

**Imran affected with ear pain**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: KP Information Advisor, Barrister Saif, has revealed that PTI founder is experiencing ear pain while in Jail. Saif stated that Khan also requires an electric toothbrush and dumbbells for exercise. He further claimed that Khan is being denied contact with his sons. Saif also mentioned that PTI workers expressed disappointment after the postponement of a planned August 22nd rally.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with JUI-F Chief, Maulana Fazlur Rehman.

## Quetta attacks a plan to 'ruin' SCO summit

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Friday said that the horrific attacks in Balochistan, wherein dozens including security personnel lost their lives, was a "plot to subvert" upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit to be hosted by Pakistan next month.

Speaking on the floor of the Senate on Friday, the interior minister said that the "completely-planned" Balochistan attacks were carried out by "two to three terrorist organisations". "A lot of people are in anguish as they don't want Pakistan to host the [SCO] meeting," he said, adding that the August 26 incident was a "conspiracy to sabotage the summit".

Naqvi further said that no operation was being launched in Balochistan while "stringent action would be taken against those who did not accept the state and took up arms". He also said that the apex committee reviewed the decisions related to the National Action Plan (NAP) and coordinated with the federal and provincial institutions, adding: "Parliament is supreme and will remain supreme."

Giving details of the Thursday's meeting chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Quetta, the minister said that dialogue could only be held with those who respect the Constitution of Pakistan and salute the national flag. He said the meeting decided to provide Rs5 billion to the Counter Terrorism Department

## Minister warns of 'Reko Diq-like situation' if IPPs deals terminated unilaterally

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Awaiz Leghari has said that the government cannot unilaterally terminate agreements with the independent power producers (IPPs), warning that such a move will lead the country to face a "Reko Diq-like situation".

While responding to different questions at the Senate's Standing Committee on Power on Friday, Leghari argued against unilaterally ending these power purchase agreements with the IPPs blamed for massive power tariffs, saying that the contracts have a sovereign guarantee cover. The minister said this while responding to Senator Mohsin Aziz, chairman of the standing committee, who called Leghari's statements "disappointing".

Leghari further clarified that the government will not take any step related to the IPPs without mutual consent, adding that a task force, chaired by him, is reviewing the IPPs issue. Replying to a question, he said that IPPs are already in court over the Muhammad Ali report, calling it a "pandora's box". "We want to put an end to [contracts with] IPPs which we do not need any longer. However, we cannot do it unilaterally," the power minister said, responding to a query from Haji Hidayatulla Khan, a member of the standing committee. However, he vowed to give good news in the future as work in this regard is in progress.

(CTD) to enhance capacity against terrorism while Rs8 billion including Rs1 billion would be given to each division of the province for the development which would be spent with their local parliamentarians recommendations.

The security czar said that to overcome the shortage of federal government employees as many as 30 to 40 officials would be deputed in the province within two days. Pakistan has witnessed a surge in militant attacks since the Taliban government returned to power in neigh-

boursing Afghanistan in 2021, mostly in the north-western border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, but also in southwestern Balochistan, which abuts Afghanistan and Iran.

There were at least 170 militant attacks killing 151 civilians and 114 security personnel in Balochistan last year, according to the Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies. Islamabad accuses Kabul's new rulers of failing to root out militants sheltering on Afghan soil as they prepare to stage assaults on Pakistan.

## Initiative taken to uplift 20 poorest dists: NA informed

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly was informed today that an initiative has been taken to uplift twenty poorest districts of the country.

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal told the House during Question Hour that this initiative will be completed with the cooperation of the provincial governments. He said a package for the urban areas of Sindh has also been included in the PSDP which will be finalized with consultations of the elected representatives from the province. He said an alternative motorway between Karachi and Hyderabad will also be constructed.

The Minister for Planning and Development said the government is giving priority to the development of Balochistan province. Responding to the points raised by Leader of Opposition Omar Ayub Khan in the House, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said no NRO will be given to the PTI founding chairman. He said the PTI founding chairman will have to prove his innocence in the courts. He said the best possible facilities are available to the PTI founding chairman in the jail. Later, the House was adjourned to meet again on Monday at five in the evening.

## SBP injects Rs9.2 trillion into market

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs9,218 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on August 30, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 32 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs9,103 billion.

The central bank received 31 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs9,287.3 billion at the rate of return ranging between 19.56 to 19.65 percent while one bid was received for the 28-day tenor offering an amount of Rs3 billion at the 19.62% rate of return. For the 7-day tenor, the central bank accepted an amount of Rs9,100 billion for all the 31 quotes at 19.56 % rate of return while single quote for 28-day tenor worth Rs3 billion was accepted at 19.62% rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs115 billion in the market.

# The Frontier Post

**Cut in petrol prices likely**  
**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government is likely to announce a decrease in fuel prices for the third consecutive fortnight, effective September 1. Sources indicate a potential reduction of Rs3.1 per liter for petrol and Rs2.5 per liter for high-speed diesel (HSD). This decision is primarily driven by the falling prices of international petroleum products.

## Nation committed to eliminate terrorism

### Terrorists to be made an example to accomplish journey of progress, Premier tells federal cabinet

**Saqib Mushtaq**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday vowed that the government as well as the armed forces would collectively make the terrorists an example to accomplish the journey of the country's progress and prosperity.

"This is for sure, the armed forces and the law enforcement agencies will collectively make them (terrorists) an example. Without this, the country's journey of progress and prosperity cannot be accomplished. We have unity of thought and action on this," he remarked addressing the meeting of the federal cabinet chaired by him here.

The prime minister, referring to his Thursday visit to Quetta, said that the provincial government and the political leaders unanimously viewed that any talks with the anti-state elements were out of the question. He said the family members of the martyrs he interacted with during his visit, were in high morale despite losing their dear ones in the terrorist incident.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said the federal government would implement the proposals put forward by the provincial political leaders during his visit. He told the cabinet members that during the visit, the Quetta Corps Commander gave a presentation on challenges faced by Balochistan and how the terrorists, funded by foreign forces, were sowing hatred against Pakistan among the people. He said the civilian government was also taking effective measures for the youth's uplift. Besides, the officers and the personnel of the armed forces were chasing the terrorists with the federal government's support, he said, and assured the federal government's support for the capacity building of Levies.

He told the meeting that both federal and provincial governments were taking measures to engage the youth and protect them from being detracted by the anti-state elements. He said a 10% additional quota had been allocated for Balochistan in the schemes like laptops and agricultural training in China. Besides, the federal government would spend Rs55 billion to

## Shehbaz, Fazl discuss political situation

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday visited the residence of President of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam (F) Maulana Fazlur Rehman. Maulana Fazlur Rehman warmly welcomed the prime minister. The prime minister expressed best wishes for Maulana Fazal ur Rehman.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed overall political situation of the country. PM Shehbaz Sharif was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for Interior Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with Chief Adviser of Bangladesh government Professor Muhammad Yunus wherein two leaders agreed that there was a need to work closely for the progress and prosperity of the people of both countries.

During the conversation, both leaders also agreed that greater regional cooperation could play a vital role in uplifting the lives of the people of South Asia, a PM Office press release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated Professor Muhammad Yunus on assuming the office of Chief Adviser and lauded his contribution to the socio-economic development of Bangladesh. He expressed sympathies over the devastation caused by the recent floods in Bangladesh. The prime minister underscored the importance of revitalizing bilateral relations through enhanced cooperation in different domains. Noting the historical, religious and cultural bonds between Pakistan and Bangladesh, he expressed a keen desire to boost commercial relations, cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

solarise agricultural tube wells in Balochistan.

The prime minister said that Moody's has recently upgraded Pakistan's rating to indicate the country's improving economic condition. "This is a long journey. This yet needs more concerted efforts to improve the economy. The whole nation, including the provincial governments, are united on this," he said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that the federal government would soon unveil its five-year Home Grown Economic Revival Plan aimed at boosting exports, agriculture, industry, youth's uplift, skill and vocational training. "We have to take this journey ahead. The nations who work hard and face challenges resolutely achieve excellence. Pakistan will soon achieve economic independence and emerge as an economic power as there is no other way out," he added.

Meanwhile, the Federal cabinet approved starting negotiations on the Financial Commitment Agreement between China and Pakistan Railways for the up gradation of the ML-1 project, a crucial component of

the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, instructed that the final agreement (on ML-1) be brought back to the cabinet for approval. The prime minister briefed the cabinet on his recent visit to Quetta, highlighting ongoing efforts to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies, such as the police and levies, in Balochistan.

The prime minister stated that the entire nation was committed to eliminate terrorism and setting an example by dealing firmly with terrorists. He also praised the Balochistan provincial government for its commendable efforts to integrate Baloch youth into the national mainstream, aiming for their development and prosperity.

The prime minister stated that the federal government will fully support the Balochistan government in offering world-class education and equal development opportunities to Baloch youth. The Cabinet also approved the decisions made by the Economic Coordination Committee on August 29, 2024.

## 13 including 9 children killed in Dir road collapse incident

**Haleem Asad**

LOWER DIR: Heavy rains, flood and land sliding wreak havoc in the Kohistan area of Upper Dir as 13 persons including 3 women and 9 children and a youth belonging to the same family were killed when heavy boulders hit a house at Ramyal village in Patrak, late on Thursday night, residents and police said.

They said that wooden beams of the house broke when a landslide and boulders fell upon them damaging three of the rooms where the inmates were sleeping in. The house owned by one Naushad Khan was completely damaged.

The residents said that the house of Naushad son of Wali Muhammad, a resident of Ramyal Patrak collapsed, burying the inmates alive.

Local residents and Rescue 1122 emergency teams rushed to the site and started a search and rescue operation. As many as 12 bodies were retrieved from the debris. The victims were identified as wife of Naushad, Samia daughter of Nowshad, Aiman Bibi daughter of Naushad, Tayyib son of Naushad, Umair Ahmed son of Naushad, wife of Khan Badshah, Tagwaib Bibi d/o Khan Badshah, Saad s/o Khan Badshah, Zuhair s/o Khan Badshah, wife of Wali Rehman, Dua d/o Wali Rehman and Nasir s/o Wali Muhammad. The Rescue 1122 medical and emergency teams shifted the bodies to a nearby hospital.

According to locals, the whole area fell into grief when 12 coffins were brought to the graveyard for burial at Ramyal here on Friday. Moving scenes were witnessed during the funeral prayers, attended by hundreds of local residents and government officials. Meanwhile residents demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government and local administration to announce a special compensation amount for rehabilitation of the poverty-stricken family of Naushad Khan and Wali Rehman.



Civil administration senior officials and area elders visited the victim family and expressed their condolence and sympathies with it. The incident occurred after torrential rains and severe lightning in the area that also flooded the Panjkora River and mountainous streams.

The administration issued a threat alert for people living on the bank of the river in both the Lower and Upper Dir.

The hours' long rains triggered flash floods, submerging most of the area. The landslides and floodwater also damaged the main road leading to the scenic Kumrat valley at Kala Bala, Thall, Barikot and Galon areas suspending vehicular traffic to Kumrat. According to local residents the gushing water in the river also washed away several bridges and houses in the area. The administration stopped vehicles from using the damaged road.

Former MPA Muhammad Ali demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to declare the Kohistan Upper Dir as a calamity hit area and announce special package for its rehabilitation.

Taking notice of the trag-

## No room for those who ditched party: Imran

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder and former prime minister Imran Khan Friday announced a policy regarding the return of leaders who left the party.

Speaking to journalists in Adiala Jail, Imran Khan stated, "Let me make it clear, those who left the party during difficult times have no place in the party. Few people were tortured, blackmailed, and had their homes destroyed, including their families and children." Imran Khan added, "I won't take any names, but I know exactly who left the party during tough times. Those who acted as 'Charles' in good times abandoned us in bad times. There is no place in the party for those who left during difficult times."

The former premier said, "I am not naming anyone, but those who left the party straightforwardly will not be taken back. A better decision will be made for all those who went underground during difficult times and endured hardships and torture." "A fair trial is my right, but here the principles of a fair trial are being trampled upon. Party leaders and lawyers are not allowed to meet me, and for the third week now, I have not even been allowed to speak to my children on the phone," he maintained.

LHC issues notices on plea for case details against PTI Lahore President: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has issued notices to the parties involved in a petition seeking details of the cases registered against PTI Lahore President, Imtiaz Mahmood Sheikh.

Justice Muhammad Iqbal Chaudhry presided over the hearing of the petition, which was filed to obtain comprehensive information on the charges against Sheikh.

## Storm system intensifies into Cyclone Asna

**F.P. Report**

KARACHI: A potential cyclone, which developed over the Rann of Kutch in India, is expected to emerge along the Sindh coast on Friday, says the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD).

The system is likely to move west/southwestwards and emerge into northeast Arabian Sea along Sindh coast. The authorities on Friday evening issued fourth alert and sought necessary precautions to be taken by people to stay out of harm's way.

Amid the alarming situation, the National Emergency Operations Center (NEOC) of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) issued an alert of a tropical storm in Sindh as more heavy to very heavy rain-wind and thunderstorms are expected on Friday or Saturday. "A deep depression over Rann of Kutch, India is approaching the west-southwest of Pakistan about 170km southeast of Karachi. The system is likely to move west and southwest and convert into a tropical storm.

"Wind speeds are expected to reach 30-40 knots,

gusting higher. The estimated central pressure is 990 hPa, with further changes expected over the next 24 hours," the NDMA news release said. Under the influence of this weather system, widespread rains, wind and thunderstorms with very heavy to isolated heavy falls are likely in Tharparkar, Badin, Thatta, Sujawal, Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan, Tando Allah Yar, Matiari, Umerkot, Mirpurkhas, Sanghar, Jamshoro, Dadu and Shaheed Benazirabad districts and Karachi division till Aug 31 with occasional gaps.

The storm is likely to result in urban flooding in the urban centres. Heavy rainfall is likely to trigger flash floods in local drains and hill torrents of Balochistan in the coming days. The NDMA urges all relevant authorities and the public to take necessary precautions to mitigate the potential impacts of the weather system. It issued instructions to all relevant departments to stay alert and mobilise resources to ensure a swift response to any arising situations.

Fishermen and sailors are advised not to venture into

open seas during these days. "Residents of these areas are advised to remain vigilant and follow guidance from local authorities. Stay informed by keeping track of weather updates and alerts.

"The public is advised to remain vigilant and follow instructions from local authorities. The NDMA advises the public to stay informed and download 'Pak NDMA Disaster Alert' mobile app for timely alerts and closely monitor weather reports," it said. The Karachi city administration decided to close all public and private schools on Friday.

According to a handout from the Karachi commissioner's office, Commissioner Syed Hassan Naqvi issued orders to close all public and private schools in all districts of Karachi on Friday, Aug 30, in light of the Meteorological Department forecast heavy rainstorms in Karachi and most parts of Sindh. The strong monsoon system near Tharparkar and India's Rann of Kutch may penetrate into Karachi, Hyderabad and other districts, bringing torrential rains with thunderstorm, the Met Office said.





# CM proposes withdrawal of power tariff slabs

KARACHI (PPI): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, in his meeting with Federal Minister for Power Awaish Leghari via video link, has proposed that since the production of electricity is higher than the demand, therefore the tariff for peak hours and different slabs may be withdrawn to provide relief to the public and the target low-income customers.

The CM was assisted by his Energy Minister Syed Nasir Shah, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, PSCM Agha Wasif and Secretary Energy Musadiq Khan. The federal Minister was assisted by the Federal Secretary for Power Dr Fakhr-e Alam.

