR 200,000.

Like the first Test match, a free shuttle bus service will continue to run on two routes on matchdays for ease of access into the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium by spectators. Route 1 will run from Aviation Ground, Rawal Road, Murree Road to Allama Iqbal Park Entrance Gate while the Route 2 will go from Government Satellite Town College for Boys, 6th Road, Murree Road to Allama Iqbal Park Entrance Gate.

NEW DELHI (Agencies): India's cricket chief Jay Shah has been elected unopposed as chairman of the sport's world body, the International Cricket Council, it said Tuesday.

Shah will take over the role from December, after current Chair Greg Barclay decided not to seek a third term.

"I am committed to working closely with the ICC team and our member nations to further globalise cricket," Shah said, adding he was "humbled" by the appointment. "Our goal is to make cricket more inclusive and popular than ever before."

From being the chief of the world's richest cricket board to leading the ICC, the 35-year-old's meteoric rise illustrates India's dom-



ination of the sport's global administration.

In a country where the sport and politics go hand in glove, Shah is best known for being the son of home minister Amit Shah, the right-hand man of Hindu-nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Shah, the powerful Secretary of the Board of Control for Cricket in India since 2019, becomes the youngest ICC chairman.

Top cricketers in India enjoy superstardom with millions of die-hard fans, most lucrative playing contracts, and endorsement deals not seen anywhere else in global cricket.

By some counts, Indian cricket on average generates more revenue than Bollywood. More than 90 percent of the sport's billion-plus worldwide fans are in the Indian subcontinent, according to a 2018 ICC study.

The ICC is the global governing body for cricket, with more than 100 members, and is responsible for staging global events such as the World Cup. Shah said he wanted to "embrace fresh thinking and innovation to elevate the love for cricket worldwide".

## PCB U19 Talent Hunt Programme, Trials Conducted at Peshawar

E.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Cricket Board talent hunt program, District Peshawar Under-19 Women's Trials were Conducted at Qayyum Sports Complex, Peshawar, in which more than a hundred women players participated.

On this occasion, PCB's Assistant Manager cricket Operations Women's Haseena Khushboo was also present. While talking to the media, she said that the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is conducting trials at the grass-root level to find talented women cricketers in the country, under which trials are being conducted at various places in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

It was said that the trials will give women cricketers an opportunity to show their potential. The



trials will help the selection committee to find talent and in the selection of Pakistan U-19 women and emerging squads.

Hasina Khushboo said that through the trials in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa organized by the PCB, we will find new talented cricketers. We are trying to

bring forward and there are many events for women cricketers in the coming days and these trials will help us find the best talent so that the selectors can consider them for the national squads.

He said that the trials in Mardan will be held at the Mardan Sports Complex

today while the Abbottabad trials will be held at the Abbottabad Cricket Stadium on August 29. Athletes born on or after September 1, 2005 can participate in the trials. Interested athletes are asked to bring all necessary documents and fill the form online.

## Gauff starts US Open defence with comfortable win



NEW YORK (Agencies): Defending champion Coco Gauff says she is treating this year's US Open as a "victory lap" after comfortably beating Varvara Gracheva in her opening match.

Gauff, 20, began her title defence with a 6-2 6-0 victory in just 66 minutes on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

The American beat Aryna Sabalenka in last year's final to win her first Grand Slam and followed that by reaching the semi-finals of the Australian Open and French Open this year.

But she has struggled for form recently, losing in the third round of the Paris Olympics before suffering early exits at tournaments in Cincinnati and Toronto.

Gauff said the past few weeks have "been a little bit tough", but she believed her performance against Gracheva was "the best tennis I have played in a while". She added that a fan's comment on her TikTok account had helped

change her perspective coming into the US Open.

"Someone commented on my TikTok saying you've won in life, literally and figuratively, and there's no point in piling pressure on yourself on a victory lap," Gauff said in her on-court interview. "I'm just treating this tournament like that and if you defend something that means you won something."

Gauff, who fired down 10 aces, broke Gracheva's serve twice in the opening set and won the last nine games on her way to an emphatic victory.

She will face German veteran Tatjana Maria in the second round after the 37-year-old moved past Argentine qualifier Solana Sierra 6-2 6-3. Second seed Sabalenka, one of the favourites for the title, beat Australia's Priscilla Hon 6-3 6-3 in Monday's night session on Louis Armstrong.

**Zheng tested but through to round two**

Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen fought back from a set down to beat world number 50 Amanda Anisimova 4-6 6-4 6-2 on Louis Armstrong Stadium.

Anisimova raced out to a 5-1 first-set lead but twice failed to serve it out, before breaking Zheng for the third time to clinch the opener. But Zheng, a little over three weeks on from her Olympic triumph in Paris, recovered well and served superbly from then on.

The Chinese seventh seed said it was the "typical match" she would have lost in the past, adding that victory was "one step forward in my mental side".

"Usually after huge success I will get a little bit too high, and until the reality slap me down again and I come back to the ground," Zheng said.

"So this time when I get a success, I'm telling myself, I don't want to let this happen. I'm really happy to get this match, because she's really tough to face," American teenager Iva Jovic pulled off the biggest upset of the opening day in New York, with the 16-year-old beating world number 40 Magda Linette 6-4 6-3 for her first WTA match win.

Meanwhile, France's Clara Burel claimed an impressive comeback victory against 2017 champion Sloane Stephens.

Stephens won the first

nine games of the match in 33 minutes but Burel somehow clawed her way back from a break down in both the second and third set before wrapping up a 0-6 7-5 7-5 win. Burel will face three-time runner up Victoria Azarenka of Belarus, who beat Ukraine's Yulia Starodubtseva 3-6 6-1 6-1.

Daria Kasatkina, the 12th seed, beat Romania's Jaqueline Cristian 6-2 6-4 to progress, while Ukrainian 27th seed Elina Svitolina came through in three sets against Maria Lourdes Carle of Argentina.

Wimbledon champion Barbora Krejickova also progressed, beating Spanish qualifier Marina Bassols Ribera 7-6 (7-3) 6-2, while American 13th seed Emma Navarro beat Anna Blinkova 6-1 6-1 in just 59 minutes.

However, Maria Sakkari became the first top-10 player to fall, with the ninth seed forced to retire injured after losing the first set to Wang Yafan. A visibly upset Sakkari received treatment from the trainer to her shoulder and neck midway through the first set, and was ultimately unable to continue into a second.

American 14th seed Madison Keys, runner-up at Flushing Meadows in 2017, moved past Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic 6-4 6-1.

### Athletics training camp from Wednesday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Pakistan Athletics Federation is set to commence a training camp for national junior team players on Wednesday at the Jinnah Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex. The camp is in preparation for the South Asian Junior Athletics Championship, scheduled to take place in Chennai, India, from September 11 to 13. According to Pakistan Athletics Federation President Brig (R) Wajahat Hussain 13 players will participate in the training camp and will be trained by qualified coaches.