The CM and the federal power minister discussed the proposal to provide relief to low-income electricity customers. The Sindh CM said that the low-income/targeted customers using 300 to 500 units per month may be provided relief in the electricity bills. "In this regard, the provincial government has submitted its proposals for discussion and consideration," Murad Shah said.

Mr Shah said that different slabs of tariff needed to be abolished by offering flat rates to all domestic consumers. In this, the consumption of electricity would be increased and the customers naturally using 300 to 500 units per month could be targeted for relief through the BISP program.

Federal Power Minister Awaish Leghari said that the prime minister has already tasked him to work out a detailed plan so that low-income customers could be provided relief in their bills. "I have received directives from the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari to discuss the plan with you [the chief minister] and find a way out for the low-income customers," he said. Sindh CM said that the [federal] government would have to reduce the cost of power production by utilising local/indigenous fuel.

"The electricity tariff could only be reduced when the production cost would come down," he said. Federal Minister for Power Awaish Leghari said that the electricity demand has

come down for different reasons, and the peak hours in the sense of demand have also changed, therefore the proposals given by the Sindh CM could be considered. As far as the abolition of different slabs is concerned, Mr Leghari said that matter was debatable.

Shah proposed to provide electricity to factories at a subsidized rate if they started a night shift. In this way, the produced power could be utilized and simultaneously employment opportunities would be created. At this, Minister Power said that he would have a separate session with the Sindh chief minister either in Karachi or Islamabad to discuss and finalize different proposals.

## CM approves Rs 500m to start IT certification by 3 varsities across Sindh

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah has approved Rs 500 million to start IT Certificate programs to enhance IT skills of students and professionals across the province focusing on poverty reduction strategy. The CM said that the program would provide practical skills and industry-recognized certifications to stand out in a competitive job market.

To this effect, a meeting regarding the signing of memorandum of understanding (MoU) was attended by Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman HEC Prof Tariq

Rafi, Secretary to CM Raheem Shaikh, Secretary Information, Science & Technology Noor Ahmadi Samon, Secretary U&B Abbas Baloch, VC NED University Dr Suresh Lodhi, VC IBA Sukkur Dr Asif Shaikh, VC Mehran University Prof Tauha Hussain, IT Dept's Member Ayaz Uqaili and others here Friday.

Secretary of IT Noor Samo briefed the chief minister that the NED University would offer IT courses in Karachi Division and Tharparkar District. Mehran University would cover Hyderabad and Mirpurkhas Divisions and Shaheed Benazirabad, Sukkur and IBA University would cover Larkana Divisions.



KARACHI: A motorcyclist navigating through a flooded road on Main Road in Scheme 33 near Fariya Chowk during the monsoon season in the Provincial Capital. —APP Photo

# CM leading a revolution to modernize entire health system: Marriyum

LAHORE (APP): Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is leading a revolution to modernize entire health system in Punjab, said Punjab's Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb while inaugurating, on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's direction, a newly-constructed block at Mayo Hospital Lahore, equipped with modern facilities for the treatment of children.

She visited various sections of the newly-constructed block and reviewed various medical facilities available there for the patients. The Senior Provincial Minister said, "Established in 1871, Pakistan's oldest and largest Mayo Hospital has been serving the public for 153 years. This 300-bed hospital at the time of establishment of Pakistan has become a 2399-bed hospi-

tal today."

Marriyum Aurangzeb said the health of women and children is the top priority of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She added, Madam Chief Minister's vision is to make Punjab an exemplary province in terms of education, health, public service, infrastructure, environment and governance. She highlighted that Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, as the chief ministers of Punjab, had always set new examples of service in the province.

Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique said on the occasion that Paeds Surgical Block also has a CSSD, central oxygen supply, a small operation theater, day care centre and pathology lab. He added the wards are named after legendary professors. He highlighted that the number of beds in the oncology, dengue and med-

ical wards of the Paeds Medicine Unit has been increased from 25 to 48.

Khawaja Salman Rafique said that the new block, built at a cost of Rs 35 crore, is equipped with modern pediatric treatment facilities, surgery and modern machinery.

He added that with the construction of a new 4-storey block, the number of wards has increased, resulting in the increase of beds from 50 to 80.

Earlier, Vice-Chancellor KEMU and Professor of Paeds gave a briefing regarding the treatment of children and provision of modern machinery in the newly-constructed block. On behalf of Madam Chief Minister, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb congratulated C&W and the management of Mayo Hospital for timely completion of this revamping project.

**OFFICE OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR SENIOR**  
Local Govt. & Rural Development Department Bannu.  
No. 1225/AD/LG & RDD/Bannu Date: 27/08/2024

**CORRIGENDUM / ADDENDUM**

Reference to advertisement Tender NO. INF(P) 2036/24 dated 14/08/2024 published in daily Newspaper "Daily Wahdat" and other newspaper. The tender date through E-Bidding system are extended due to corrigendum / Addendum in the Term & Condition at S# 04 is replaced and may be read as "Only those contractors/firms will be eligible whom workshops are registered/Prequalified with PESCO/WAPDA and as well as the eligible contractors/Firms must have the following,

- Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), codes EE05.
- Inspectorate of Electricity, Energy & Power Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa License in Category "C" or "E".

Now the date of opening of tender is 13/09/2024 instead of 30/08/2024. The Package detailed/TOR can be obtained from the office of Assistant Director LG&RDD H.Q Bannu in office timing. Other terms and condition of advertisement will be same.

**Assistant Engineer (Sr)**  
LG & RDD H.Q Bannu

**Assistant Director (Sr)**  
LG & RDD H.Q Bannu

INF(P) 2263/24

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**PUBLIC HEALTH ENGG: DIVISION MARDAN**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDERS**  
**Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System**

Public Health Engineering Division Mardan Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites Electronic Bids from eligible firms / contractors in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage two envelop procedure, contractors / firms must be registered with PEC (up to date), KPRA and Provincial Enlistment Committee.

SerialNo	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (M)	2% E/M + Stamp Duty of Estimated Cost (Rs.)	0.03% Tender Form Fee (Rs.)
<b>CONSTRUCTION OF WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION SCHEME ON NEED BASIS UNDER ADP NO. 180616</b>				
1.	Sanitation Scheme At UC Daman e Koh	8.448	195710/-	2700/-
2.	Sanitation Scheme At UC Sari Behlol	10.864	236030/-	3300/-
3.	Sanitation Scheme At UC Gujar Garhi	4.024	86730/-	1250/-
4.	Sanitation Scheme At UC Pat Baba	8.812	194990/-	2650/-

**A) General Terms and Conditions:**

- Bidding Documents Including BOQ & Instruction to Bidder can be downloaded **PHE website (www.phedkp.gov.pk)**
- Following documents must be attached with the bids, (i) Enlistment and Renewal copy (ii) CNIC (iii) Valid Registration copy in the relevant code CE-09 (iv) Registration with Provincial Enlistment Committee (v) Registration with KPRA established under Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2013 (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa act No.XXI of 2013) (vi) NTN certificate (vii) As recommended by Sub Committee to the Cabinet notified vide Section Officer (Confidential) Chief Minister's Secretariat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Peshawar No.SO ( C ) / CMS-KPK / 2021/2828-31 dated 05-04-2021 a Non Refundable Bidding Entry fee @ 0.03% of tender cost along with 2% Earnest Money & Stamp Duty separately (In original & photo copy) should accompany the bid.
- Additional Security shall be submitted as per KPRA Notification No.S.R.O(14) / Vol:1- 24/2021-22 dated 10-05-2022.
- Last date & submission of the bid is **20-09-2024 at 12:00 Noon**, which will be opened on the same day at **12:30 P.M** in presence of the contractor or their authorized representative who opt to be present. Bid should reach to the office of undersigned through Courier service on or before the closing date mentioned.
- All others terms and conditions will remain intact as per guidelines and rules framed by Provincial Govt:

**Executive Engineer**

**INF (P) 2263 / 24****Public Health Engineering Division Mardan**  
**Tel / Fax No.0937-9230149**

## Kundi condoles with Rana Tanvir

LAHORE (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday visited the residence of Federal Minister for Food Security Rana Tavar Hussain and condoled with him the sad demise of his brother, MPA Rana Afzaal Hussain.

Faisal Karim Kundi offered Fateha for the departed soul. During a visit to the Rana Farms, Muridke, Governor Faisal Karim Kundi also met sons of the deceased and expressed his deep grief over the sad demise of the eminent politician. Former Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Sardar Dost Muhammad Mazari and MNA Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa were also present.

## Baba Bulleh Shah's Urs starts

LAHORE (APP): The 267th three-day annual Urs celebrations of Hazrat Baba Bulleh Shah started at Kasur.

Secretary Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Tahir Raza Bokhari, inaugurated the Urs by placing a traditional chadar on the shrine of the great saint. He alongwith Auqaf officials and other political personalities offered dua for the development, progress and stability of the country.

Addressing a Tasawuf conference, the secretary said that Baba Bulleh Shah believed in peaceful coexistence. He said that Baba Bulleh Shah is a prominent Sufi sage of the 17th century; he has a permanent position in Punjabi literature and his tone is extremely effective. His thoughts and wisdom were accepted without discrimination of colour, caste, religion and nationality, he added.

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The key responsibilities will include:

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- Providing legal and procedural support to in-house adjudication.
- Representing organization at various judicial forums/courts, such as high courts.
- Opinion writing on complex corporate issues.

**Age Limit: 30-45 Years**

**General Terms and Conditions:**

- The candidate possessing the requisite qualification, experience and age may apply.
- Only shortlisted candidates based on qualification and experience will be called for the interview. No TA/DA will be given to the candidates who appear in the test/interview.
- Government employees may apply through proper channel after getting NOC from the parent department.
- Applications that are incomplete or received after the due date will not be considered.
- General age relaxation of 5 years in upper age limit may be granted as admissible under the rules.
- After completion of two years of satisfactory performance, contract may be extended.
- Candidates who try to exercise undue influence during the selection process will be disqualified immediately.
- The organization reserves the right to accept, reject the applications or postpone the process as allowed under the rules.
- The organization being an equal opportunity employer offers competitive packages with excellent benefits.

**How to apply:**

Applications along with detailed CV and attested copies of academic credentials, testimonials, experience certificates, copy of CNIC, and one latest passport-size photograph may be sent within 15 days of publication of this advertisement at the following address:

**Deputy Director (HR), PO BOX # 1487 GPO, ISLAMABAD****PID(I)1481/24**

**NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING**

Sealed tenders based on MRS-(2024 1<sup>st</sup> Bi Annual)/ Non MRS- items for the below mentioned works are hereby invited on the basis of **Single stage single envelope procedure** from the government contractors registered with PEC, PESCO and enlisted with C&W Department as per Centralized Enlistment Policy of the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for the current financial year:

Work No	Work Name	Constituency	Estimated Cost (Millions)	Bid Security @2% (Rupees)	Last date & time of submission of electronic tender form	Date & time of opening of electronic bid
01	Repair and Maintenance of Transformer at PK-105, District Lakki Marwat.	PK-105 Lakki Marwat	10.00	200000	18-09-2024 12:00 pm	18-09-2024 12:30 pm
02	Repair and Maintenance of Transformer at PK-106, District Lakki Marwat.	PK-106 Ghazni Khel	10.00	200000	18-09-2024 12:00 pm	18-09-2024 12:30 pm
03	Repair and Maintenance of Transformer at PK-107, District Lakki Marwat.	PK-107 Sarai Naurang	10.00	200000	18-09-2024 12:00 pm	18-09-2024 12:30 pm

**Terms and Conditions:**

- Tender form can be filled online and downloaded from the official website of LGE&RDD ([www.lgkp.gov.pk](http://www.lgkp.gov.pk)) after publishing NIT.
- The securities shall be in shape of call deposit in favor of the **Assistant Director LG&RDD Lakki Marwat**.
- Only PESCO registered Contractors/Firms are eligible to apply.
- The eligible contractors/firms must have;
  - Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC), codes EE04 & EE05.
  - Inspectorate of Electricity, Energy & Power Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa License in Category "C" or "E".
- The contractors quoting their bids up to a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security @ 2% of Engineer Estimate.
- The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below up to 20% below on Engineer's Estimate shall submit along with their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer's Estimated cost in addition to 2% bid security. If the bid is not accompanied with the required amount of additional security, then it will be considered as non-responsive than the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the second lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- Similarly, a contractor, quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer's Estimated cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer's Estimate along with detailed rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids, if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security, then said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted along with such non-responsive bid shall be forfeited in favor of Government and the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly.
- In case detailed rate analysis submitted with the bids is, in view of the Procuring Entity, not convincing, the Head of the Procuring Entity may declare such bid as non-responsive without any forfeiture of bid securities and record reasons thereof.
- The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids or may advertise procurement opportunity afresh.
- Printed Electronic bid (both Original & Duplicate copies) may be delivered through courier service.
- The call deposits i.e. bid security for the work / contract must be prepared after publishing of NIT.
- The time for completion of scheme shall be as per work order. The contractor or his representative can be present at time of opening of electronic bids opening.
- In case of tie draw amongst the responsive bidders, the bid may be decided through free toss which shall be considered as final.
- Any electronic bidder who provides false, or materially inaccurate or incomplete or do not send information in hard form will be disqualified as per KPRA Act Section 29 (1) read with KPRA Rule (43). Furthermore, the Procuring Entity/Executing Agency will recommend and sent cases for debarring/Blacklisting and will initiate / take action in light of approved procedure/ mechanism as per KPRA Act section 29 (2) read with KPRA Rule (44).
- Bids will remain valid for 90 days from the closing date of bids.**
- The firms/contractors who wants to participate in tendering process may approach Directorate General LG&RDD Peshawar within two days before closing time of electronic apply, for uploading their names on the official website i.e. ([www.lgkp.gov.pk](http://www.lgkp.gov.pk))
- All bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority (KPRA) under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act 2013.
- The PEC and KPRA registration (Active Tax Payer) must be valid for current Financial Year and attached with the Electronic Bids.
- The successful bidder/contractor shall be responsible to produce satisfactory certificate of the work-done from concerned MPA and Technical committee constituted for the purpose before submission of bill for payment.
- Any addition made in the terms & conditions in NIT advertised shall be implemented as per KPRA Act & Rules.

**Assistant Engineer**  
LG&RDD Ghazni Khel

**Assistant Engineer (Sr.)**  
LG&RDD Lakki Marwat

**Assistant Engineer**  
LG&RDD Naurang

**Assistant Director (Sr.)**  
LG & RDD Lakki Marwat

INF(P) 2254/24



Training for child protection officers and social case officers

# KP Child Protection and Welfare Commission sings MoU with UoP



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Child Protection and Welfare Commission and University of Peshawar have signed a memorandum of understanding to build synergy for the nascent regional child protection units and help cementing in-service training for child protection officers and social case officers across the province.

The MoU was signed by the acting vice chancellor Prof. Dr. Muhammad

Naeem Qazi and Chief CPWC Ijaz Khan.

Speaking on the occasion, Ijaz Khan said that agreement will go a long way to implement Chief minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur vision to enlarge child protection unit to offer services from a divisional to a regional child protection institution " This is a paradigm shift that will offer in-service capacity building to child protection officers and social case officers in 21 districts", he stressed. He added that street and

runaway children and menace of child abuse could be addressed through such sound policy frameworks.

The vice chancellor University of Peshawar congratulated UNICEF, Social Work and CPWC to forge an alliance for helping students, curriculum, child welfare and protection through academic linkages and exposures. He stressed on three partners to work in unison for two years for ending child exploitation and plight.