He said that the national junior team will participate in the South Asian Athletics Championship to be held from September 11 in Chennai, India. Men's and women's teams from seven countries are participating in the championship, including hosts India, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, along with Pakistan. Fifteen categories of men and women are held in the championship. Men's events include 100m race, 200m race, 400m race, 800m race, 1500m race, 3000m race, 110m hurdle race, long jump, triple jump, high jump, shot put, desk throw, javelin throw, 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay are included while Women's events include 100m race, 200m race, 400m race, 800m race, 1500m race, 3000m race, 100m hurdle race, long jump, triple jump, high jump, shot put, desk throw, javelin. Includes throws, 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay.

## Door not closed on Bairstow's white-ball career, says England selector

LONDON (AFP): England chief selector Luke Wright said Jonny Bairstow's international white-ball career is not over despite the 34-year-old's omission from the upcoming series against Australia.

Bairstow and fellow veterans Moeen Ali and Chris Jordan were overlooked with five uncapped players selected for the three T20s and five ODIs in just 19 days between September 11 and 29.

An integral part of England's 50-over World Cup success in 2019, Bairstow has struggled for form since he returned from breaking his leg two years ago.

"One of Jonny's great strengths is how much he wants to play," said Wright.

"We just want him back to being one of the best players in the world. He had that horrific injury, and that's been the message. Can we get you back to where you were pre-injury?"

"He understands that. He doesn't like it. One thing Jonny will do is fight back, and I hope he does and gets himself back in the team."

Matthew Mott was sacked as England's limited over head coach last month following disappointing ODI and T20

World Cup campaigns with Marcus Trescothick to take interim charge.

Left-arm seamer Josh Hull, all-rounder Jacob Bethell and pace bowler John Turner were the uncapped players selected in both formats, while Dan Mousley and Jordan Cox come into the T20 group.

"Now feels like the right time to have a few more picks in there and look probably for the future," added Wright.

"It's certainly not an experiment. These guys are top cricketers. The one thing we don't lack in England is the amount of talent that's around."

"With the schedule, it gives us the opportunity to look at some wider squads, and gives us the opportunity to look at some of those younger lads who sometimes wouldn't get that opportunity."

Jos Buttler is expected to shrug off a calf injury to remain captain for the series against the Aussies.

However, he is contemplating giving up his wicketkeeping role, at least for the T20 series, to concentrate on rediscovering his best form at the top of the order.

"I think it's something he's open to. It's something that could easily happen in this Australia series," said Wright.



PESHAWAR: Mr. Anayat Ullah, former Mr. Peshawar and the current Mr. KPK Bodybuilding title holder, met with Mr. Syed Fakhar Jehan, Minister of Sports & Youth Affairs, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Paralympics icon Peacock back in hunt to regain his 100m title



PARIS (AFP): British Paralympics great Jonnie Peacock believes there is no pressure on him as he bids to regain his 100 metres title in Paris saying

"I am no longer the hunted, I am the hunter".

The 31-year-old two-time champion in the T64 category -- for athletes who have a single below-the-

knee amputation or moderately affected movement in one lower leg -- said it was his rivals who "have the target on their back".

Peacock, who had his

lower right leg amputated after contracting meningitis aged five, was principally thinking of Germany's Felix Streng, who took his crown in Tokyo in 2021, and Italy's Ghana-born world champion Maxcel Manu. "The two people in my opinion with the most pressure on them are Felix and Maxcel," said Peacock.

"Maxcel has run the fastest time in the last year and won the world championship title 14 months ago so he has to do the job here."

"Felix is the defending champion. I know people in that race who consistently run fast times outside the championships but I am the person who every time turns up at championships and runs faster times in them. "Provided I do not make too

many mistakes, touch wood, I know I can do that again but the question is how many of the guys can as well."

"Fallen asleep"

Peacock, who became something of a poster boy for disabled sport following his first gold in London in 2012, says he is proven to be able to cope with pressure. "I am relishing the prospect drawing on my experience," he said.

"How many of the others have dealt with it in that situation and it is how they deal with it that will decide the outcome. "It is a really cool race to be part of, it is a pressure cooker. "For me the big thing and it is interesting a lot of people forgot is that I am the only person contesting the event at the Paralympics for the fourth

time. "For most of them it is just the second, I am almost a man among boys!"

Peacock, who has dabbled with acting and appeared in British TV shows such as "Strictly Come Dancing", says no matter one's talent you have to have a strong mentality to produce a championship-winning performance in a full stadium.

"A handful of my rivals are the same age, so they are not all youngsters but in terms of experience I feel a bit different and feel ready," he said.

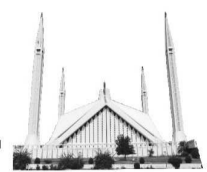
Peacock admitted that the Covid-affected Tokyo Paralympics, held in an echoing, empty stadium were no fun, but as a result "it limited the pressure".

"For me this (Paris) is

what it is about. Can you handle everyone looking at you, can you perform in a stadium full of people, who are screaming and yelling?"

"Can they deal with that noise, this is what intrigues me." Peacock points out that although 31-year-old Manu won the world title last year in Paris, it was a poorly attended event at Charley Stadium in Paris and cannot be compared to the Stade de France, which could be an 70,000 sellout for the September 2 final.

"I have run on many occasions in big packed stadia," he said. "I thrive on that, the more pressure there is the faster I run. "This season some meetings were so poorly attended that before I ran I have nearly fallen asleep."



## In brief

### IESCO issues power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Tuesday issued a power suspension programme for Wednesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 06:00 AM to 11:00 AM, Islamabad Circle, F-11/4 Feeder, Rawalpindi City Circle, Officer Colony, Tench Bhatta, Nust Road, SM Din, E-Block, FOECHS Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, Zeta-I, Zaraj-I & II, IST, Dhok Awan, Mohra Nagyal, NPF-I, Major Riaz, Lala Zar, Lalkarti Feeders, Attock Circle, Shakurdara, Kashif Gul, New City Block A, New City Block G, Nawazis shaheed, Kohsar Colony, Kala Khan Feeders, Jhelum Circle, City Gujar Khan, Captain Nisar Shaheed, Express Mangala, Madu Kals Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Mugla, Dhalar, Dhoda, Toba, Ahmedabad, Rawal feeders, from 08:00 am to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, PC, TDCP, MCM, Gharial, Kohala, Sunny Bank feeders and surrounding areas.

### Police arrest three thieves

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested three thieves and street criminals, members of Wahab gang and recovered gold ornaments, cash Rs 45,000, mobile phones and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Tuesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Chontra Police Station managed to net three thieves namely Abdul Wahab, ring leader, Saqib Ali and Mohsin and recovered gold ornaments, cash Rs 45,000, mobile phones and other items. The arrested accused are record holder criminals and remained jail birds. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Saddar, Muhammad Nabeel said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

### Rawal Dam spillways to open

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration have announced that the spillways of Rawal Dam will be opened on Tuesday at 4 pm. This measure is being taken as a precaution due to rising water levels in the dam, said the spokesman of ICT administration. Residents living near urban river channels are advised to avoid these areas to stay safe. Those in low-lying regions should ensure they follow all safety measures to protect themselves and their property. In the event of an emergency, the public is encouraged to contact the district administration by dialing 16. Livestock owners are also being told to move their animals to higher ground without delay. The district administration is closely monitoring river channels and bridges, with strict oversight continuing to ensure public safety. All necessary preparations have been made to handle potential flooding, according to the administration.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme Senator Rubina Khalid briefs Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on BISP's newly launched initiatives at BISP headquarters.