Mr. Sohail Ahmad child protection specialist from UNICEF, stressed that agency is working to bid for acquiring professional services from Bradford university to streamline child protection services and policies in the province.

Dr. Shakil Ahmad while sharing his thoughts said that this understanding will solve HR issues for commission and University alike. He thanked Ijaz Khan services for involving academia in district child protection committees.

Director P& D Professor Bushra Khan term this agreement to be fruitful for final year students to acquire hands-on training and understanding real world social problems. She offered University infrastructure for capacity building of the staff in near future.



PESHAWAR: A young mechanic busy repairing bicycle tyre at his workplace, Sikandar Pura.

# UET Peshawar, LUMS ink MoU to foster joint research in energy

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Energy Research Center (BERC), University of Engineering and Technology, Peshawar entered into a strategic collaboration with the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) here the other day.

The MoU signing and award of the consultancy contract was organized under the project titled "Transformation of Construction Sector in Pakistan: A Pathway towards Clean, Green, and Sustainable Buildings supported by GIZ Pakistan and funded by BMZ.

The MoU was signed by Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor, UET Peshawar and Prof. Dr. Tariq Jadoon, Chief Academic Officer / Provost, LUMS. The MoU aims to foster joint research and development projects in the field of energy, with a particular focus on energy efficient building designs.



The collaboration will also involve organizing conferences, providing training, and offering consultancy services. Both the institutions will work together to explore new opportunities for research, work on pilot projects and conduct studies to address the pressing need of demand side management.

Dr. Naveed Ahmed, Director BERC said that this collaboration marks a significant step forward in addressing the energy challenges faced by Pakistan, with both institutions poised to lead the

way in research and innovation. Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali appreciated the initiative taken by BERC and LUMS. He emphasized on the importance of this partnership in enriching the academic environment and making significant contributions towards society, particularly in the energy sector.

Dr. Tariq Jadoon highlighted the commitment of both institutions to advancing expertise in energy optimisation.

This MoU would not only enhance energy effi-

ciency nationwide but also improve the student experience, drive cutting-edge research, and contribute to societal development, he added. The ceremony was attended by Prof. Dr. Rizwan M. Gul, Dean, Faculty of Mechanical, Chemical, and Industrial Engineering, Prof. Dr. Hamidullah, Chairman, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Dr. Khizar Azam Khan, Registrar UET Peshawar, Dr. Gul Muhammad Khan, Director CISNR and other officials from LUMS and UET Peshawar.

# WAPDA Hydro Union announces 3-day mourning

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has announced a three-day mourning period across the province, from September 2 to September 4, in response to the brutal killing of Swabi PESCO personnel, Hafiz Kamranullah. The union has warned that if the killers are not arrested within this period, they will not hesitate to shut down the electricity supply across the province.

This strong stance was declared by Haji Muhammad Iqbal, the Chairman of the All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, after attending the funeral of the

martyred PESCO official. Addressing a protest at Aman Chowk, Swabi, where the body of Hafiz Kamranullah was placed, Haji Muhammad Iqbal was joined by other union leaders, including Provincial Secretary Noor Ul Amin Hyderzai, Central Chairman Gohar Taj, Provincial Vice Chairman Kamran, and Deputy Chairman Shafiullah.

Haji Muhammad Iqbal condemned the government and administration for their failure to protect PESCO personnel and properties, stating that despite severe staff shortages-nearly 70%-the workers have continued to run the system. However, the recent killing of Hafiz Kamranullah and the serious injury of his colleague Hussain Muhammad in the Maniri

Payan Nawabbandh area of Swabi have heightened the union's concerns.

He demanded that the government register terrorism cases against the killers and ensure their arrest within three days. He further emphasized that if the authorities fail to act, the union will proceed with the power shutdown, holding the government and administration fully responsible for any consequences.

The union leaders reiterated that the workers are not to blame for the rising cost of electricity and highlighted the continuous sacrifices made by the personnel.

They called for enhanced security measures for NEPRA, TESCO personnel, and WAPDA installations to prevent further tragedies.

# Sajid made PRO for Chief Secretary



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: According to a transfer notification issued by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the services of Sajid Mahmood Khan, Assistant Director of Information, have been transferred from Public Relations Officer for the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to the provincial government-run broadcasting institution, Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan. The newly appointed Assistant Director of Information, Sajid Mahmood Khan, has assumed the charge as Station Manager of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan. It is worth noting that Sajid Mahmood Khan has previously served as Station Manager at Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan. He possesses extensive experience in producing quality programs and effectively managing administrative affairs. Considering this experience, the department has appointed him as Station Manager of Pakhtunkhwa Radio Mardan.

# KPEZDMC, Rasgar Air Compressors hold seminar

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Economic Zones Development and Management Company (KPEZDMC) and Rasgar Air Compressors successfully conducted a seminar on energy Conservation through clean, sustainable manufacturing with compressed air technology at the Gadoon economic zone, Swabi, said a press release issued here on Friday.

The event aimed to equip local industries with the knowledge and tools to

optimize compressed air systems, reduce energy consumption, and adopt sustainable practices.

Valuable insights provided on importance of aligning with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) regarding renewable energy and responsible production and consumption and the need for sustainable manufacturing practices to ensure a greener future.

The seminar was a resounding success, provid-

ing a platform for knowledge sharing, networking, and promoting sustainable manufacturing practices. By empowering industries with the tools to reduce energy consumption and adopt eco-friendly approaches, KPEZDMC contributing to a more sustainable and prosperous future for the region.

Similar sessions will be organized in other zones of the province under KPEZDMC, to raise awareness and promote sustainable practices.

# Internet onslaught diminishing traditional sports

PESHAWAR (APP): Shabir Ahmed, a renowned volleyball player of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, is extremely disheartened by the decline in traditional sports activities in his hometown of Amankot, Nowshera District due to onslaught of an internet and social media in Pakistan.

Amankot—once a vibrant center for volleyball matches among local players and produced many stars—are now deserted due to growing dominance of internet and social media, influencing the area's youth immensely.

Shabbir recalled a time when volleyball tournaments were a major local event before 2000, drawing large crowds amid significant enthusiasm especially among youth of Peshawar, Charsadda and Nowshera districts.

"It is heartbreaking to see the deserted volleyball and Kabadi grounds where we used to play with great spirit and sports discipline," he told APP. He reminisced about the lively gatherings and competitive sportsmen spirits that once defined the local sports scene.

Before the rise of the internet and social media in 2001, the villages and towns sports events in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were highly anticipated, with volleyball and Kabaddi tournaments besides other traditional games drawing enthusiastic support from locals irrespective of caste and colours.

Players from surrounding towns and villages of Nowshera, Charsadda and Peshawar had come together every Friday for Kabaddi matches,

with crowds cheering and chanting "Kabaddi, Kabaddi, Kabaddi" as they played, raising winners on shoulders amid dances on beatdrums.

Shabir who represented Police at National Games pointed to Pakistan's great success in Kabaddi, noting that the national team won the World Cup in 2020 and Arshad Naeem's heroic performance at Javelin throw during Paris Olympics 2024 raised heads of every Pakistani high.

He believed that with proper support and recognition, Pakistan can produce more champions like Olympic gold medalist Arshad Naeem, Squash legends Jahangir Khan and Jan Sher Khan and Seoul 1998 Olympics silver medalist Hussain Shah to make the national flag high in the world.

However, he emphasized that the current focus on digital entertainment especially on facebook and TikTok are negatively impacting traditional sports especially in rural areas where scope of sports is gradually fading away.

The proliferation of internet use in Pakistan, which has crossed 111 million early this year, has mainly contributed to the decline of traditional sports in Pakistan including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, and Snapchat have seen significant user growth, further drawing attention away from physical activities.

The internet users in Pakistan had swelled to a record 111 million January year while about 71.90 mil-

lion people use social media which is equating to 29.5 million of the total population of the country.

Similarly, about 188.9 million cellular connections are active in Pakistan which is equal to 77.8 percent of 241 million population of Pakistan. Alike, the users of Facebook have jumped to record 44.50 million while 71.70 million population use YouTube, 17.30 million Instagram, 54.38 million TikTok and 30.21 million snapchat, affecting traditional games.

Squash legend Qamar Zaman noted the negative impact of the internet and social media on traditional sports including squash. He observed a significant reduction in the number of young players in his squash academy compared to previous years due to the onslaught of internet and social media's influence.

He said Pakistan had ruled on world squash referring to the great squash players such as Roshan Khan, Azam Khan, Jahangir Khan, Jansher Khan, Atlas Khan and himself over the years.

Political concerns also emerged with Iktairat Wali Khan, Pakistan Muslim League-N KP Information Secretary and former member provincial assembly, criticizing the PTI-led government for its long delays in upgrading and renovation of the historic Arbab Niaz Cricket Stadium.

The stadium's renovation, which began in 2017, remained incomplete even to date, depriving thousands of players of crucial sports facilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa especially in Peshawar.

# Beyond the veil - The trend of female suicide attacks

Sajid Anwar Wardak

ON August 26th, at the anniversary of Nawab Akbar Bugti, a 22-year-old student of Turbat Law College "Sangat Mahal Baloch" hit a truck full of explosives on the main gate of the Bela headquarters. After this, the attackers of the Balochistan Liberation Army get a chance to enter the headquarter. On the same pattern, 44 attacks are carried out continuously for 20 hours at 40 different places in 13 districts of Balochistan.

The BLA calls this series of attacks Operation "Hiroof". The BLA's Majeed Brigade, headed by Bashir Zeb, claimed responsibility for the attacks. According to media reports, 78 security officials, including 35 civilians were martyred as a result of these attacks, while 130 security personnel were martyred according to the BLA social media account "Hakeel". Apart from human lives, 2 gas pipelines, 7 railway tracks, 2 bridges and 13 vehicles were destroyed. Whether through ignorance or negligence, the terrorist attacks were turned into a conflict between Balochistan and Punjab.

In terms of damage, these attacks can be called the most destructive operation in the history of Balochistan. BLA has released a list of 10 attackers, all of whom are between the ages of 20-25 and all are educated, some have degrees from universities and some are still students. Mahil, the female suicide attacker was also a student. Mahil's entire family is well-educated and has political background. No one has gone missing from his family to

date. Then what are the factors that forced Mahil to take such an extreme step? Earlier, another female BLA suicide bomber Sherry Baloch blew herself up near China Language Center in Karachi University. Sherry received a B.Ed degree from Allama Iqbal Open University and an MSc in Zoology from Balochistan University.

At that time she was a government school teacher in Kalatak. Sherry's husband was a dentist while she was a mother of two children. There was no one missing from Sherry's family to see her actions through the mirror of revenge. However, she was involved with the Balochistan Students Organization Azad to some extent. Historically, on June 6, 2000, a female suicide bomber attacked Nawawaq's office in Karachi, which was the first such attack in Pakistan.

In 2005, the security agency arrested women named Arafat and Saba who were receiving training for suicide attacks. In 2010, World Food Program personnel were attacked by a female in Bajaur while they were distributing food to the public. The female suicide bomber took 43 other lives with her. In 2010, an Uzbek couple carried out a suicide attack on a police station in DI Khan. In 2012, a woman committed a suicide attack on Jamaat-e-Islami's former Ameer Qazi Hussain Ahmed in Mohmand.

In 2013, a woman committed a suicide attack on a university bus in Quetta, killing 25 people. The South Asian Terrorism Portal has identified 6 female suicide bombers in Pakistan between 2002 and 2017. This tradition of suicide attacks by women, especially educated women, is alarming.

Khurram Iqbal's book "The Making of Pakistani Human Bombs" is an excellent and comprehensive literature to understand its basic science.

It is not at all necessary that the suicide attack is done for revenge, but it is done by controlling and commanding the human mind. The role of religion is not too prominent, in history, women have been used most in terrorism by secular organizations. A human becomes a machine, depending on what the programmer wants it to do, since women are naturally more emotional and impressionable, making them easy targets for terrorist organizations. On the one hand, they reach the target very easily and on the other, apart from getting media attention, they also get public sympathy.

Their main aim is to tell the world that we have been severely oppressed and that our women have also been forced to commit suicide attacks. If we observe all these attacks, women have caused more loss of life and property than male suicide bombers. In Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, thousands of years of traditions of the veil and the sanctity of women prevent security personnel from searching them and female terrorists pass through the checkpoint without being checked.

On one side such suicide attacks cause more destruction, and on the other hand, Baloch and Pashtun traditions and culture, which have been going on for thousands of years, are also suffering irreparable damage. What is the solution to this problem? If we think that all this can be done away with by force, it is simply a delusion, and for the last twenty years, this effort has failed. Practically, there is a need to address

the numerous factors that can fuel violent extremism. Discrimination, inequitable distribution of resources, marginalization, poor governance and lack of state accountability are justified by terrorists and are setting our future generations on the path of destruction. Only the rule of law and respect for human rights can satisfy their minds.

This war has now moved out of arms and into minds. The most important thing to understand is that most suicide bombers have been or are students of social sciences. If terrorists are playing with our future by weaponizing beliefs and ideas, with the help of rival states, then we also have to treat these sick minds with other methods instead of force.

The scope of education and employment should be extended to those areas which are their target. First of all, the state has to come forward and take responsibility, then since most of the terrorists, especially women are coming out of the modern education system i.e. universities, then the teachers have to play their role. Rather, elements of nationalism dominate. I believe that the greatest need today is to teach peace in our educational institutions. I am saying this because 75% of the population of Balochistan alone consists of youth below 30 years. Thirdly, our religious leaders have to play their role to convey the correct teachings of Islam to the children of this nation. Teachers and scholars will not be able to bring major changes without state patronage. We pray to Allah Almighty to protect our motherland from both external and internal enemies and make this country a cradle of peace.





## In brief

### Monitories demand facilities F.P. Report

BUNER: For the first in the history of Buner a 'Kuli Katcheri' at Pir Baba Shamshan Ghaat for redressal of problems faced by minority community in which large number of minorities elders and youth present their problems and difficulties, on Friday. The deputy commissioner with a team included ADC General, AC Gadezai Salarzai, Tehsil Nazim, TMO and heads of all other departments participated in order to support the minority community. Representing the minority community in open forum, minority nominated MPA Arish Kumar, former member of district council, Sardar Santh Singh, Deepak Kumar, Lajoon Singh, Inder Singh and others demanded more construction and modern facilities installation of solar system in the Shamshan Ghaat and Guru Nanak School. The participants demanded establishment of separate playground and tournament for the minority community, conducting separate vehicle license test for minorities, posting women teachers in the nearest schools, allocating quota in NGOs for the minority community and establishing community center to perform religious rituals day and night in rain and heatwave. They also demanded respect in offices for them.

### Two killed for honor in Bannu F.P. Report

BANNU: A man and woman were killed in the name of honor in Bannu district, police informed on Friday. Police said the incident took place in Mirakhel area of Bannu where a man and woman were killed by unknown assailants. Police said, the incident seemed to be a case of honor killing however investigation has been started to arrest the responsible. The names of the deceased were not yet ascertained. Bodies of both the deceased were shifted to District Headquarters Hospital Bannu for medico legal procedure.

### DC hold 'Kuli Katchery' F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Program "Awami Agenda" arranged a Health Kuli Katchery at DHQ Hospital KDA here which besides the Members of the Provincial Assembly Shafi Jan and Daud Afridi was also attended by the MS of DHQ Hospital, Doctors, Nursing Staff and General Public. Explaining the aims and objectives of the Health Katchery, the Deputy Commissioner said that the main purpose of this Katchery is to get recommendations, suggestions and complaints from the hospital administration, other staff and general public to improve the condition of the hospital so that action can be taken in light of these suggestions and recommendations. The participants openly pointed out the non-availability of necessary medical equipment in the hospital and said that DHQ Hospital Kohat is a Divisional Level Hospital which is in dire need of CT scan and MRI machines as well as an upgraded laboratory. Similarly, availability of medicines and the vacancy of pathologists for the emergency unit is also the urgent need. Moreover, due to construction work in Liaquat Memorial Hospital, the rush at DHQ Hospital has also increased. Therefore, reconstruction work should be completed at the earliest on Liaquat Memorial Hospital.



QUETTA: Federal Minister for Interior, Mohsin Naqvi meeting with Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhel.

## KKKU 34th syndicate meeting concluded

F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University-Karak (KKKUK) 34th syndicate meeting concluded with several important administrative decisions, on Friday. The meeting presided by Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Naseer-u-din took several administrative and academic decisions pertaining to the university matters. The 34th Syndicate meeting was also attended by representative of Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jahanzeb Khan, Registrar Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak Dr. Ghani Ur Rahman, Treasurer Hafiz Ismail Khan, Director P&D Muhammad Rashad Khattak, Director QEC Dr. Muhammad Anwar, Deputy Director Audit Farid Jalal, Deputy Registrar Meetings Muhammad Ilyas, HOD Computer Science and Bioinformatics Dr. Muhammad Inam Ul Haq, Lecturer Computer Science Dr. Shad Muhammad, Abdul Salam, Deputy Secretary Establishment Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Syed Habib-ul-Hasan Geelani, Deputy Secretary Finance



Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Muhammad Kamran Khattak, Deputy Secretary Higher Education Archives and Libraries Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Dr. Mohsin Habib and Principal GPGC Karak Muhammad Ajmal Khan. Earlier, Registrar Dr. Ghani Ur Rehman presented the agenda of the 34th syndicate meeting and all the participants gave their opinion on it. He appreciated the role of the Vice-Chancellor in framing detailed rules and regulations for the university, which will also prove helpful for other universities as well.

Similarly, other syndicate members Muhammad Rashad Khattak, Naveed Bukhari, Muhammad Ilyas, Dr. Shad Muhammad, Abdul Salam and Hafiz Ismail Khan also appreciated the role of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naseeruddin for solving the

problems of the university consistently.

The participants of the meeting appreciated the efforts of the Vice-Chancellor for completing the infrastructure of the university in difficult times. The Syndicate took important decisions on various teaching and administrative matters besides forming committees in certain cases, so that it could be resolved in accordance with the rules and regulations of the University.

In his address to the 34th Syndicate, Vice-Chancellor Prof. Dr. Naseer-u-din thanked the members of the Syndicate for reposing confidence in his Vice-Chancellorship and reiterated that he should resolve all the problems of the University employees without any delay and keeping aside personal likes and dislikes, will focus all attention on the betterment of the university.

## Power outage plunges Shangla into darkness

F.P. Report

SHANGLA: The worst power outage in Shangla has plunged the valley and areas connected to the Kotki Grid Station into darkness since last night. The complete shutdown of electricity on Friday has paralyzed businesses that rely on electricity. Hospitals and government offices are facing difficulties due to the power outage.

The power outage, which was supposed to end at 2 am on Thursday night, could not be restored until Friday evening. The people of Shangla are fed up with the unscheduled load shedding and now the worst power outage. As soon as the rain starts in Shangla, WAPDA shuts down the electricity. As usual, on weekends, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, Shangla is completely without electricity, just like government offices are closed.

The worst power outage has created severe problems for traders, especially small machinery operators, hospitals, laboratories, X-rays, and government and private offices that rely on electricity. The people of Shangla are facing severe difficulties due to the power outage, especially those coming from remote areas of the district.

There is a general perception in Shangla that the residents here do not pay bills, but after the electricity supply to remote areas, the billing issue has started. However, the authority is facing difficulties in distributing bills in these areas due to staff shortages. Currently, 12 to 15 hours of load shedding is being carried out in Shangla, and often the complete power outage has become a major problem.

## Safety steps for PESCO officials sought

F.P. Report

PABBI: President of PESCO Engineers Association Engineer Kashif Farhan has strongly condemned the tragic incident of the martyrdom of a lineman and the injury of another lineman in Swabi, calling it an irreparable loss that has saddened our hearts.

Linemen are an essential part of our power transmission system, and they risk their lives to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the public. PESCO Engineers Association has expressed deep grief and anger over this incident and demands that the government and relevant authorities conduct a thorough and immediate investigation into the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

Furthermore, the association demands that the relevant authorities take appropriate security measures to ensure the safety of field officers and staff and protect their rights. Such tragic incidents are further demoralizing all employees.

The PESCO Engineers Association has appealed to the authorities and the Board of Directors to ensure that such incidents do not happen in the future and that the safety of all officers and staff is ensured, and the shortage of staff and resources is addressed on an emergency basis, otherwise, achieving the set goals will not be possible.

## Firing incident on recovery team in Swabi WAPDA Hydro Union members hold protest

F.P. Report

MARDAN: WAPDA Hydro Union members here on Friday held protest demonstration against the firing incident on recovery team in Swabi district and what they declared it as a target killing incident. The protesting demonstration was followed by a press conference held in Mardan press club.

Divisional Chairman of Pakistan WAPDA hydro-electric Muhammad Zubair Musakheil along with other union officer bearers and large number of wapda employees attended the press conference. On the occasion, Muhammad Zubair Musakheil strongly condemned the firing incident on wapda employees who were on their way back from their recovery duty in Swabi district.

He made it clear that it was not a terrorist attack rather he declared it as target killing incident. He gave three days ultimatum to relevant authorities to arrest the real culprits forth-

with, otherwise, they would devise their next line of action in this connection to press the government for fulfillment of their demands.

However, he unearthed that they would disconnect power supply to district Swabi in first phase then in Mardan district in second phase and after that in Peshawar district and other parts of the province in third-phase if the real perpetrators were not arrest.

He told media-representatives that a recovery team of wapda department was attack by unknown armed men wherein a Hafiz-ul-Quran Kamran Ullah died instantly while the other employee Muhammad Hussain and a passer-by received critical injuries.

Muhammad Zubair Musakheil claimed that wapda employees and public were interlink with each other. He lamented that they were being fought with general public under a well-planned conspiracy. "Neither wapda employees

are policy-makers nor are they fixing power tariffs rather themselves are against the poor and faulty policies of government," he added.

He said that on one side wapda employees were falling prey to electricity-current incidents while on the other hand they were now being chased by target killers. He demanded of the government to not only take their issues seriously but also provide them fool-proof security. He alleged that agreements with IPPs had been causing damages in billions to national kitty as these were agreements of big investors and landlords. He blamed that public were now born the unnecessary financial burden owing to those IPPs agreements. He demanded of the government to carry out impartial inquiry on scientific and modern ways to not only arrest the real killers within three days but also to ascertain real motives behind the target killing of said wapda employees.

## Cement dealer killed in bright daylight

F.P. Report

MARDAN: A youth, cement dealer was shot dead by armed suspects in a dispute over a minor issue near the police checkpoint in Sari Behlol, a suburb of Taktbhai. The relatives of the deceased and local residents protested against the murder by placing the body on the road and blocking the main Malakand Road for traffic, on Friday.

However, after the SDPO Takht Bhai, assured the protesters of the immediate arrest of the killers, the protesters opened the road for traffic. Police registered a murder case against the nominated suspects on the complaint of the deceased's brother and has started raids for their arrest.

According to details, near the Sari Behlol police checkpoint, cement dealer Mian Bawar and his brother Mian Amjad were present at their shop when a verbal dispute started with a customer over a business issue. Later, the suspect Umair, son of Qadeem, along with his brother, whose name is unknown, opened fire on Amjad Ali with a pistol, severely injuring him. He was taken to Mardan Hospital and later to Peshawar Hospital, where he died after struggling between life and death. The suspects fled crime scene safely.

**Govt to resolve compensation issues soon:** Commissioner Mardan has said that the government is aware of the problems of the land owners of Abdul Wali Khan University, Bacha Khan Medical College, Engineering University Mardan and Agricultural University and is determined to pay compensation to them adding that the issue will be

resolved soon.

He was addressing a high-level meeting in the conference room of the commissioner's office. Vice Chancellors of Abdul Wali Khan University, Engineering University Mardan and University of Agriculture Peshawar, Additional Advocate General Azhar Rahim, Additional Deputy Commissioner Saeedullah Jan, District Attorney Arshad Alam, Revenue officials and representatives of land owners attended. The meeting was told that there are judgments of the Higher judiciary regarding the payment of compensation according to which the payment of compensation is the responsibility of the government.

The representatives of the land owners thanked Commissioner Mardan Javed Marwat for convening today's meeting and taking practical steps to solve the problem and expressed full confidence in him in this regard. Commissioner Mardan assured the representatives of the affectees on this occasion that the government is serious in taking steps to give them their right and a positive decision will be taken soon. Various proposals regarding payment to the affectees were considered and recommendations were made which will be sent to the Ministerial Committee for further process.

**DPO directs facilitation of public:** District Police Officer (DPO) presided over an important meeting with all the police stations of Mardan at his office, on Friday. The purpose of the meeting was to further improve public service and administrative efficiency in police sta-

tions.

DPO while addressing the moharar emphasized their important role as the first point of contact between the public and the police. He said that their behavior with the public directly affects the image of the police. People come to us in difficult times, and you have a duty to treat them with courtesy and professionalism." He emphasized the importance of listening carefully to the complainants and reminded them that their primary objective is to provide relief to the people.

He said "the government spends a huge budget on our department, and this uniform that you wear is a symbol of respect. You should also respect this uniform and show respect to the public". He expressed his strong stand against mismanagement and actions that tarnish the name of the police. "Your role is crucial in improving or tarnishing the image of the police. I will not tolerate any act that tarnishes our reputation. Effective and honorable public affairs management is essential."

The DPO directed the muharars to speed up the data entry in the Police Records Management System (PRMS) and complete the work by September 25. "I want to see clear results by the end of this period, along with public affairs and administrative duties, he directed the officers to keep the police station premises, including the mess areas and residential quarters, clean and orderly. Maintaining a clean and orderly environment is not only a matter of discipline, but it reflects our duty and commitment to public service.

## Streets, roads converted into stream after rain

F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: The street and roads of the city Hafizabad converted into stream after one hour rain as a result of which students of Government High School No.1, Government Girls High School Alipur road and government college for women Alipur road Hafizabad have to pass through standing rain water.

Due to inundated of different areas of city, people confronted hardships to go their home. The people alleged that the Punjab government was spent million of rupees to lay sewerage system in the city but by the virtue of technical faults and negligence of Municipal committee, the whole city was inundated and government expenditures went wasted.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq has said that timely completion of ongoing development schemes under special people welfare initiatives of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is top priority of the district administration Hafizabad whereas no com-

promise will be made on quality material being used in execution of the schemes. He expressed these views while inspecting ongoing different development schemes in the district. While inspecting special education school Hafizabad, DC reviewed renovation work in the school and directed the school administration to complete ongoing work at the earliest.

He also visited under construction museum and checked quality of material being used in completion of the construction work and directed the officers of bulding department to expedite construction work ongoing development schemes so that people could get benefits of government expenditures soon.

Meanwhile, DC visited Tehsil Headquarter Hospital Pindi Bhattian last night and checked emergency, X-Ray room, medicine store and other department of the hospital. He reviewed provision of free of cost medicines and other treatment facilities in the hospital. DC said on this occasion that on the directions of the Chief Minister of

the Punjab, provision of free of cost medicines and other treatment facilities were being improved in the hospitals so that the best healthcare could be available to patients at local level without any hurdle and delay.

## Couple stabbed to death

F.P. Report

ATTOCK: Unidentified attackers killed an elderly man and wife by stabbing them multiple times in Dhok area of Tehsil Pindi Gheb in Attock District on Friday.

As soon as the incident was reported, the police reached the spot and after collecting the evidence, they shifted the dead bodies of the deceased couple to a hospital for post-mortem and started legal proceedings. According to police, the slain Banaras and Irshad Bibi were about 60/55 years old.





# US forces ready with a ‘range of options’ to deal with China Sea aggression

BAGUIO (AP): American forces are ready with a "range of options" to deal with increasing acts of aggression in the disputed South China Sea if ordered to carry them out jointly and after consultations with treaty ally the Philippines, a US admiral said.

US Indo-Pacific Command chief Adm. Samuel Paparo, who heads the biggest number of combat forces outside the US mainland, refused to provide details of the contingency options. Paparo's comments came when asked at a news conference what the longtime treaty allies could do to deal with China's so-called gray-zone tactics in the disputed waters.

The "gray-zone tactics" refer to types of assault, like water cannon fire and the blocking and ramming of rival ships in the disputed waters, that are under the threshold of an actual armed attack and wouldn't allow the Philippines to invoke its 1951 Mutual Defense Treaty with the US. The treaty obligates either country to help the other in case of an armed external attack. "We certainly have prepared a range of options and USINDOPACOM stands ready, if so called, after consultations in accordance with the treaty to execute those shoulder to shoulder with our ally," Paparo said.

Detailing those US military options would allow "the potential adversary" to "build a countermeasure to those," he said. Paparo held a joint news conference with Armed Forces of the Philippines chief Gen. Romero Brawner Jr., after both led an annual meeting in the northern Philippine mountain city of Baguio to discuss security challenges and military plans. They include the Balikatan - Tagalog for shoulder to shoulder - the treaty allies' largest combat exercises, which in April involved more than 16,000 American and Filipinos forces and were partly staged in the South China Sea.

In response to a question, Paparo repeated that the US military is open, after treaty consultations with the Philippines, to escorting Philippine ships in the South China Sea amid a spike in hostilities between Beijing and Manila in the disputed waters. Such a prospect would risk putting



US Navy ships in direct collisions with those of China. Washington and Beijing have been on a collision course over China's increasingly assertive actions to defend its territorial claims in the South China Sea, and Beijing's stated goal of annexing Taiwan, by force if necessary.

Brawner said the Philippines could still fend for itself in the disputed waters, where hostilities with the Chinese coast guard, navy and suspected militia ships have alarmingly spiked since last year.

"If we exhaust all the options and nothing works, then that's the time we can ask for help," Brawner told reporters. When Filipino forces in the disputed waters "are at the verge of dying," because food supplies were being blocked by Chinese forces, "then that's the time that we are going to seek the help of the United States," Brawner said, but added that "we still have a lot of options."

During combat exercises by US and Philippine forces in April, the US military transported a mid-range missile system to the northern Philippines, angering China, which warned that the missile system can trigger a regional arms race and endanger regional stability. Beijing demanded that the US missile system, which can threaten mainland China, be pulled out of the Philippines. Paparo and Brawner refused to say if and when the missile system would

be flown out of the Philippines. Brawner thanked the US military for transporting the high-tech weaponry to the country, saying Filipino forces were being exposed to advance defense equipment that the Philippine military plan to acquire in the future.

"Just like what we did with the Stingers and with the Javelins, we start training already even if we don't have them yet in our inventory," Brawner said. China has angered the Philippines by repeatedly harassing its navy and coast guard ships with powerful water cannons, a military-grade laser, blocking movements and other dangerous maneuvers in the high seas near two disputed South China Sea shoals. They have led to minor collisions that have injured several Filipino navy personnel and damaged supply boats.

China has accused the Philippines of setting off the hostilities in the disputed waters by encroaching in what it says are its offshore territories, demarcated by 10 dashes on a map. It says the Chinese coast guard and navy have been forced to take action to expel Philippine coast guard and other vessels from those areas. The Philippines has repeatedly cited a 2016 international arbitration ruling based on the UN Convention of the Law of the Sea that invalidated China's claim over virtually the entire South China Sea on historical grounds.