## Benazir's vision of empowering women realized through BISP

ISLAMABAD (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Faisal Karim Kundi said that the late Benazir Bhutto's vision of empowering women has been realized through the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP).

Speaking during his visit to BISP's central office, where Chairperson Rubina Khalid and other officials briefed him on the program, Governor Kundi praised the initiative for its transparency and effectiveness. Governor Faisal Kundi said that BISP's data are considered credible by international organizations during emergencies and aid situations. He highlighted the program's goal of reducing dependency and gradually leading women towards economic stability.

He commended the program's efforts to ensure aid transparently reaches the public and appreciated the expansion of BISP offices to the union council level, which aims to provide necessary facilities directly at the doorstep of the poor. The governor also suggested transferring the oversight of BISP's operations from

third parties to direct management under the program's supervision. He stressed the importance of combating misinformation and misleading campaigns on social media.

BISP Chairperson Rubina Khalid informed that under President Asif Ali Zardari's directives, the program focuses on addressing the difficulties faced by the poor. She mentioned the increase in bank branches and the initiative to transfer funds directly into beneficiaries' accounts. Rubina Khalid also emphasized training beneficiaries to become self-sufficient and eventually exit the program.

Governor Kundi offered his support, mentioning ongoing efforts to consolidate technical education through institutions like NAVTTC, GIZ, and universities. He said that the program is aligning with global workforce needs and plans to advance accordingly. Director General of BISP, Dr. Asim Ijaz, briefed the Governor on various BISP programs, including the Benazir Kifalat Program, Benazir Educational

Scholarships, Benazir Nutrition Program, and Benazir Scholarships for undergraduates. The meeting also included discussions on potential reforms and improvements.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has praised the security forces for their successful operation against the terrorists in the Tirah Valley of the merged Khyber district. Kundi lauded the bravery and courage of the security personnel, who have killed 25 militants in the operation. In his statement, Kundi highlighted that the high morale and determination of the security forces in combating terrorism are a source of pride for the entire nation.

He also expressed deep respect for the four security personnel who lost their lives in the operation, extending heartfelt condolences and sympathy to their families. The governor prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and patience for their families. He emphasized that the sacrifices made by the security forces in the fight against terrorism are significant and will not be in vain.

## Pak committed to fostering sustainable tech advancement: Gilani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman, Senate of Pakistan Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani has said that Pakistan is committed to bringing technological advancement while being mindful of sustainable and green practices for a prosperous future.

He was addressing the opening ceremony of the 58th Asia-Pacific Advanced Network Meeting (APAN-58) being hosted by Pakistan Education Research Network (PERN), a flagship project of the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

The opening ceremony was attended by Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed, Chairman APAN Shinji Shimoji, Member (IT) HEC and Chair of the local organising body Dr. Jamil Ahmad. APAN is a valuable platform for researchers and technical experts from various countries to exchange their insights and establish partnerships for future endeavours. Education and Research Networks of countries of Asia and Oceania are members of APAN.

The five-day APAN58 meeting includes various workshops, tutorials, presentations, panel discussions and an academic conference covering advanced network technologies and applications. It is pertinent to mention here that in 2021, Pakistan virtually hosted the 51st meeting of APAN for the first time.

Speaking to the participants, the Chairman Senate Gilani highlighted the need for the development of IT infrastructure. "Despite great efforts, around 50 per cent of our country does not have internet access, Pakistan's partnership with APAN and investment in this sector is expected to open pathways of access to education and networking to the far-flung areas of the country, especially for the marginalised communities."

He further said that the partnership between PERN and APAN is not only for networking but also to enhance connectivity between different Education and Research Networks around the

world, especially between industry leaders and key stakeholders for prompt and efficient decision-making. He hoped that this partnership would be instrumental in addressing global challenges like climate change, food security, and poverty.

He appreciated HEC's role in seamlessly managing the mega event and providing a conducive environment for young and experienced minds of emerging technologies to come together and brainstorm the future of technology and education.

Earlier in his welcome remarks, Chairman HEC Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed said, "Over 40 participants from 17 APAN member countries are attending this meeting, while over a hundred have joined us virtually. Events like these help us learn from each other so we can join our efforts for a mutual cause."

He highlighted the significance of providing opportunities for the young people to remain updated with the technological

advancements so that they, their countries and the world can benefit from their learning. He assured to take every possible step to enable students to make positive use of IT in Pakistan, along with using it to upgrade the education sector of the country.

Chairman APAN Shinji Shimoji thanked HEC and PERN for hosting the event. He also launched an APAN handbook to help newcomers quickly grasp APAN's journey and achievements, and the first edition of APAN Pulse, APAN's official magazine which will keep its audiences updated with the latest happenings.

He also announced that Mongolia will become a member of APAN from 2025. Notable professionals like Chief Collaboration Officer NORDUnet Erik Kikkenborg, Head of Connectivity, Asia Pacific, META, Dr. Syed Ismail Shah, and Roy Lou, VP of MECA Cloud Business Unit, Huawei Technologies delivered keynote addresses in the opening ceremony.

## US Embassy awards \$20,000 in seed funding to women entrepreneurs



ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) Embassy has awarded \$20,000 as seed funding to women entrepreneurs, participating in its Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE) programme.

The winners were selected through a pitch competition, which marked the final activity for the 2024 cohort of AWE participants. The grants are intended to support the growth and development of their businesses.

According to the details, Iman Khan from Peshawar, representing Gricks International, was recognized for her innovative approach in producing building materials from recycled plastic, re-purposing plastic bot-

tles into bricks for reconstructing homes in flood-affected areas, and addressing both housing needs and environmental concerns.

Alishba Sajid from Rawalpindi, representing Cardana Utensils, received funding for her initiative to create eco-friendly, biodegradable plates and utensils as a sustainable alternative to plastic products. Sahar Munir from Quetta was awarded for her delivery app 'QuickUp' which provides fair and affordable delivery services specifically for women-led businesses in Balochistan.

In addition to these top winners, the US Embassy awarded honorable mentions to Sana Rehman from

Quetta, who is addressing a significant healthcare gap in Balochistan through her Physiotherapy Clinic in Khanazai, and Zarmina Sanam from Lahore, whose company, Skill2Success, offers hands-on learning experiences in robotics, coding, and Artificial Intelligence for students aged 5-18.

The AWE programme is designed to equip enterprising women with the knowledge, networks, and resources needed to launch and scale successful businesses. This year's cohort included 100 aspiring and established women entrepreneurs who participated in a three-month online entrepreneurship course developed by the Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University. Participants also received mentoring from established Pakistani women entrepreneurs and built a strong support network within the women-owned business community.

Future opportunities to participate in the AWE program will be announced on the Lincoln Corners Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/LincolnCornersPakistan>. Entrepreneurs are encouraged to follow the page to stay informed about upcoming programmes and opportunities.

## Ayaz pays tribute to brave security forces

ISLAMABAD (APP): Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Tuesday paid rich tribute to the security forces for eliminating 25 terrorists during the operation against Fitna-ul-Khawarij in the Tirah Valley, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The Speaker also honored the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in the operation. He expressed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families

of the martyrs.

"The security forces and the people of Pakistan are resolute in eliminating the scourge of terrorism from the country," he said.

"The brave personnel of our armed forces have been fighting the terrorists courageously, and they will continue to eliminate them."

He said that terrorists are the enemies of humanity and are fearful of Pakistan's development and prosperity. He underscored that the

sacrifices made by the brave personnel of the armed forces will never allow terrorists to succeed in their nefarious designs.

"The sacrifices of the martyrs and the courage of their families will always be remembered in history with golden words," he added.

The Speaker prayed to Allah Almighty for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and solace and patience for the bereaved families.

## PTI faces internal conflicts: Barrister Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Government's Spokesperson on Legal Affairs Barrister Aqeel on Tuesday said that Pakistan Tehreek e Insaaf (PTI)'s government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has demonstrated zero performance in ten years and has been engaged in loot-

ing the province.

Addressing a press conference in the federal capital, he said that conflicts have appeared now in the anarchist group and the party will end by fighting each other.

Barrister Aqeel said that there is a battle for positions in PTI, adding that

the rivalry continues between Bushra Bibi and Aleema Khan which had distributed the party into groups. The internal clashes in the party are now public, he said.

He said that Atif Ali and Shir Ali Arbab have been removed from the party positions.

## Five workers killed in Humak building collapse

ISLAMABAD (APP): At least five workers lost their lives on Tuesday when the roof of an under-construction building collapsed in the Humak area of Islamabad.

According to police, rescue teams promptly reached the scene soon after the incident, successfully saving two workers trapped under the rubble,

reported a private news channel.

Rescue efforts are ongoing to rescue one worker still trapped beneath the debris.

Rescue sources have identified the deceased workers as four individuals from Tuansa Sharif and one from the Malir area of Karachi.

Deputy Commissioner

Islamabad, Irfan Memon, has taken notice of the tragic incident and ordered an inquiry to determine the cause of the collapse.

He stated that the building will be sealed pending the investigation. The injured workers are currently receiving medical treatment in a hospital in the federal capital.



ISLAMABAD: A girl along with her mother feeding to deer in a local park in Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## RWMC continues cleanliness drive during rains

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) had deputed additional sanitary workers to clean and dredge major drains to avoid urban flooding.

According to the RWMC spokesman, the RWMC carried out the cleanliness of nullahs and choked drains during continued rainfall since Tuesday morning to ensure sanitation in several city areas.

He said that additional staff had been assigned

duties in three shifts to ensure cleanliness round the clock so that some sanitation-related problems could not become hurdles in the smooth flow of water during monsoon season.

He informed that RWMC workers removed hundreds of tons of waste in the Rawalpindi city areas while drains blocked during the rain had been opened immediately to have no problem with drainage in the city.

He said that complaints received on social media platforms were also being

addressed promptly. He added that heavy machinery and excavators were being used to remove rubbish from the roads.

In case of any complaint, citizens were asked to register their complaints on helpline number 1139, which would be resolved immediately. RWMC has appealed to the citizens not to throw garbage and plastic bags in nullahs and drains, which cause obstruction, adding that RWMC would utilize all resources to keep the city environment friendly.

## Al-Shifa saves 16,000 premature babies from blindness

RAWALPINDI (APP): Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital has prevented sixteen thousand premature babies from developing irreparable damage to their eyes over the past eleven years through timely intervention.

Dr Wajid Ali Khan, the chief of medical services at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital on Tuesday said that the growing incidence of retinal abnormalities among premature infants in Pakistan calls for urgent attention. Talking to the media, he said that the majority of premature babies who weigh less than 1.5 kilograms at the time of birth have a high risk of developing the disorganized growth of retinal blood vessels, which could cause vision problems, including permanent blindness.

Dr Wajid said that babies born prematurely have many obstacles to overcome in their first weeks, including

abnormal eye development, which could be resolved through screening and surgical procedures to help avoid serious eyesight problems.

He said the retina's blood vessels begin to develop three months after conception and complete their growth at normal birth, however, eye development could be disrupted if an infant was born prematurely. "Latest studies have shown that keeping the oxygen saturation at a lower level can reduce the rate of advanced retinopathy," he said.

He said one in ten babies worldwide is born early, with a chance of eyesight issues. Therefore, parents must include a vision screening in their list of baby check-ups between six and twelve months of age. The health officer added that every premature infant deserves the constant attention of an ophthalmologist because they

are at increased risk for eye misalignment, amblyopia, and the need for glasses to develop normal vision.

He said that in Pakistan, about 900,000 babies are born annually, out of which about 100,000 are prematurely born, and eighty per cent of them are prone to eye problems. Dr Wajid informed that the Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital Rawalpindi has over 40 highly qualified eye surgeons, and the Pediatric Department has some of the most senior eye specialists, adding the hospital has expanded handling over 500 OPD babies daily.

He said "We had signed MoUs with the administrations of Fauji Foundation Hospital, Combined Military Hospital, and Benazir Bhutto Hospital, under which the trust will provide all the facilities, from transportation to screening and surgery, for premature babies born in these hospitals."

PM chaired cabinet meeting

KABUL (BNA): IEA's fourth cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Mullah Mohammad Hassan Akhund, was held. Deputy Spokesman of the Islamic Emirate, Mullah Hamdullah Fitrat, shared on his X page that the Ministry of Public Health was tasked with controlling the prices of medicines, preventing their sale at inflated prices, and ensuring that all pharmacies sell medicines at fair rates without exploiting the public's needs.

2 million passports issued

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Interior in Kabul has announced the distribution of nearly 2 million passports in the past year. The Ministry reported on Tuesday that, over the past year, it distributed 1,745,000 passports. The Passport Directorate spokesperson previously mentioned that the capacity for passport issuance would be increased to 15,000 per day; however, this number has now reached 20,000 per day.

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

## IEA defends Sharia law enacted

KABUL (BNA): In a statement released today, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has strongly defended the recent laws enacted by the Ministry of Vice and Virtue, dismissing concerns expressed by entities such as UNAMA as "baseless."

The Sharia law, which consists of an introduction, four chapters, and 35 articles, is said to be derived directly from Islamic sources and formulated according to Hanafi jurisprudence. The government claims that each article and clause has been extracted from credible and accepted sources of Islamic jurisprudence, with all references documented in the law's footnotes.

The statement asserts

that any non-Muslim who expresses concern or rejects these laws must first "familiarize themselves with Islamic laws and show respect for Islamic values." It goes on to state that such objections are seen as a display of "audacity" towards the country's Islamic principles.

For Muslims, the government urges self-education about these Sharia-based laws and consultation with religious scholars. The statement warns that for Muslims to reject or criticize these laws "indicates ignorance of their religion and may even pose a risk to their faith."