## Ex-national police chief in Thailand charged

BANGKOK (AP): Prosecutors in Thailand indicted a former national police chief in connection with an alleged cover-up of a 2012 Ferrari crash involving an heir to the Red Bull energy drink fortune that killed a police officer.

Former Police Chief Gen. Somyot Poompanmoung, former Deputy Attorney General Nate Naksuk and six other people were arraigned at a Bangkok court on charges alleging they conspired to alter the recorded speed of the Ferrari driven by Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya to help him evade a speeding charge.

Vorayuth escaped justice by fleeing abroad in a case widely held up as an example of how the rich and well-connected enjoy impunity in Thailand. Police have said Vorayuth smashed his Ferrari into the back of a police officer's motorbike around dawn on a major Bangkok road in September 2012. The officer was flung from the bike and died at the scene. Vorayuth drove home and was later arrested. Medical tests showed traces of alcohol and cocaine in his bloodstream, according to police.

Vorayuth avoided further legal action by consistently failing to meet with prosecutors, while continuing for years to live a jet-set life. By the time prosecutors finally issued an arrest warrant in April 2017, Vorayuth had fled abroad, where he remains. His case has been marked by numerous delays in the investigative and judicial processes, running down the clock on most of the charges involving the hit-and-run death of the officer. There is a single charge left of reckless driving causing death, which expires under the statute of limitations in 2027.

Vorayuth is the grandson of the late Chaleo Yoovidhya, one of the creators of the globally famous Red Bull brand. Forbes magazine this year listed the Yoovidhya family as Thailand's richest with an estimated net worth of \$36 billion. Only Thailand's royal family, treated separately by the magazine, is believed to be richer.

## Macron hosts Starmer

PARIS (AFP): UK premier Keir Starmer was welcomed warmly in Paris by French leader Emmanuel Macron, as the new centrel-left British government seeks to relaunch post-Brexit ties with Europe. Paris is the second leg of Starmer's trip to key EU capitals, after the prime minister visited Berlin and announced treaty talks alongside Chancellor Olaf Scholz.

Macron strode out to meet Starmer for a demonstrative hug, slapping the recently-elected leader's back and shaking his hand. French presidents usually wait beside uniformed Republican Guards standing rigidly to attention at the top of the steps in the presidential palace's courtyard when welcoming visitors. The pair have plenty to discuss. Like Germany, France is a key security partner for Britain -- Paris and London hold permanent seats on the UN Security Council and are Western Europe's only nuclear-armed powers. The two countries share strong support for Ukraine in its fight against Russian invasion since 2022. More

fraught is the issue of migrants crossing the Channel to the UK on boats, which the two countries' security forces have cooperated for years to try to contain. The issue was the first aim singled out by Starmer in a statement released ahead of the France visit, alongside stoking economic growth. Migrant arrivals in Britain reached a record high in the first six months of the year, according to London, adding 18 percent year-on-year to reach 13,500 people.

Since the beginning of the year, 25 people have died in often dangerously overcrowded craft, twice as many as in the whole of 2023. Reaching a new level of cooperation with the EU as a whole may be more elusive than the treaty Starmer hopes to strike with Germany by year's end.

# Serbia makes a \$3b deal to buy 12 French warplanes

BELGRADE (AP): Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic announced a \$3 billion deal to buy 12 French warplanes, in a move that shifts his country away from its dependence on Russian arms.

The announcement about the Rafale multi-purpose fighter jets was made during a joint news conference in Belgrade with French President Emmanuel Macron during a two-day visit to Serbia as part of what French officials have called a strategy of bringing Serbia closer to the European Union.

Macron called called the deal "historic and important," and said it demonstrated Serbia's "strategic courage." "The European Union needs a strong and democratic Serbia at its side and Serbia needs a strong, sovereign Europe to defend its interests," Macron said. "Serbia's place is in the EU, and it has a role to play to be an example for all the region."

Serbia is formally seeking European Union membership, but under Vucic's increasingly autocratic rule it has made little progress in the fields of rule of law and democratic reforms, which are the main preconditions for membership in the 27-nation bloc. Selling Rafales to Russian ally Serbia, which has occasionally expressed an aggressive stance toward its Balkan neighbors, has raised some concerns, one of which is how France plans to prevent sophisticated Rafale technology from being shared with Russia. Asked about whether the warplane deal includes restrictions on Serbia's sharing of Rafale technology to its ally Russia, or the use of

the military hardware in the Balkan region, Macron said the deal included full guarantees like any defense agreement," without elaborating. Russia has been a traditional supplier of military aircraft to Serbia, which has refused to join international sanctions against Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine. Vucic described the purchase of the Rafale jets as a "big" development. "It will contribute considerably to improving operational capabilities of our army, a completely different approach and we are happy to become part of the Rafale club," Vucic said.

Vucic dismissed any concerns among Western nations of the possibility that Serbia would transfer technology to Russia because of the Balkan country's traditional close ties with Moscow. "For the first time in history Serbia has Western jets," Vucic said. "You wish to have Serbia as a partner and then you voice suspicions?"

The French maker of Rafale, Dassault Aviation, said in a statement that Serbia's decision to buy the warplanes confirms "Rafale's operational superiority and its proven excellence in serving the sovereign interests of a nation." Serbia had been considering the purchase of the new Rafale jets for more than two years, since neighboring Balkan rival Croatia purchased 12 used fighter jets of the same type for about 1 billion euros (\$1.1 billion). The acquisition allows Serbia to modernize its air force, which consists mainly of Soviet-made MiG-29 fighters and aging Yugoslav combat aircraft.

# Former Russian defense official detained

MOSCOW (AP): A former Defense Ministry official was ordered held in a fraud case, the latest high-profile arrest in what appears to be a sweeping investigation into abuse of office in Russia's military leadership.

Former Deputy Defense Minister Pavel Popov faces up to 10 years in prison if he is charged and convicted following his detention on suspicion of committing fraud, Russian state news agencies reported, adding that he was ordered held until at least Oct. 29. The case against Popov relates to business activities at a sprawling park in Moscow sometimes called Russia's "military Disneyland."

Patriot Park, a pet project of former Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, is designed to inspire national pride in younger generations and showcases Soviet and Russian weaponry. It has a firing range, air base, museums and conference center and a massive, khaki-colored Cathedral of the Russian Armed Forces, which features mosaics of Soviet and Russian soldiers. President Vladimir Putin personally donated money to commission the main icon for the church, according to the Kremlin. Popov is the eighth top military figure to be arrested on charges of fraud, bribery or abuse of office in recent months, including Deputy Defense Minister Timur

Ivanov, who was arrested for bribery in April and later dismissed from his position. The arrests began shortly before Putin replaced Shoigu with an economist, Andrei Belousov.

Analysts suggest the arrests are a sign that Shoigu's associates are being removed from power and that the most egregious corruption in the Defense Ministry will no longer be tolerated. Popov was responsible for developing and maintaining Patriot Park and is accused of renovating his own properties in the Moscow region at the park's expense, according to the state news agency Tass. He is accused of fraud alongside the director of the park and Maj. Gen. Vladimir Shesterov, deputy of the Defense Ministry's innovations department, both of whom have already been detained.

Popov forced companies that had contracts with Patriot Park to do work on his "out-of-town apartments without paying for them," Svetlana Petrenko of Russia's Investigative Committee told Tass. In addition to a plot of land with houses outside Moscow, Popov and his family own "numerous properties in prestigious areas of Moscow, the Moscow region and the Krasnodar region," in southern Russia, Petrenko said. The properties are

worth a total of 500 million rubles (\$5.5 million), and investigators are establishing whether they were acquired legally, Petrenko told Tass.

Graft in the Defense Ministry "is so rife" that the choice of who is arrested will be informed by "internal turf wars," said Richard Connolly, a specialist on the Russian economy and military at the Royal United Services Institute in London. The arrests are "sending a message in a strategically important sector. But also offering the chance to settle some scores," he said.

Popov was a deputy defense minister from 2013 until June, when he was dismissed by presidential decree. His arrest comes shortly after that of former Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Dmitry Bulgakov, who was detained in Moscow in July. According to Tass, Bulgakov is charged with large-scale embezzlement. He reportedly oversaw supplies of food rations to soldiers that reportedly were overpriced and of low quality. If found guilty, he faces up to 10 years in prison. Bulgakov was deputy defense minister from 2008 until his dismissal in 2022. He was in charge of logistics at the time, and while the ministry had said he was taking another job, the move was seen as punishment for flaws in supporting operations in Ukraine.

# Video shows Yemeni rebels planted bombs on tanker

DUBAI (AP): Yemen's Houthi rebels released footage showing their fighters boarded and placed explosives on a Greek-flagged tanker, setting off blasts that put the Red Sea at risk of a major oil spill. The vessel was abandoned earlier, after the Houthis repeatedly attacked it.

In the video, the Iran-backed Houthis chant their motto as the bombs detonated aboard the oil tanker Sounion: "God is the greatest; death to America; death to Israel; curse the Jews; victory to Islam." The blasts capped the most-serious attack in weeks by the Houthis in their campaign disrupting the \$1 trillion in goods that pass through the Red Sea each year over the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, as well as halting some aid shipments to conflict-ravaged Sudan and Yemen.

The Sounion carried some 1 million barrels of oil when the Houthis initially attacked it on Aug. 21 with small arms fire, projectiles and a drone boat. A French destroyer operating as part of the European Union's Operation Aspides rescued the Sounion's crew of 25 Filipinos and Russians, as well as four private security personnel, after they abandoned the vessel and took them to nearby Djibouti. The footage released shows masked Houthi fighters carrying Kalashnikov-style rifles boarding the Sounion after it was abandoned. The bridge appeared ransacked. Fighters then rigged explosives over hatches on its deck leading to the oil tankers below. At least six simultaneous blasts could be seen in the footage.

The footage, as well as comments by the Houthi's mysterious leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi, confirmed an earlier analysis by The Associated

Press that the Houthis boarded and planted explosives on the Sounion. The Houthi-controlled SABA news agency described al-Houthi as saying the Sounion attack shows America "is lying in its claims regarding any deterrence of Yemeni operations supporting Palestine." "The effectiveness of our operations and their control of the situation is acknowledged by the enemies," al-Houthi said.

Western countries and the United Nations have warned any oil spill from the Sounion could devastate the coral reefs and wildlife around the Red Sea. However, the EU's naval force in the region says it has yet to see any oil spill from the Sounion. Operation Aspides "is preparing to facilitate any courses of action, in coordination with European authorities and neighboring countries, to avert a catastrophic environmental crisis," the EU mission said. "Together, we can protect the environment and maintain stability in the region." UN spokesman Stephane Dujarric commended the efforts by the international community and the UN special envoy for Yemen, Hans Grundberg, "to secure the immediate access to the vessel and avert an environmental catastrophe." The Houthis have agreed to allow the operation to proceed safely, he said.

Dujarric did not offer any indication when it might start but added that the reports that "the salvage operations for the tanker can proceed with tugboats and rescue ships to access the incident area" are encouraging. The Houthis suggested they may allow the Sounion to be salvaged, though the rebels already once blocked crews trying to reach the abandoned vessel, the US military

said. The US State Department declined to directly comment on the video. It referred to earlier remarks in which spokesperson Matthew Miller warned "the Houthis' continued attacks threaten to spill a million barrels of oil into the Red Sea, an amount four times the size of the Exxon Valdez disaster" in 1989 off Alaska. This isn't the first time the Houthis have used the threat of an oil spill to their advantage. It took years of negotiations before the rebels allowed the UN in 2023 to remove 1 million barrels from the oil tanker Safer off the coast of Yemen, which had been used as a floating storage and offloading facility. "Experience has shown that the group is willing to interfere with salvage efforts if they can turn the situation into a political bargaining chip," warned Noam Raydan, a senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near-East Policy who has studied the ongoing Houthi attacks.

The Houthis have targeted more than 80 vessels with missiles and drones since the war in Gaza started in October. They seized one vessel and sank two in the campaign that also killed four sailors. Other missiles and drones have either been intercepted by a US-led coalition in the Red Sea or failed to reach their targets. The rebels maintain that they target ships linked to Israel, the US or the U.K. to force an end to Israel's campaign against Hamas in Gaza. However, many of the ships attacked have little or no connection to the conflict, including some bound for Iran. Meanwhile, the US military's Central Command said its forces destroyed a Houthi missile system and drone.

# Putin to travel to Mongolia next week

MOSCOW (AP): Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit Mongolia next week, the Kremlin said, despite the country being a member of the International Criminal Court, which last year issued a warrant for his arrest. The visit, scheduled for Sept. 3, will be Putin's first trip to an ICC member state since the warrant was issued in March 2023 over suspected war crimes in Ukraine.

Under the court's founding treaty, the Rome Statute, ICC members are bound to detain suspects for whom an arrest warrant has been issued by the court, if they set foot on their soil. But the court doesn't have any enforcement mechanism. In a famous case, then Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir wasn't arrested in 2015 when he visited South Africa, which is a member of the court, sparking angry condemnation by rights activists and the country's main opposition party.

The Kremlin, which had previously stressed that it doesn't recognize the jurisdiction of the ICC,

didn't comment on the prospects of Putin being arrested in Mongolia.

According to the Kremlin's online statement, Putin will travel to Mongolia upon the invitation of President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh "to participate in the ceremonial events dedicated to the 85th anniversary of the joint victory of the Soviet and Mongolian armed forces over the Japanese militarists on the Khalkhin Gol River." Putin will also hold talks with Khurelsukh and other top Mongolian officials, the statement read. The ICC has accused Putin of personal responsibility for the abductions of children from Ukraine, where Moscow has fought a devastating war for the last 2½ years. It was the first time the global court has issued a warrant against a leader of one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

The ICC said in a statement that Putin "is allegedly responsible for the war crime of unlawful deportation of (children) and that of unlawful transfer of (children) from occupied areas of Ukraine to

the Russian Federation." The Kremlin has dismissed the warrant as "null and void."

Putin hasn't traveled to ICC member states ever since. Putin skipped a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies last year in South Africa. South Africa lobbied Moscow for months for Putin not to attend to avoid the diplomatic fallout since the country is an ICC member, and ultimately announced the countries had reached a "mutual agreement" that Putin not attend a meeting he's normally a fixture at.

The Kremlin said that Putin had decided not to attend in person. He instead took part in the summit in Johannesburg by video link, during which he launched a tirade against the West. Last, year, the Kremlin also bristled at old ally Armenia over its decision to join the ICC, adding to the growing tensions between Moscow and Yerevan. Armenian officials, however, quickly sought to assure Russia that Putin wouldn't be arrested if he entered the country.



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# Media freedom in Hong Kong

**P**RESS freedom in Hong Kong is at its lowest level in at least 11 years, according to the latest survey of its members and the public by the Hong Kong Journalists Association. One of the biggest factors in that decline is the introduction this year of Article 23, which penalizes anything deemed as sedition or external interference, the association, known as the HKJA, found. The law has "more severe restrictions on media" than previously existed, Selina Cheng, chair of the HKJA, told VOA. It includes substantially tougher penalties for sedition, which Cheng described as "the main legislation that's been used against speech and media work" since the implementation of a new National Security Law in 2020. The findings are part of an annual survey by the HKJA in conjunction with the Hong Kong Public Opinion Research Institute. The journalists association sent surveys to 979 members, and the research institute collected opinions from 1,000 phone interviews, selected at random.