Emphasizing Afghanistan's status as an Islamic country, the statement argues that in an Islamic

society, Islamic laws are enforceable. Citing Quranic texts, it declares the duty of every Muslim and the Islamic government to "command good and forbid evil," thereby justifying the establishment of the Ministry of Vice and Virtue to implement this Sharia law. The Islamic Emirate assures that the implementation of this law will not involve "any oppression, injustice, or transgression against anyone" and will be carried out with "great leniency." It dismisses any "unfounded concerns" from various parties, stating that the Islamic Emirate remains committed to enforcing Sharia in line with the aspirations of the "Mujahid nation and our pure martyrs."

## Afghanistan demands return of aircraft held

KABUL (BNA): The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's Ministry of National Defense has issued a strongly worded response to recent comments from the US Embassy in Uzbekistan regarding the status of Afghan military aircraft and helicopters currently located in Uzbekistan.

In an official statement, the country's Defense Ministry asserted that any negotiations or decisions made about the fate of these Afghan aircraft and helicopters are completely unacceptable. The Ministry stressed that the United States has no legal right to seize or transfer Afghan military assets.

Furthermore, the Defense Ministry urged the government of Uzbekistan to avoid engaging in any transactions or deals involving these Afghan air assets. The statement called on Uzbekistan to consider the principles of good neighborly relations and to cooperate in the return of the Afghanistan's Air Force's aircraft and helicopters that are currently being held in Uzbekistan.

## Afghan Post provide services to 192 countries

KABUL (TOLONews): Afghan Post says that after the return of the Islamic Emirate, the challenges in domestic and international postal services have been resolved.

Zabiullah Omar, head of development and trade of the postal service, said that the company now provides postal services not only to all provinces and districts within the country but also to 192 countries worldwide.

According to Omar, currently, nearly 470 postal centers are active across the country, including in the capital.

The head of Development and Trade of the Postal service added: "There were issues where we were not providing services to some countries, and postal services to countries were also suspended for us. But with the efforts of our colleagues, these problems have been resolved. The Universal Postal Union has a modern operational system that has been offered to 192 countries, and we are also a part of it."

Omar clarified that after the Islamic Emirate came to power, the services of this company have expanded from 8 sectors to 18 sectors.

He said: "Before the Islamic Emirate came to power, this company was operating in eight sectors, but with the arrival of the Islamic Emirate, these sectors have increased to eighteen."

At the same time, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MoCIT) said that alongside the state-owned Afghan Post, ten other private postal companies are also operating in the country.

Enayatullah Alkoza, the spokesperson for the ministry, said: "According to its statistics, the MoCIT has also issued postal licenses to ten other private companies, which are currently active in the country."

Some citizens of the country have also called for the expansion of postal companies within the country. Wasim Talash, a resident of Kabul, said: "We are happy with the services of Afghan Post and hope that this company will also be established in the provinces, and if it is present in the provinces, it should activate its other sites."

Salman Yasin, a resident of Nangarhar, said: "The Afghan Post company has brought good achievements for the citizens of the country in both domestic and international sectors."

Afghan Post has also announced that it is working to start postal services via air within the country and to reduce the process of sending mail abroad to less than a week.

## Afghanistan declared secure for first time in 40 years

KABUL (Ariana News): Delivering their annual report for the last solar year, 1402 (April 2023 to March 2024), ministry of interior officials said Tuesday Afghanistan has, for the first time in 40 years, achieved nationwide security, allowing its citizens to live in a secure environment and travel to provinces without any safety concerns.

Officials emphasized that all activities within the ministry are managed in accordance with a comprehensive strategic plan.

They noted that the decrees issued by the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, along with court rulings and directives from the ministry's leadership, have been swiftly and effectively implemented to ensure national security and public order. Due to the persistent efforts of the country's security forces, the national crime rate has decreased by 30%.

Over the past year, 38 kidnapping cases were reported, and security forces conducted a total of 250 operations against kidnappers, resulting in the arrest of 76 kidnappers and the death of 34 others during clashes with security forces.

Ministry officials also reported that due to the unwavering dedication of the national police, large religious, national, and ceremonial gatherings were held across the country without any security incidents, allowing citizens to participate in events with confidence and peace of mind.

The ministry highlighted



the successful safeguarding of economic and developmental projects, the facilitation of investments, the assessment and registration of the country's borders, the improvement of public services, and the promotion of balanced development as key achievements over the past year.

Notably, 70 infrastructure projects were successfully protected by the national police.

Significant steps have been taken to professionalize and strengthen the security forces, officials said.

National police training centers have been further equipped, and the police force is now fully capable of countering any malicious plans posed by adversaries, officials added.

Over the past year, 450 students graduated from the commission and in-service programs. In addition, 673 individuals, including 325 women, participated in capacity-building programs.

A total of 24,000 individuals received basic, specialized, and non-commissioned officer training, with

32,000 more currently enrolled in training programs. During this period, 20,515 individuals were appointed to officer positions, 15,060 to non-commissioned officer roles, and 35,584 soldiers were recruited.

In alignment with a decree from the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Emirate, the ministry has undertaken serious initiatives to eradicate the cultivation, production, trafficking, and use of narcotics.

As a result, these illicit activities have been nearly eradicated. Furthermore, poppy fields across the country have been destroyed, addicts have received treatment, and those involved in the drug trade have been prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.

The ministry reported that, over the past year, 3,643 tons of narcotics were seized, 790 drug production and processing facilities, as well as facilities producing alcohol and intoxicating pills, were dismantled.

In addition, 10,564 suspects were arrested, 27,891 addicts were referred to

treatment centers, and 17,651 hectares of land were cleared of poppy cultivation.

Officials further noted that last year, the ministry successfully prevented the smuggling of US \$1.95 million; 845,000; 4.83 million Saudi Riyals; and 100,000 Dirhams at the country's airports.

Furthermore, 344 kilograms of narcotics and over one kilogram of gold were seized, leading to the arrest of 591 individuals.

The ministry also highlighted the provision of services such as the issuance of passports and traffic documents, assistance to victims of natural disasters, crime reduction, and the regulation of weapons and vehicles as critical initiatives taken over the past year.

In total, 1.745 million passports were issued to applicants, and 500,000 vehicles were registered in the system, with temporary license plates issued for 250,000 of them. The process of issuing temporary plates remains ongoing.

## New law facilitates land distribution in industrial areas

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Industry and Commerce said that the newly ratified law on industrial zones paves the way for land distribution in industrial parks.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad, the spokesperson for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce (MOIC), said that the purpose of this law is to manage land distribution, provide opportunities for investment, and oversee industrial zones.

According to Jawad, a committee will be formed under this law that will work on land distribution.

Akhundzada Abdul Salam Jawad mentioned the Ministry of Industry and Commerce is striving to create the necessary facilities for industrialists in the country, saying: "The aim of this law is to manage land distribution, foster Afghanistan's economic growth and development through the regulation of industrial zones, provide opportunities for investment, and ensure the maintenance and care of industrial zones."

The Chamber of Industries and Mines considers land distribution important for manufacturers in

increasing investments.

Sakhi Ahmad Paiman, the First Deputy of the Chamber of Industries and Mines, said: "Unfortunately, in Kabul alone, about 500 to 600 small and medium factories are on rented land, and this decision can provide a good opportunity for our investors and industrialists to expand their industries."

Additionally, some manufacturers have said that if their challenges, especially in the areas of land distribution and electricity supply, are addressed, they can increase their production and provide more job

opportunities for citizens.

Mohammad Naseem Sighani, the administrative manager of one of the factories, said in this regard: "If our industrialists are supported by the government and their problems, such as electricity and land issues, are resolved, production will increase, God willing, and employment for our people will also increase."

Meanwhile, according to the Chamber of Industries and Mines, about 5,000 factories are active across the country, providing job opportunities for more than 400,000 people.

## Patients in Helmand to receive free eye treatment

LASHKARGAH CITY (TOLONews): The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) in Helmand, with financial support from Qatar, has successfully performed free surgeries on more than 270 eye patients.

Officials report that these eye surgeries were conducted in Lashkargah city and several districts of Helmand.

Fazl Mohammad Fazli, the head of ARCS, said: "A total of 271 surgeries were performed."

In addition, 1,672 patients were seen in the outpatient department (OPD), around 542 near-sighted glasses were distributed, and 1,672 protection sheets were handed out."

Doctor Mohammad Jaswar Ibrahimkhil said,

"Among the patients who came for surgery, there were those who had been blind for 5 to 7 or even 8 years. However, they successfully underwent surgery here and are now very happy."

Borjan, a 68-year-old resident of Nawa district in Helmand, had been struggling with vision problems for years but could not afford timely treatment due to financial challenges.

He expressed his happiness to TOLONews, saying, "I have come here from a long distance, and I am pleased that they are providing services to the people here."

Several other patients welcomed the initiative, saying they could not afford eye treatment due to

economic difficulties.

Rahmatullah, a resident of Helmand, said, "I have had eye problems for about 14 to 15 years. I couldn't afford to treat my eye condition, and it's been about 8 to 9 years that my wife's eye developed a cataract, but we couldn't afford the treatment."

Gul Mohammad, another resident of ARCS in Helmand, added: "Many people have gathered here with us. When we arrived, they told us that the time was up, but I hope this process continues."

According to the officials of ARCS in Helmand, hundreds of residents in the province still suffer from eye diseases, and efforts are being made to provide free treatment for them as well.

Additionally, the WHO reported approximately 866,000 suspected cases of acute respiratory infections with 2,067 deaths, 42,800 suspected cases of measles with 188 deaths, 771 cases of Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever with 63 deaths, and 34,760 suspected cases of malaria with one death across Afghanistan this year.

Previously, the WHO has stated that access to quality healthcare remains a major challenge in Afghanistan.

Meanwhile, the WHO's latest report underscores the urgent need for increased health support and resources in Afghanistan to address the growing health crisis and improve the well-being of its population amidst ongoing challenges.

## UN provides health aid to 500,000 returnees

KABUL (Khaama Press): The World Health Organization (WHO) has reported that from November 2023 to July 31, 2024, health aid organizations provided services to around 578,000 returnees from neighboring countries.

In a report released, the WHO expressed concern over the rising incidence of infectious diseases, maternal and child health issues, and increased maternal mortality rates in Afghanistan.

According to the WHO report, 46 health aid organizations operated through 746 health centers in 284 districts across 34 provinces, providing medical services to over 666,000 needy Afghans. The organization also highlighted that 17.9 million people in

Afghanistan require health assistance, with 52% of them being children.

The WHO emphasized that the influx of returnees from neighboring countries, recent earthquakes, and potential floods have exacerbated health needs in Afghanistan. The organization warned that the risk of outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea, measles, Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever, dengue fever, COVID-19, pertussis, and malaria poses a significant threat to vulnerable populations.

The report also noted that psychological distress affects half of Afghanistan's population, with one in five citizens experiencing disruptions in daily functioning due to traumatic events.

# ATC orders PTI workers to appear in May 9 case

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Judge Iqbal Khan ordered Pakistan Tehreek Insaf (PTI) workers nominated in the vandalism case during the 9th May 2023 protest against the arrest Imran Khan while adjourned further hearing till 6th September, on Tuesday.

During the hearing, ATC informed that the attendance of the nominated accused isn't complete, and the court did not record their statements. The court recalled all nominated accused in the case and ordered them to appear in court on the next hearing on 6th September.

According to the prosecution, a protest was held on 9th May in the premises of Landi Kotal police station, during which the nominated accused in the case blocked the Torkham Road and vandalized property, causing damage to government and private properties. After which, Landi Kotal police nominated 18 accused in the case and completed the investigation, submitting the challan to the court, after which the trial against the accused is underway. ATC ordered PTI's workers to appear before the court on 6th September to record their statements in the vandalism committed on 9th May 2023.

Meanwhile, Special Anti-Corruption Court Judge Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judge Salah-u-Din has

dispose-of the cases against former Speaker National Assembly Asad Qaiser, Provincial Minister Aaqib Ullah Khan and others in corruption and illegal recruitment cases after withdrawal of their interim bail pleas.

During the hearing, Anti-Corruption Establishment lawyer informed the court that the names of the applicants had been included in Category 2, and therefore, the Anti-Corruption Department did not want to pursue further legal action against them. The applicants' lawyers then informed the court that the petitioners wanted to withdraw their applications after their names were included in Category 2. The court subsequently dispose-of the plea.

It is worthy to note that Asad Qaiser and his brother Aaqib Ullah along with others were accused of corruption and illegal recruitment in Swabi, after which the Anti-Corruption had registered cases against them.

PHC seeks FIA response in contempt plea: A divisional bench of Peshawar High Court (PHC) comprising Justice Ijaz Anwar and Justice Dr. Khurshed Iqbal has sought a response from Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) on a contempt of court petition for their failure to remove the name of Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) Ifitikhar Ali Mashwani from the Exit Control List (ECL).

The court has also dismissed the petitions of MNA Asif Khan and former MPA Rangrez Khan after their names were removed from the ECL. During the hearing, Justice Ijaz Anwar remarked that multiple cases are registered against the same person at different locations, but it is claimed that the police are autonomous, however, the police are also involved in making political cases.

The counsel Syed Sikandar Shah advocate informed the court that the petitioner's name was included in the ECL and he could not travel abroad. PHC had ordered the removal of the petitioner's name from the ECL on 4th June, but despite the court's order, the name was not removed.

The court considered taking contempt of court action against the Director FIA. The lawyer argued that the cases against the petitioner were political and that the police did not comply with court orders. Justice Ijaz Anwar observed that it is claimed that the police are autonomous, but they are also involved in making political cases. Multiple cases are registered against the same person at different locations. PHC issued a notice to the FIA and sought a response by 18th September. Similarly, the bench dismissed the petitions of MNA Asif Khan and former MPA Rangrez Khan after the FIA officials informed the court that their names had been removed from ECL.

## Top Biden adviser in Beijing

BEIJING: The national security adviser of the United States, Jake Sullivan, has met China's top diplomat Wang Yi as Beijing finds itself embroiled in security rows with key US allies. Japan scrambled fighter jets after a Chinese military aircraft's incursion into its airspace on Monday with a military spy plane.

Speaking at a news conference on Tuesday, Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said the airspace breach – the first by a military aircraft – was “not only a serious violation of Japan’s sovereignty but it also threatens our security”. Meanwhile, the Philippine defence chief on Tuesday accused China of being the “biggest disruptor” of peace in Southeast Asia following a week of confrontations between the two countries’ ships near a flashpoint disputed shoal in the South China Sea.