Both groups surveyed were asked to rank press freedom in Hong Kong. The 250 journalists who responded to the survey ranked it at 25 out of 100, with 100 being a perfect score. It is the lowest ranking since the annual survey was started 11 years ago. The public score came in at 42. The survey findings came the same week that Hong Kong denied a work visa to journalist Haze Fan. The reporter for Bloomberg News was detained in Beijing on alleged national security violations in December 2020 and held for about 13 months. Bloomberg has said Fan will be transferred to its London office.

In the HKJA survey, 92% of the journalists who responded to the survey indicated press freedom had "significantly" been impacted by the Safeguarding National Security Ordinance, known as Article 23. Passed in March, it prohibits acts of treason, secession, sedition, subversion and theft of state secrets, and prevents foreign political organizations from conducting activities or establishing ties with local political bodies in Hong Kong. Penalties for sedition under the new law increased from two to seven years, or 10 years if a foreign force is involved.

Authorities have insisted that journalists are safe to carry out what they call "legitimate" reporting activities. But critics say the vaguely worded legislation creates uncertainty for journalists. Cheng said the law's reference to state secrets is wide, too, which could be a concern. The law is using Beijing's definition of state secrets, according to Human Rights Watch.

Under Article 23, what is deemed a state secret "encompasses [a] pretty wide spectrum of things, including information about economy, technology, society, so on," Cheng said. "It could be that the government considers the findings of a think tank or an academic institution a state secret, then that would become a crime of national security," she said. China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded to the HKJA findings, saying Hong Kong's national security laws are not meant to target journalists who do not break the law.

Cheng noted that only about a quarter of HKJA members responded to the survey this year, which could be a sign of how the media environment is declining. "The response rate is not great and is a reflection of the sort of self-censorship even when it comes to discussing or reflecting reporters' views on press freedom," she told VOA. "At some organizations that might be seen as more pro-Beijing or pro-government reporters, the contact people we have at those organizations will worry if they might face retaliation if they send out [the] HKJA questionnaire. I think people are scared to do it, because they're afraid of retaliation," she said.

Cheng believes she personally was retaliated against for her association with the HKJA. Her contract at The Wall Street Journal, where she covered the auto and electric vehicle industry, was terminated in July, in a move she said is connected to her being elected chair of the HKJA. In a statement issued at the time, Cheng said she had been told by her supervisor that having Journal employees advocate for media freedoms would create conflicts of interest because the newspaper reports on related topics, including the ongoing trials of Hong Kong journalists and media organizations. The Journal confirmed to VOA at the time that personnel changes had been made but said it could not comment on "specific individuals."

Journalists also highlighted overt calls for journalists to use caution in their reporting. In a note to columnists at the pro-Beijing Ming Pao newspaper, chief editor Lau Chung-yung urged people to be "prudent" and "law abiding" in their writing. His note was posted on social media on August 15 by one of the paper's columnists, Eric Wishart, the standards and ethics editor at Agence France-Presse in Hong Kong, says such comments concern journalists.

The Ming Pao note, he said, "is another example of the chilling effect that recent developments have had on journalism in Hong Kong." Johan Nylander, a Swedish journalist in Hong Kong, said it is no surprise that press freedom is at a new low. "The national security law and Article 23 have created an atmosphere of uncertainty and self-censorship among many reporters and media companies," he told VOA. "It's quite clear where the trend is going. The situation regarding press freedom is very depressing in Hong Kong, and nothing indicates that it will get better anytime soon."

Media groups such as the HKJA have been criticized by authorities and Chinese state media for allegedly having links to activist organizations. But Wishart said it was important for the HKJA to continue. "It's important that the HKJA and other organizations continue to monitor the state of press freedom in Hong Kong and that media professionals continue to respond to these surveys," he said. Hong Kong's ranking on the World Press Freedom Index has declined rapidly since the national security law was enacted in 2020. It currently ranks 135 out of 180 on the Reporters Without Borders index, where number 1 represents the best environment. In 2019, the year before the national security law took effect, Hong Kong ranked 73.

## Important Notice

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# South China Sea now a dangerous flashpoint

Nectar Gan & Brad Lendon

**A** stretch of uninhabited, low-lying reefs in the South China Sea is fast becoming a dangerous new flashpoint between China and the Philippines, dealing a blow to recent efforts to de-escalate tensions in one of the world's most vital waterways.

Over the past week, Chinese and Philippine vessels have engaged in multiple collisions and face-offs near Sabina Shoal, a disputed atoll lying just 86 miles from the Philippines' west coast and 745 miles from China, which claims almost all of the South China Sea as its sovereign territory despite an international ruling to the contrary. The violent confrontations came just weeks after Beijing and Manila struck a temporary deal to lower tensions that had been rising all summer at another nearby reef, where China's increasingly aggressive tactics had raised alarm across the region as well as in Washington, a mutual defense ally of the Philippines.

Renewed tension in the South China Sea is expected to be on the agenda of meetings between US national security adviser Jake Sullivan and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during Sullivan's visit to China this week. Following a particularly violent encounter at the Second Thomas Shoal in June, which saw Chinese coast guard personnel brandishing axes at Filipino soldiers and slashing their rubber boats, Chinese and Philippine officials sat down for talks and agreed to de-escalate.

For a while, tensions appeared to be cooling, but the detente proved short lived. On August 19, in the middle of the night, coast guard ships from China and the Philippines collided near Sabina Shoal. Manila said the Chinese ships rammed into its vessels, tearing a 3.6-foot hole in one and a 3-foot-wide gap in another. Beijing blamed the Philippines for the collisions.

Then, on Sunday afternoon, another clash took place, with the Philippines accusing China of ramming and firing water cannons at a vessel from its fisheries bureau in an encounter with eight Chinese ships, including a warship from the People's Liberation Army Navy. China said the Philippine ship "refused to accept control" by a Chinese coast guard vessel and "deliberately collided" with it. The following day, in yet

another tense encounter, the Philippines said China deployed "an excessive force" of 40 ships - including three PLA Navy warships - to block two Philippine Coast Guard vessels. Beijing said it took "control measures" against two Philippine ships that "intruded" into waters near Sabina Shoal. Analysts say Sabina Shoal is fast becoming the latest confrontation zone in what is already a highly contested part of the world, where a mistake could quickly spiral into a conflict with hugely damaging consequences.

"All indications seem to point to the fact that this is an emerging third flashpoint" after the Second Thomas Shoal and another atoll to the north named the Scarborough Shoal, said Collin Koh, research fellow at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. "Manila is trying to avoid what they call a repeat of the Scarborough Shoal," which China seized in 2012 after a long standoff with the Philippines and on which it has maintained a permanent presence since, Koh added. China, on the other hand, is trying to see off another Second Thomas Shoal, where the Philippines ran aground a World War II-era ship in 1999 to stake its claim over the reef and has stationed a small group of marines since.

The violent clashes around Second Thomas Shoal earlier this summer occurred during Beijing's attempts to block Manila's missions to resupply its soldiers stationed on the rusting BRP Sierra Madre. A similar blockade is playing out at Sabina Shoal, which is about 40 miles closer to the Philippine coast than the Second Thomas Shoal. Both lie within the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of the Philippines. Since April, the Philippines has deployed a coast guard vessel to Sabina Shoal to monitor what it said were signs of China's illegal land reclamation activities, after Filipino scientists discovered piles of crushed corals on the sandbars amid an increased presence of Chinese ships in the area. China has denied the accusation. Displacing 2,300 tons, the 318-foot-long BRP Teresa Magbanua anchored at Sabina Shoal is one of the two largest ships that the Philippine Coast Guard has and is its flagship. Acquired from Japan in 2022, it is also

one of the newest ships in Manila's fleet, carrying a crew of 67.

"This has really annoyed China and they want that (Philippine) vessel to go away," said Ray Powell, director of SeaLight, a maritime transparency project at Stanford University's Gordian Knot Center for National Security Innovation. "China refers to it ... as a 'quasi-grounding,' so they're basically treating it like it's the Sierra Madre all over again even though it is not grounded, it's anchored." And Beijing has been gradually upping the pressure on Manila. In July, China anchored one of its "monster" coast guard ships, the 12,000-ton CCG-5901, near Sabina Shoal. The CCG-5901 is more than five times the size of the Philippines' Teresa Magbanua and larger than any other regular coast guard ship in the world.

"Initially the Chinese were trying to warn Manila to roll back at Sabina Shoal. That's why they send the monster ship just to create an impression," Koh said. "But the Filipinos were sitting still and not moving at all. So I guess the Chinese likely have reached a point where they concluded that they need to up the pressure on the Filipinos, which is why we saw what's happening recently." In recent weeks, Chinese state media have accused the Philippines of trying to establish a long-term presence at Sabina Shoal to occupy the reef and indicated that China will not allow any resupply missions to proceed.

"China will never be deceived by the Philippines again," Chinese state news agency Xinhua said in a commentary about the Sunday faceoff, citing Manila's grounding of the Sierra Madre at the Second Thomas Shoal back in 1999. On Monday, the Philippine Coast Guard said it had deployed two ships on a "humanitarian mission" to deliver vital food and supplies to its personnel stationed abroad the Teresa Magbanua, including "a special ice cream treat" in honor of the country's National Heroes' Day. (Teresa Magbanua, one of the heroes commemorated on the day, was one of the few women to lead Filipino troops in battles against Spanish colonizers during the Philippine Revolution and against American forces in the

Philippine-American war.)

But the mission failed due to the obstruction of 40 Chinese ships, according to the Philippine Coast Guard. If China continues to block the Philippines from resupplying the Teresa Magbanua with food, water and fuel or rotating its crew, the Philippine ship will have to sail away, Powell said. "It's a high-stakes game for Manila," Koh said. "The domestic circumstances all point to the very fact that now Sabina Shoal is where you could not yield an inch to the Chinese... Marcos Jr is definitely right on the chopping board for that," he added, referring to Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Since coming to power in 2022, Marcos Jr has strengthened Manila's alliance with the US and increasingly challenged China's expansive claims in the South China Sea, which an international tribunal said had no legal basis in a landmark ruling in 2016. His predecessor Rodrigo Duterte, a firebrand populist who launched a notoriously brutal anti-drug war, favored a much warmer relationship with Beijing and was much less willing to confront Beijing over the South China Sea. Meanwhile, both Beijing and Manila are watching closely for how Washington will react. American officials have repeatedly pledged to defend the Philippines from any armed attack in the disputed waters, stressing

Washington's "ironclad Samuel Paparo, commander of the US Indo-Pacific Command, said Tuesday that American ships could escort Philippine vessels on resupply missions in the South China Sea, describing what he called an "an entirely reasonable option" that required consultation between the treaty allies, according to Reuters. But being dragged into another global conflict will not be in US interests, especially in the run-up to its presidential election, Koh said, adding that Washington is already occupied with Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the raging war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. "The Chinese know that Manila has very limited options if they could not depend on US help," Koh said. "China is deliberately escalating the situation, with a likely intention to test how far Washington would support Manila."

CNN

# EU olive branch

Martin Kettle

**O**N Tuesday, in the Downing Street garden, Keir Starmer delivered a grim, generation-defining warning that "things will get worse" for Britain. On Wednesday, in Berlin, he gave a more upbeat resetting of European relations, with more to come in Paris, describing it as a "once in a generation opportunity". The abrupt juxtaposition is striking. It embodies why so many still find it so hard to get a convincing handle on the prime minister and to have confidence in what he is really about.

Many responses to Starmer's speeches often seem predetermined, in some cases lazily so, while others contain a nagging descendant of truth. That has happened this week too. Starmer's Labour critics said he was not bold enough - but then, that's what they always say. The Conservatives - who spent the past decade raising performative politics into almost an art form - also dismissed the speech as performative. The Daily Mail denounced an attack on middle England, as usual. The Tory right alleged Starmer was undermining Brexit, whatever that now means.

All of them are wrong, though they are wrong in different ways and to different degrees. The larger reality is that Tuesday in the Downing Street garden and Wednesday in Berlin fit snugly together. That's because they are two parts of the same Starmer project. This project was summed up in Tuesday's speech in a pair of phrases, each already familiar and each often repeated: "do things differently" and "fix the foundations".

Figuring out Starmer may sometimes seem like trying to solve a Wordle problem. You think you know what some of the letters you need are, but it isn't immediately obvious how they can be fitted together in a way that makes sense. But the truth is that Starmer is fairly easy to read.

In these first two months, Starmer's project has revealed itself as ambitious and social democratic. It is a long-term attempt to recast a self-evidently broken, unequal and misfiring Britain as a social democratic nation that Starmer grew up wanting this country to be, but which it never quite was. As such, his project is sharply distinct from both New Labour and from the c o m m a n d - e c o n o m y labourism of the postwar era. This is why, though it may sometimes seem a throwback to earlier Labour eras, it is actually radically different.

Whether this project is sustainable is a massive but quite separate question. Nobody knows the answer to it. What cannot be doubted is that the economic strategy and the international strategy on show this week represent what Starmer wants to do. They are not what he wants in principle or what he wants in an ideal world - he said as much in the Downing Street garden - but they are undoubtedly what he wants here and now, and at this particular point in the political cycle.

Every prime minister knows that they are strongest in the aftermath of victory. They know that tough, unpopular stuff always has to be done first, before the next election begins to dominate. They know that blaming the previous government is an argument that works. Starmer is no different.

That's why taxes - some,

not all - will clearly rise in the budget and why departmental budgets - again some, not all - will be trimmed, in spite of the inevitable rows. It is why he also gives priority to smoothing the way towards much closer European relationships, even though the Brexiters will shout foul (despite having kept relatively quiet so far).

It is no secret that Starmer has a two-term, 10-year governing project that he wants to see to the end. But perhaps it is less well understood how methodical he is. Starmer was always a methodical lawyer, and he has become a methodical politician. He thinks ahead, better than his opponents, and he is ruthless. Everything he does and says at this extremely early stage in his government's life is groundwork. So this week's injunctions to fix the economic foundations and to turn a corner in Europe ought to be seen as two sides of the same coin. With politics resuming after the summer, he is attempting to frame his picture of Britain's 10-year future.

As the Iraq crisis deepened, advisers told Tony Blair that he did not have to be drawn into George W Bush's war. "It's worse than you think," Blair responded. "I really do believe in this." This may not be a happy precedent, but Starmer has displayed a similar determination at the heart of his own, very different, project. His social democracy is extremely steely.

Will this ambitious project work? It may. The economy is beginning to hum a little more. If the next election is not until May 2029, he also has time on his side. Time for promised houses to be built, for rivers to get cleaner, for hospital waiting times to be reduced, for wise investments to show returns, for cooperation over migration to show some dividends. And, above all, time for the public to notice.

Yet the success or failure of Stamerism is nevertheless not simply down to delivery. Nor is it just down to tax rates either, though too much of the media still make that mistake. It also depends on the kind of Britain within which the Starmer project evolves.

In the Downing Street garden, Starmer talked about how the riots had exposed a "deeply unhealthy society" and a "societal black hole" in a country "where nothing seems to work any more". It is a bleak vision of a country disfigured not just by racist riots but by things such as the shocking news that 500 children every day are being referred to England's mental health services. Starmer's descriptions may be true, but they also come dangerously close to feeding a self-fulfilling prophecy, especially with the public finances under such pressure and when the sense of threat and hopelessness is leading to considerable personal despair.

In 1940, David Low drew a famous cartoon: All Behind You, Winston. It showed a unified - and all-male - Britain marching determinedly behind its leader to combat the wartime threat to the nation. Though we should not underestimate Starmer's ambition, or the importance of what he is attempting, or the goodness of the public, it would be naive to expect the peacetime Britain of 2024 to pull together so readily behind its prime minister to overcome its peacetime national troubles.

The Guardian

# Kursk and Russian war with Ukraine

Brad Lendon

**U**KRAINE'S military incursion into Russian territory in the Kursk region is covering some of the same territory on which the Soviet Union scored one of its most important victories over German invaders in World War II, one that some historians say turned the tide of the war in Europe almost a year before the D-Day invasion of Normandy.

The June 6, 1944, landings on the beaches of France are often thought of in the West as the turning point in Nazi leader Adolf Hitler's conquest of Europe, but the die was cast for Germany's defeat from July 5 to August 23, 1943, when millions of troops and thousands of tanks and armored guns did battle around Kursk, the historians say.

With victory in Kursk, "the Soviets seized the initiative in the east and never surrendered it until the end of the war," said Michael

Bell, executive director of the Jenny Craig Institute for the Study of War and Democracy at the National World War II Museum in New Orleans.

In the spring of 1943, Hitler's army in the east was badly wounded by the Battle of Stalingrad, where the Germans lost almost a million men in their attempt to take the city on the Volga River, rout a battered Soviet army, and capture oil fields in the southern Caucasus that could provide the fuel for Germany's full conquest of Europe. Soviet leader Josef Stalin ordered Stalingrad defended at all costs and German advances during the late summer and fall of 1942 were pushed back during the winter, and what was left of the German forces in the city surrendered by February 1943. As German forces were pushed back along the Eastern Front after Stalingrad, Hitler's generals looked for a way to regain the initiative in the

east and settled on trying to pinch off a Soviet salient, a 150-mile, north-to-south bulge in the German lines, defended by more than a million men and centered on Kursk. The generals wanted to attack in the spring, but Hitler pushed back the start of the operation, dubbed Operation Citadel, so some of Germany's newest tanks could be dispatched to the battlefield. This gave the Soviets ample time to prepare defenses for what was an obvious point for an attack, said Peter Mansoor, a professor of history at The Ohio State University and former US Army armored cavalry commander. "It was pretty easy to tell that the Germans would have an interest in squeezing this bulge out of the front," Mansoor said.

Germany would commit as many as 800,000 troops and around 3,000 tanks to take that salient. But they

faced formidable defenses. Bell, from the World War II museum, said the Soviets prepared a series of defensive lines, dug 3,000 miles of anti-tank ditches and laid 400,000 land mines to defend the bulge, while putting 75% of its armor and 40% of its manpower on the Eastern Front in the Kursk salient or in reserve behind it.

While the new tanks Hitler wanted in the battle were more powerful than Soviet armor, Stalin's forces had the numerical advantage, Bell said. "The Germans have some superior equipment, but the superiority in numbers is clearly on the Soviet side," Bell said. Some estimates of Soviet strength in the Battle of Kursk surpass 2 million troops and more than 7,000 tanks.

The numerical advantage tipped even further to the Soviet side when on July 9, Allied forces landed on the

Italian island of Sicily, opening a new front Hitler had to defend and prompting him to transfer some forces from the Eastern Front to Italy, the historians said. The German forces that remained could not break the Soviet defenses, falling well short of objectives and never penetrating deep into rear areas. The cost to Hitler's forces was steep, with casualty figures ranging up to 200,000 or more killed and around 1,000 tanks lost, according to histories of the battle.

"The Germans were never able to mass forces again to the magnitude that they attempt with this battle," Bell said. "What Kursk did was eliminate the German armor reserves and thereby made it impossible for the Germans to successfully defend the Russian front for the rest of the war," Mansoor said. "After Kursk, the Germans could no longer replace their manpower losses and they lost the cream of their armored corps there,"

he said.

When Ukrainian forces crossed the border into the Kursk region on August 6, they had an advantage that the Germans didn't have in 1943 - surprise. The offensive was planned in complete secrecy, and troop movements were made to look like reinforcements of defensive positions or an exercise inside Ukraine. "The Russians have not changed their way of war all that much," Mansoor said. And that may play to Ukraine's advantage today, said the former US Army armored cavalry officer. Ukraine has created maneuver space inside Russian territory using combined arms warfare - successfully synchronizing infantry, long-range artillery and aviation in support of each other - something Kyiv's forces had not been able to do before. "It really changes the nature of the war, at least in that area of the front line," Mansoor said.



# By taking aim at Telegram, France puts free speech in crosshairs

Rina Matsapulina

**THE arrest of Pavel Durov in France could be a turning point for free speech in the digital space, threatening to permanently cripple our understanding of privacy and its limits. Judging by media reports, the charges being readied against the Telegram founder appear to be less about his actions and more about controlling a platform known for its privacy protections.**

The essence of the charges is that Telegram is allegedly being used for crimes including drug trafficking and child pornography, as well as hacking attacks. However, the same accusations could just as easily be brought against the creators of the iPhone and Android, since virtually no offense can be committed without using their products in one form or another. In a similar vein, it would be a good idea to ban the manufacture of small plastic bags because they are often used to sell drugs. This reminds us of the old question: Is the maker of a knife to blame if someone is stabbed to death with it? The answer is obvious - no, they are not. It is the perpetrator who is responsible for the crime, not the one who created the tools or technology that can be used for both legal and illegal purposes.

Fighting crime is primarily the job of law enforcement and intelligence agencies, not private enterprises. Leaders of companies like Telegram may assist the authorities if they deem it necessary, but they are under no obligation to blindly act in the interests of states by sacrificing the privacy of their users. Ultimately, it is the job of law enforcement to develop crime-fighting techniques and collect evidence themselves, not to shift that responsibility to technology companies. If it's difficult for them to track and expose illegal activity without access to user data, that's not a problem for Telegram or other privacy-protecting companies, and it's certainly not a problem for the users themselves.

At the same time, the strong declarations about fighting crime sound even more absurd as long as there are truly impenetrable encrypted tech-

nologies and communications such as Tor, i2p, Freenet and PGP, which are constantly used to organize illegal activities and are virtually uncontrollable. These systems are inherently designed to maximize user anonymity and security, making them ideal for covert operations. In contrast, Telegram is more focused on media and political activity, where privacy is important, but the platform does not claim absolute invulnerability and is involved in the fight against illegal content.

All of this indicates that Durov's arrest reflects the authorities' desire to gain control over one of the most independent platforms rather than a real desire to fight crime.

The introduction of various regulations is often disguised as a fight against terrorism, drug trafficking or pedophilia. However, these well-intentioned goals hide the threat of arbitrary use of power: any dissent, criticism or denunciation of state abuses can be declared a crime, and any inconvenient citizen can be declared a terrorist. This is a painfully familiar practice that we have seen in Russia for decades.

The fundamental problem is that, time after time, under beautiful slogans, states try to crush and distort the very idea of privacy and data protection on the internet. Telegram and its creator have already faced similar attacks. In 2018, Russian authorities tried to block access to the platform in the country under an absolutely identical pretext - the fight against terrorism. However, Durov refused to hand over user data to the Russian security services, becoming a symbol of resistance to the state and the arbitrary use of the coercion machine. We are now seeing similar attempts from the French authorities, which shows the global nature of this pressure.

The insistence that platforms such as Telegram actively cooperate with the intelligence services undermines the basic principles of freedom of speech and guarantees of secrecy of correspondence. The inviolability of

personal information must remain a fundamental principle, even if it complicates the work of law enforcement agencies - otherwise, we open Pandora's box and create a world in which no one is protected from the arbitrary power of the authorities; we embark on a dangerous path toward authoritarian control over citizens.

The consequences of Durov's arrest could be long-lasting and tragic for digital freedom. If Durov is forced to cooperate with the authorities, it could undermine Telegram's credibility as an independent company. In turn, it will open the door to increased scrutiny of other digital platforms as well. States around the world will be able to use this precedent to justify their demands for access to users' personal information without court orders.

Freedom of speech and secrecy of correspondence are once again being held hostage to political games. And although these concepts are legally enshrined as fundamental rights, real practice shows that states increasingly ignore them when it comes to the possibility of extending control over the private lives of citizens.

Another aspect that deserves attention is the political reaction to Durov's arrest. The Kremlin, always ready to pursue any opportunity to criticize the West, immediately latched on to the story, using it as a convenient argument against Western democracy. The Russian authorities, who were themselves trying to block Telegram just a few years ago for the same reasons now voiced by French law enforcement agencies, suddenly became its "defenders." This blatant hypocrisy underscores that Durov's case is being used by both the West and Russia to their own advantage.

However, it is important to understand that Kremlin officials would not have defended Durov with such zeal if he were in Russia. On the contrary, he would likely face the same fate as many other entrepreneurs and activists facing repression. After all, Durov fled Russia precisely because

of pressure from the authorities, accompanied by the exact same accusations that are now being made by the French authorities, and the hooting of all the same characters who are now cartoonishly posing as freedom of speech activists.

This underscores that the Durov case is not just an issue of free speech and data privacy, but a political struggle for control over information and technology. If states can subjugate platforms like Telegram, it will be a blow to digital rights around the world. The very ability to express oneself and speak openly about one's beliefs will be jeopardized.

As practice shows, people who speak out loudly and publicly against government regulation of speech and interference with privacy sooner or later come face to face with the full force of the coercive apparatus. Assange, Snowden, Durov. These figures have become symbols of the struggle for free speech and the protection of personal information, but their lives have been full of hardship and repression. Any open resistance to the authorities' interference sooner or later leads to severe pressure. In this regard, it is worth asking the question: who is next? Perhaps Elon Musk, known for his ambitious projects and provocative statements, will be at the center of such a confrontation.

In a world where the boundaries between privacy and state control are increasingly blurred, the struggle to preserve freedom and privacy is becoming increasingly dangerous, and anyone who stands up to defend these values must be ready to face the Leviathan.

Ultimately, the arrest of Pavel Durov is not just a problem for one person or one company. It is a major challenge for everyone who supports freedom of speech and who is ready to fight for the remnants of privacy that still exist. Behind the guise of fighting crime, states have sought time and again to undermine these principles. If we do not pay attention, we risk losing the freedoms we consider inalienable.

The Moscow Times

# Are Kamala Harris' Democrats taking back

Robin Abcarian

**If you are old enough to remember the tumultuous protests of the Vietnam War era, you probably remember the ideological combat waged on car bumpers. People who supported the war slapped "America: Love It or Leave It" bumper stickers on their cars. To which those who opposed the war responded, "America: Change It or Lose It."**

"Patriotism" means many things to many people. But one thing should be obvious to anyone lucky enough to be a citizen of this country: No political party has a lock on it. For Republicans, that should have become uncomfortably clear during last week's Democratic National Convention, when the party of traditionally unherdable cats became a flag-waving, "Born in the USA," singing single-celled organism.

"For everyone here and everyone watching, I want you to proudly claim your patriotism," said Michigan Rep. Elissa Slotkin, a former CIA officer who served in Iraq. "You are here because you love your country. Do not give an inch to pretenders who wrap themselves in the flag but spit in the face of freedoms it represents." Wrapping oneself in the flag is usually a metaphor. Former President Trump literally grabs it by the pole.

The Democrats' full-throated embrace of patriotism discombobulated Republicans, who have always tried to claim the flag and freedom as their own. "These American flags are sort of startling to me," said CNN political analyst (and Times contributor) Scott Jennings, a longtime advisor to Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell who rarely misses a chance to insult Democrats. "Normally you guys are burning these things, but tonight, you're waving them." The Wall Street Journal's Peggy Noonan was also annoyed by what went down at the DNC. "They stole traditional Republican themes (faith, patriotism) and

claimed them as their own," she wrote, even as she confessed that the Springsteen sing-along brought her to tears.

Republicans have abandoned the values they traditionally embraced. In the past, you could define the GOP by its commitment to a strong national defense, free-market capitalism, lower taxes and limited government. Now it is the party of Trump - the party of whatever narcissistic whim the former president is indulging at the moment. That necessarily means Republicans have no consistent ideology. For instance, Trump crowed about appointing three of the ultraconservative Supreme Court justices who overturned Roe vs. Wade and, as a candidate in 2016 and during his presidency, vowed that he would sign a national abortion ban. But now that he understands that stripping women of a fundamental right hurts him and other Republican candidates politically - and will continue to hurt them - he has backtracked.

He has trashed immigrants seeking better lives in the US and fomented paranoia about those coming across the southern border. But when a bipartisan immigration enforcement bill was finally hammered out last year, he demanded that Republicans withhold their support. Why? So he could continue hammering Democrats over immigration. Loving your country means loving it warts and all. But more than that, loving your country means being able to grapple honestly with its history and hold contradictory views of it in your head: America is a country founded on freedom, and America is a country founded on slavery. The flag is a beloved symbol of America, and Americans have a constitutional right to burn it if they choose.

That is what the Supreme Court ruled in 1989. And even the cranky conservative Justice Antonin Scalia agreed. "If it were up to me, I would

put in jail every sandal-wearing, scruffy-bearded weirdo who burns the American flag," Scalia said. "But I am not king."

On Monday, the man who would like to be king wrongly implied that Democrats burned flags during their convention. "They're burning American flags all over the place, and the fake news doesn't want to show it," Trump said. (There was one widely reported instance of pro-Palestinian protesters outside the convention burning American and Israeli flags.) Anyone who burns a flag should spend a year in jail, he said. "They say, 'Sir, that's not constitutional,'" he said. "We'll make it constitutional."

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, patriotic fervor surged in every corner of America. Flag sales skyrocketed. In the months after the attacks, it was not unusual to see American flags flying everywhere - on cars, homes, commercial buildings, construction cranes. Even in liberal bastions, Americans who had eschewed the flag suddenly waved it. Left-wing baby boomers who came of age during Vietnam and the civil rights era, who were rightfully skeptical of performative patriotism, embraced the flag as never before. It was a rare moment of national unity. Before long, however, President George W. Bush's misbegotten war in Iraq shattered the sense of oneness.

During President Obama's first White House run, he decided to stop wearing a flag pin on his lapel as a gentle protest against the Iraq invasion. Republicans, already bent on "othering" him, were apoplectic. "My attitude is that I'm less concerned about what you're wearing on your lapel than what's in your heart," Obama said at the time. "You show your patriotism by how you treat your fellow Americans, especially those who serve. You show your patriotism by being true to our values and ideals." It was true then. It is true today. And it will be true forever.

The Los Angeles Times

# How anti-Kremlin artists are diagnosing a sick regime

Irina Mak

**ARTISTS Against the Kremlin is an exhibition of Russian-speaking artists organized by All Rights Reversed gallery with the support of The Moscow Times at De Balie Arts center in Amsterdam. The more than 100 paintings, installations, photographs and sculptures - most of them new - on display were created by artists who, for the most part, have long declared their opposition to the Russian regime. Two and a half years after Russia's invasion of Ukraine, this art is seen less as a protest than as a testimony. Or, rather, as a diagnosis - and in some cases, a confident prognosis.**

During the feast of the Babylonian king Belshazzar, "mina, mina, shekel, half a mina," or "numbered, weighed, divided" was written by an unknown hand on the wall. And Cyrus destroyed Babylon. Today, "Mene tekkel upharsin" is written on an electronic scoreboard under the unmistakable silhouette of the Kremlin wall's battlements (Sergey Mongayt, "Writings on the Wall"). There is some consolation in the fact that this work was created in the same city where Rembrandt painted "Belshazzar's Feast." But our Babylon is still standing, and victory over absolute evil is still in dreams not yet realized.