Sullivan's plane landed at Beijing's Capital airport just before 2pm (06:00 GMT). He was welcomed on the tarmac by US Ambassador to China Nicholas Burns and Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs official Yang Tao. Sullivan met Wang at a resort on the northern outskirts of the Chinese capital, where they shook hands in front of Chinese and US flags. In his remarks in front of journalists, Wang described China-US ties as “critical” and which have taken “twists and turns”.

“I hope, as always, the communication will be not only strategic but also substantive and, at the same time, very constructive,” he said. Before proceeding into a closed-door meeting, Sullivan said they would discuss areas of agreement and disagreement that “need to be managed effectively and substantively”. In advance of his trip – the first by a US NSA to China since 2016 – an American official said Sullivan would discuss the South China Sea with officials in Beijing, including Wang.

“We are committed to making the investments, strengthening our alliances, and taking the common steps on tech and national security that we need to take,” the official said, referring to sweeping restrictions on US technology transfers to China imposed under President Joe Biden. “We are committed to managing this competition responsibly ... and preventing it from veering into conflict,” she added, speaking on condition of anonymity. — Aljazeera

## Zelenskiy to present plan to US president

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Tuesday that the war with Russia would eventually end in dialogue, but that Kyiv had to be in a strong position and that he would present a plan to U.S. President Joe Biden and his two potential successors. The Ukrainian leader, addressing a news conference, said Kyiv's three-week-old incursion into Russia's Kursk region was part of that plan, but that it also comprised other steps on the economic and diplomatic fronts.

“The main point of this plan is to force Russia to end the war. And I want that very much - (that it would be) fair for Ukraine,” he told reporters in Kyiv of the war launched by Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022. He did not elaborate further on the next steps, but said he would also discuss the plan with Democratic Vice President Kamala Harris and probably also with Republican Donald Trump, the two nominees for the U.S. presidential election. Zelenskiy said he hoped to go to the United States in September to attend the U.N. General Assembly in New York and that he was preparing to meet Biden.

His remarks indicated that he sees the main potential forum for talks as a follow-up international summit on peace, at which Ukraine has said it wants Russia to have representatives. The first summit to advance Kyiv's vision of peace, held in Switzerland in June, pointedly excluded Russia, while attracting scores of delegations, but not from China, the world's second largest economy, despite Kyiv's push to win over the global south.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferring award of Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) upon Commander of the Ground Forces of China, General Li Qiamong, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

# Pakistan aims to raise \$4b from ME banks: SBP

KARACHI (Reuters): Looking to plug its external financing gaps, Pakistan plans to raise up to \$4 billion from Middle Eastern commercial banks by the next fiscal year, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Jameel Ahmad, told Reuters on Tuesday.

The governor's optimism stems from the government's efforts to roll over \$12 billion in loans from China, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), according to sources. In a wide-ranging interview with the wire, the SBP governor said Pakistan was also in the “advanced stages” of securing \$2 billion in additional external financing required for IMF approval of a \$7 billion bailout programme.

Additionally, as per sources, the government

has requested an extra \$1.2 billion loan from Saudi Arabia to bridge a \$2 billion financing gap. Pakistan and the IMF reached an agreement on the loan programme in July, subject to approval from the IMF's executive board and it obtaining “timely confirmation of necessary financing assurances from Pakistan's development and bilateral partners”.

However, the country is missing from the IMF agenda until September 4, 2024, according to the lender's schedule of its Executive Board meetings released on August 26. Asked about monetary policy, Ahmad said recent interest rate cuts in Pakistan have had the desired effect, with inflation continuing to slow and the current account remaining under control, despite the cuts.

Pakistan's annual consumer price index inflation was 11.1% in July, having fallen from highs of over 30% in 2023. “The Monetary Policy Committee will review all these developments,” Ahmad said, adding that future rate decisions could not be pre-determined.

The central bank cut rates for two straight meetings from a historic high of 22% to 19.5%, and will meet again to review monetary policy on September 12. “Now we have to focus on growth and other related areas because those are also equally important for job creation and other socioeconomic issues,” said Ahmad. He added that the central bank's mandate was to ensure price and financial stability before shifting its focus towards growth.

# Israeli strikes across Gaza kill 18, including 8 children

GAZA (AP): Palestinian officials say Israeli airstrikes across the Gaza Strip have killed at least 18 people, including eight children. The Civil Defense, first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government, said three children and their mother were killed in an airstrike late Monday in the Tufah neighborhood of Gaza City. It said three other people were missing after the strike.

Another strike late Monday hit a building in downtown Gaza City, killing a child, three women and a man, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. In southern Gaza, a strike on a home early Tuesday killed five people, including a man, his three children as young as 3 years old and a woman, according to a casualty list provided by Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis, where the bodies were taken.

Another airstrike early Tuesday flattened a home west of Khan Younis, killing at least four people, including a child, according to Nasser Hospital, where the dead were taken. Footage shared online showed residents digging through the rubble. A man carried a wounded child to an ambulance, while two others carried a dead body wrapped in a blanket. Palestinian health officials do not say whether those killed in Israeli strikes are civilians or fighters.

Israel says it tries to avoid harming civilians and accuses Hamas of putting them in danger by fighting in residential areas. But the military rarely comments on individual strikes, which often kill women and children. Gaza's Health Ministry says Israel's offensive has killed over 40,000 people in Gaza. The war began when Hamas-led

militants stormed into southern Israel on Oct. 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting around 250 people. One of Gaza's last functioning hospitals has been emptying out in recent days as Israel has ordered the evacuation of nearby areas and signaled a possible ground operation in a town that has been largely spared throughout the war, officials said Monday.

The Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital in Deir Al-Balah is the main hospital serving central Gaza. The Israeli military has not ordered its evacuation, but patients and people sheltering there fear that it may be engulfed in fighting or become the target of a raid. Also on Monday, Israeli strikes in Gaza City and Khan Younis killed at least 19 people, according to local officials, and fighting between Israel and Hezbollah resumed across the Lebanon border.

# Starmer ‘unpopular decisions’ to fix Britain

LONDON (Reuters): Prime Minister Keir Starmer said on Tuesday he would have to take unpopular decisions, raising the possibility of “painful” taxes on the wealthy and spending cuts to try to fix Britain's myriad of problems he blamed on Conservative misrule.

In a speech in the rose garden of his Downing Street office, the scene of COVID-19 parties under a former Conservative government, Starmer promised to end politics as usual, telling voters he was leveling with them that Britain's problems would only get worse before getting better. Elected in a landslide victory in July, Starmer has vowed to rebuild British society, saying this month's anti-migrant riots reflected divisions that have taken hold, stoked by what he described as the Conservatives' preference for populism.

He also blamed the last government for leaving him

with a 22 billion pound (\$29 billion) black hole, something he said was unexpected and which had forced him to take some difficult decisions such as limiting fuel payments to the elderly. The opposition Conservative Party accuses Starmer's Labour Party of portraying the fiscal situation as much worse than it is so it can hike taxes after campaigning before the election on an agenda not to raise certain taxes on working people.

Starmer said he planned to stick to that pledge, but there would be short term pain in what he said would be “unpopular decisions” for the long term good. “There is a budget coming in October, and it's going to be painful. We have no other choice [...] Those with the broader shoulders should bear the heavier burden,” he said in a speech to voters he met during the election campaign, referring to a fiscal statement

due on October 30. “We have inherited not just an economic black hole but a societal black hole and that is why we have to take action and do things differently. Part of that is being honest with people about the choices we face and how tough this will be,” he said. “Frankly, things will get worse before we get better,” he told the audience of apprentices, teachers, nurses, small business owners and firefighters.

The rose garden last made headlines after it was used by former Prime Minister Boris Johnson and his staff to hold parties during the COVID-19 lockdowns, events that Starmer said had shattered the trust between the public and its politicians. Conservative leadership contender, Kemi Badenoch, who is also the party's policy chief for housing and communities, said the speech was based on a “dishonest analysis”.

## Indian police fire tear gas at students protest

KOLKATA (AFP): Police have fired tear gas and water cannon, and used batons to break up protests over the rape and murder of a trainee doctor in the eastern Indian city of Kolkata. Protesting university students led the crowds in breaking through barricades set up by security forces to demand the resignation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, the state's top elected official, for her handling of the case.

The August 9 rape and murder of the 31-year-old trainee medic while she was on duty at Kolkata's state-run RG Kar Medical College and Hospital caused outrage and protests across India, shedding light on the pervasiveness of sexual violence in the country. Some of the protesters demanding Banerjee's resignation were from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the main opposition party to the chief minister's Trinamool Congress party in the state.

Police had banned the BJP's rally in Kolkata, the capital of West Bengal, deeming it illegal and blocking roads. Some schools and workplaces had given people the day off, in anticipation of the protests blocking traffic, local media reported. Four student activists were arrested ahead of the rally, police said, accusing them of trying to orchestrate large-scale violence.

Namita Ghosh, a college student who attended the protest, told the AFP news agency that the crowd was demonstrating “peacefully” before the police chased them with batons. Some 5,000 police officers were deployed in Kolkata and the neighbouring city of Howrah, a senior officer said. Kunal Ghosh, a spokesman for the Trinamool Congress party, blamed the police crackdown on “lawlessness” created by BJP workers.

The BJP is supporting the protesting students. Senior state leader Suwendu Adhikari has said that Banerjee's administration is trying to suppress the young doctor's murder, a charge the state government has denied. One police volunteer has been arrested for the crime, but the doctor's family has alleged that it was a case of gang rape and more men were involved. An autopsy confirmed sexual assault.

Protests have rocked Kolkata, as well as cities across the country, demanding justice and a swift investigation, mirroring similar widespread demonstrations after the 2012 gang rape of a 23-year-old student on a moving bus in New Delhi. Activists say women continue to face high levels of sexual violence despite tougher laws enacted since the 2012 attack, which spurred politicians to order harsher penalties for such crimes and set up fast-track courts dedicated to rape cases. The government also introduced the death penalty for repeat offenders.

# PNS Yarmook conducts exercise with Oman Ship

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy Ship YARMOOK conducted Passage Exercise with Royal Navy of Oman Vessel (RNOV), AL SEEB during Regional Maritime Security Patrol in Gulf of Oman. The exercise was aimed to develop synergy and mutual understanding between the two navies while demonstrating interoperability to undertake Joint Ops in the region. Earlier, PNS YARMOOK also visited Muscat, Oman, where Commanding Officer called on military leadership of Oman and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Pakistan Navy regularly operates along with other navies for a common cause of promoting peace and stability in the region. Cognizant of its national obligation to maintain rule based order at sea, PN regularly deploys its warships on Regional Maritime Security Patrol (RMS) and also contributes to collaborative maritime security efforts.

PN's Commodore



Muhammad Khalid promoted to Rank of Rear Admiral: Pakistan Navy's Commodore Muhammad Khalid has been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral with immediate effect.

Rear Admiral Muhammad Khalid got commission in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1995. He is a graduate of Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi and MS Oceanography from USA.

The flag officer has done various professional courses from national and international institutes. He has done Harbour and Coastal Hydrography Course from Italy, Hydrography and Meteorology Advanced Survey Course from UK, Exclusive Economic Zone Protection Officers Course

from UK, Pakistan Navy Staff Course from PN War College Lahore, Naval Staff Course from South Africa and National Security and War course from National Defence University Islamabad.

The Real Admiral has an illustrious naval career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments. His major Command appointments include, Commanding Officer (Dredging Vessel) BEHR KUSHA, Commanding Officer Survey Vessel (SV) BEHR PAIMA and Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral was awarded Sitara-e-Imtiaz (Military).

# Russia launches another wave of missiles at Ukraine

MOSCOW: Russia has launched a barrage of missile and drone attacks targeting several Ukrainian regions and killing at least four people, a day after it carried out a “massive” attack on Ukraine's power grid.

Two people were killed when a hotel was “wiped out” in the central Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, regional officials said on Tuesday. Two more people died in drone attacks on the city of Zaporizhzhia, east of Kryvyi Rih. The Kyiv region's air defence systems were deployed several times overnight to repel missiles and drones targeting the capital, the regional military administration said on the Telegram messaging app.

Ukrainian air defences shot down about 15 drones and several missiles near the Ukrainian capital during Russia's overnight attack, Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv's military administration, said on Tuesday morning. “Everything that flew to the capital of

Ukraine was destroyed,” he said on Telegram.

Ukraine shot down five missiles and 60 drones launched by Russia during the overnight attack, the Ukrainian air force said on Tuesday. Russia launched 91 projectiles, including 10 missiles and 81 Iranian-designed attack drones, from several regions, it said in a social media post. Ukraine's air force also said it recorded the launch of several clusters of drones and the takeoff from Russian airfields of Tu-85 strategic bombers and MiG-31 supersonic interceptor aircraft.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a post on X, “We will undoubtedly respond to Russia for this and all other attacks. Crimes against humanity cannot go unpunished.” He said 16 people were wounded in the strikes. On Monday, Russia launched more than 200 missiles and drones, killing at least seven people and damaging energy infrastructure. US President Joe

Biden condemned the attacks as “outrageous”.

“I condemn, in the strongest possible terms, Russia's continued war against Ukraine and its efforts to plunge the Ukrainian people into darkness,” he said in a statement. “Let me be clear: Russia will never succeed in Ukraine, and the spirit of the Ukrainian people will never be broken.” Russia's Ministry of Defence said its strikes on Monday hit “all designated targets” in Ukraine's critical energy infrastructure.

Zelenskyy, who held a news conference on Tuesday, said Ukraine planned to present a plan on how to end the war with Russia to Biden as well as Democratic and Republican presidential candidates Kamala Harris and Donald Trump. He said the war would eventually end through dialogue but Kyiv had to be in a powerful position at a summit that it hopes to convene this year to advance its vision of peace. — Aljazeera



KYIV: Rescue workers busy in relief work in Kryvyi Rih area of Ukraine, after it was hit by a Russian missile.