"We are faced with a real pile of lies," says Serafima Bresler, an artist who until relatively recently taught at the British Higher School of Art and Design in Moscow, in her 2020 work of the same name. But already a year ago, as a student at Hamburg's HFBK (University of Fine Arts), she and fellow students and artists from Ukraine, Russia and Belarus created the "Cultural Integration Initiative" project to help refugees fleeing the war in Hamburg.

Her canvas on display at De Balie, an endless strip going all the way up to the ceiling, resembles a photographic film of snapshots. These are printed photographs: frame-by-frame moments from the "Dance of the Little Swans."

Philippenzo, another artist in the exhibition, also had a dream of "Swans" that was somehow realized in his art - the installation "Swan Lake," shown in 2019 in Yekaterinburg: a painted TV screen showing Pyotr Tchaikovsky's iconic ballet with the text "For an endless twenty years / We've been looking forward to the ballet."

After the beginning of the war, in his native Volgograd, Philippenzo created the mural "Tsink Nash" ("Zinc is Ours," referring to the zinc coffins used to transport dead Russian soldiers) - at that time, something like this was still possible - for which he was fined 80,000 rubles. For "Izrossilovanie" (a combination of the Russian words for "rape" and "Russia") - a piece of graffiti that appeared on Russia Day 2023 under Elektroavodsky Bridge in Moscow - Philippenzo was arrested for 15 days, followed by another 15 days. He finally managed to slip out of the embrace of his native country when he was released on the eve of his interrogation. It was "Izrossilovanie" that I was reminded of, watching how, a couple of hours before the exhibition vernissage, the artist was putting the finishing touches on a black-and-white canvas with cemetery crosses, on which an oblique crossbar transforms the Orthodox Christian cross into the letter Z.

On June 12, 2022, when everyone saw a photo of "Izrossilovanie" on social media, it sparked more than just delight. Many did not hide their skepticism about whether creating this graffiti was even possible. "This is definitely photoshopped," wrote everyone who was not lazy. And they were wrong. "That spot is not the most frequented," the artist explained when, having met him in Amsterdam, I awkwardly asked how it happened. "I ask myself the same thing. Two to two and a half hours was enough for me to do everything."

"Resistance art is a symptom: when this art begins, it is a sure sign that the sick regime is doomed and

dying," said Linor Goralik, one of the many participants in the exhibition. Goralik's horror "icons" flank the video for "Putin's Ashes" by Pussy Riot founder Nadya Tolokonnikova. While the viewers careen Nadya's delicate knees in net stockings, her hand deftly fills pharmacy vials with the product of the combustion. All by herself.

Among the artists on display, in addition to the authors mentioned above, are Andrei Bilzho (everyone pictures his own heroes in his head when looking at his drawing "Kiss of the Devil"), Victor Melamed, Mikhail Ray, Danila Tkachenko, Slava Pflr, Artem Loskutov, Vladlena Sandu, Alexey Kovalchuk... And many artists are exhibiting under pseudonyms that say little about them: olo.olooolo, Kungfuk, Pomidor, Party of the Dead, Igor Ost, artisterror, BFMTH, K.Hell, Kuril What, AXYXY...

Among them is the curator, who acted as an exhibitor at the same time. His unmistakable "A Little Country" is about one fearsome republic living inside Russia according to its own laws. A mosque in the style of the Hagia Sofia (a mosque just like it was built not so long ago in the capital of this republic) on a bright green square cloth brings to mind the unapologetically politically correct Brodsky - "Green only on the banner of the Prophet" from "Journey to Istanbul." And of course, one can't forget about the woven "paintings" of Soviet nonconformist artist Timur Novikov.

The exhibition as a whole confirms the truth: old ideas live and triumph, at least by virtue of their validity and eternal, alas, relevance. I do not know who exactly hides behind the pseudonym Kastu? Kalino?ski (the name of the hero of the January Uprising of 1863-1864 in the lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against the Russian Empire), but his porcelain invalids ("Soldiers," from the "Sad Toys" series) refer, of course, to the sculpt-

tures of Ukrainian-Soviet avant-garde sculptor Vadim Sidur, whose centenary we have just celebrated.

And the porcelain meat grinder with babies in diapers (Tasya Asya, "Original Debt to the Russian Federation") refers to "The Wall," Alan Parker's film set to the music of Pink Floyd. That film once shocked the world. But more than 40 years have passed, and society has gotten used to it. The drawings of Sasha Skochilenko, who, on the eve of the exhibition's opening, was fortunately among the political prisoners exchanged by Putin for murderers and terrorists, also inadvertently refer to a sad page from Russian art history (and the country's history).

Sentenced to seven years in a penal colony for spreading "fakes" about the military - by swapping supermarket price tags with anti-war leaflets - Skochilenko is to some extent an artist by chance. She studied directing at the Russian State Institute of Performing Arts and, before this whole story, was professionally involved in music and wrote poetry.

She didn't start to draw in earnest until she was imprisoned. Sasha's mother says they even gave her daughter colored pencils, but not right away, and only six colors. And so everything was put to use, including diluted paste from gel pens. Obviously, despite all the abuses prisoners face today, the conditions in which Sasha found herself can hardly be compared to those in which Soviet nonconformist painters Boris Sveshnikov and Ulo Sooster, who were even younger at the time of their imprisonment than Sasha, created their graphic evidence of total gulag humiliation in the 1940s and 1950s.

It was forbidden to draw in those camps. When a guard snatched a pack of Sooster's drawings and threw them into the fire and Sooster pulled them out, he got his front teeth knocked out. Sooster's 100th birthday, by the way, is in October. I'm not comparing those horrors to these - but I can't help but notice a self-evident trend.

# Starmer's plan to undo hard Brexit

James Crisp

**SIR Keir Starmer needs Olaf Scholz of Germany to carry out his plan to undo the Tories' hard Brexit. Striking deals with Germany after his visit to Berlin is part of the Prime Minister's "Operation Reset" strategy to lay the groundwork for the next generation of Brexit talks.**

He needs to build political momentum, trust and goodwill with EU capitals before he can renegotiate the "botched" Brexit trade agreement and forge deeper ties with the EU. "We must turn a corner on Brexit," Sir Keir said, as Labour insisted there was no plot to rejoin the EU or its single market.

UK-EU relations have improved, helped by the Windsor Agreement on Northern Ireland and the need for a united Western front against Russian aggression. But the EU is preoccupied with the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis, limiting its bandwidth. Sir Keir's challenge is that the European Commission, which spearheads EU trade talks, is happy

with a deal it believes is very much in its favour.

He needs influential EU leaders arguing Britain's case to convince Ursula von der Leyen's commission, and the 27 member states, to endure yet more Brexit talks. After the years of negotiations, the rows over fishing rights and vaccines, and the threats of a trade war over the Irish Sea border, the EU wanted Brexit done every bit as much as the British. Deepening relations with Berlin with a new deal on defence and trade will win Sir Keir an important ally and send a signal to the rest of Europe.

It helps that Ursula von der Leyen, the commission president, is German, and Berlin is the EU's largest economy. But the clock is ticking on Mr Scholz's time as chancellor. He is under fire over migration and a massive black hole in its budget. His centre-Left SPD faces defeat to the centre-Right CDU in federal elections next year, and to the far-Right Alternative for Germany in regional elections in

Thuringia this weekend. Sir Keir may be armed with a whopping majority, but he is relying on a European leader who is nearing his sell-by date.

The federal elections are not until September 2025, which does give Mr Scholz some time to make Britain's case before the May 2026 review date for the UK-EU trade deal. Bilateral deals with Berlin will not be enough on their own to move the dial in Brussels, which will drive a hard bargain with Britain regardless.

The commission, to Labour's initial shock and annoyance, insists it sees the review as a chance for some minor tweaks to the Brexit trade deal - and nothing more. Sir Keir says he won't agree to a "free movement lite" deal on youth mobility or a return to Erasmus, which Brussels has offered. UK universities were hugely popular destinations for the Erasmus student exchange programme but are now too expensive, with EU citizens fac-

ing overseas fees. Can Labour really expect to get better deals for British touring bands and city workers and not have to give up anything on youth mobility? The history of Brexit shows that both sides draw out maximalist red lines before pinking them in the course of the negotiations. Britain, in particular, has form for caving to the EU at the very last minute.

The commission remains convinced that its 450 million-strong single market gives it irresistible negotiating leverage with the UK. It is also fiercely jealous of its territory. It made its demand for a youth mobility deal solely because Britain began bilateral talks with individual member states on improving it. During the Brexit negotiations, Brussels warned London against attempting to divide and conquer the EU by lobbying its capitals. Sir Keir now faces a delicate balancing act to avoid being accused of going over Brussels' head to Europe's capitals as he tries to lay the foundations of the new EU relationship.





**LAHORE:** Director-SOGO Group of Companies & CEO-SOGO Solar Solutions, Mr Shoaib Jafrani receiving International Solar Technology Excellence Award from Governor (KPK) Mr Faisal Karim Kundi in the category of Trusted Solar Products and Services. And a shield as a token of appreciation for SOGO's contribution in Pakistan's Energy sector from Mr Malik Khuda Baksh, a great personality from FPCCI's Energy Committee. The event took place at Nishat Hotel, Lahore and was attended by officials from Ministry of Energy, PPIB(AEDB), and Member of Prime Minister's solarisation committee.

## Macroeconomic indicators sow resilience: Report

ISLAMABAD (APP): In the first month of the current financial year, key macroeconomic indicators demonstrated resilience, with consumer-based inflation decreasing, the current account balance improving, and revenue collection surpassing targets.

According to the 'Monthly Economic Update and Outlook August 2024', issued by the Ministry of Finance on Friday, the agricultural credit disbursement recorded an increase of 24.8 percent during fiscal year 2024 to Rs 2,216 billion compared to the last year.

A significant rise in the import of agriculture machinery and implements

by 122.8 percent to \$ 91.3 million during the period under review indicates a continued boost in investment in farming technology, paving the way for enhanced productivity and efficiency in the agriculture sector.

The Large Scale Manufacturing Sector registered positive growth of 0.9 percent in fiscal year 2024 against the contraction of 10.3 percent last year. CPI inflation recorded at 11.1 percent on Year-on-Year basis in July 2024 as compared to 12.6 percent in previous month, and 28.3 percent in July 2023.

On a month-on-month (M-o-M) basis, it increased by 2.1 percent in

July 2024 compared to an increase of 0.5 percent in the previous month.

The government managed to reduce the fiscal deficit to 6.8% of GDP in FY2024, down from 7.8% last year. The primary balance showed a surplus of 0.9% of GDP, in contrast to a deficit of 1.0% of GDP in FY2023. The fiscal performance remained robust due to the prudent measures.

Total revenues grew by 38.0 percent due to a notable increase in both tax and non-tax collection, whereas the non-tax collection grew by 75.4 percent to Rs 3183.3 billion in fiscal 2024 against Rs.1814.8 billion last year. Federal Board of Revenue

collection growth continued its upward trajectory and surpassed the target by Rs.3.8 billion set for July 2024 as the net tax collection grew by 23 percent with tax collection at Rs.659.8 billion from Rs.538.4 billion last year.

The external account position improved due to tangible increase in exports and remittances despite upsurge in imports as during the month of July the current account deficit shrank to \$0.2 billion compared to \$ 0.7 billion last year. Goods exports increased by 12.9 percent, reaching \$2.4 billion, while imports recorded at \$4.8 billion, compared to \$4.1 billion last year (16.3% growth).

## Removal of limits on transactions through PSX's EIPO System

### E.P. Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) and Central Depository Company of Pakistan Limited (CDC), under the aegis of and in close coordination with the Securities & Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) and State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) are working towards facilitating Investors participating in the Initial Public Offerings to have a seamless experi-

ence.

As part of the initiative, ILink with the support of SBP has instructed all its member banks to remove the limits on transfer of funds for transactions executed through EIPO platforms.

Previously such electronic payments were subject to transactional limits imposed by the Banks.

A Memo to this effect was issued by ILink recently whereby all banks were instructed to remove

the transactional capping for EIPOs.

This step will enable investors to invest in an IPO through the EIPO facility without being restricted by any transactional capping or limit. The EIPO system is utilised to provide an end-to-end digitised experience to investors participating in the IPO through the EIPO platforms.

Speaking about the removal of transactional capping for EIPO transac-

tions, Mr. Farrukh H. Khan, MD & CEO PSX, stated, "Pakistan Stock Exchange continuously endeavours to facilitate investors, market participants and stakeholders.

It is in line with this ethos which PSX follows that today, with the cooperation of the CDC, and the support of the SECP as well as SBP, we have enabled removal of capping on transaction limits for investors utilizing the EIPO platforms".

## Wall Street rally helped boost gains for 401(k) plan savers

LOS ANGELES (AP): Strong growth for stocks on Wall Street this year have helped juice gains for savers with retirement accounts.

The average 401(k) plan balance stood at \$127,100 at the end of the second quarter, an increase of 13% from the same period last year, according to data from Fidelity Investments.

The average balance in the April-June quarter was up just 1% from the first three months of the year, when the average 401(k) balance jumped 16.4% from a year earlier.

"Retirement savers in the second quarter of 2024 benefited from the continued upswing of the previ-

ous quarter, when contribution levels and average account balances reached record highs," said Sharon Brovelli, president of workplace investing at Fidelity Investments.

The median 401(k) plan balance was just \$29,200 at the end of the second quarter, an increase of 17% from a year earlier.

The median figure tends to skew lower than the average because workers who recently enrolled into a 401(k) plan but haven't had time to build up a balance.

About 35% of Americans reported having a 401(k) or similar retirement savings plan in 2020, according to the Census Bureau.

Individual retirement

accounts, or IRAs, also rose. The average balance was \$129,200 by the end of the second quarter, an increase of 1% from the first quarter and up 14% from the second quarter last year, Fidelity said.

The retirement savings plans' gains came as the major stock indexes crushed multiple record highs amid a wave of enthusiasm over artificial intelligence developments that fueled demand for shares in Big Tech stocks, including chipmaker Nvidia, Meta Platforms, Microsoft and Amazon.

The benchmark S&P 500 index rallied to a roughly 15% gain through the first six months of the year. It has since added another 2.4% and is up

about 17% as of Wednesday.

The savings rate, or how much savers set aside from their pay combined with contributions from their employer, also helped push up 401(k) plan balances. The savings rate was 14.2%, Fidelity said. That's down slightly from 14.1% in the first quarter, but higher than the 13.9% rate in the second quarter last year.

For many savers, their growing nest eggs are proving too tempting not to tap early. Some 18.3% of employees with a 401(k) plan had a loan outstanding on their retirement account balance in the second quarter, Fidelity said. That's up from 17.2% in the same quarter last year.

## Review of overseas trade missions' performance underway

KARACHI (PPI): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan assured on behalf of the Ministry of Commerce and the Government of Pakistan that the current government is prioritizing the resolution of issues faced by the business community. He emphasized that good times are ahead, and the country's economy is steadily strengthening. There are strong indications that Pakistan's share in global trade will increase.

The free trade agreements (FTAs) made in the past were not in the national interest and resulted in losses rather than benefits for Pakistan. The government is working on a mission to promote the economy and ease of doing business under the Prime Minister's vision.

In a meeting with Zubair Tufail, former President of FPCCI and President of United Business Group (UBG), the Minister of Commerce stated that the survival of Pakistan's economy is directly linked to the performance of the Ministry of Commerce and the Chambers of Commerce. Officers appointed on overseas trade missions have been specifically assigned to promote the country's trade and economy, and their performance is being continuously reviewed.

UBG President Zubair Tufail said that the government signed free trade agreements with Sri Lanka, Malaysia, and China, but those agreements benefitted the respective countries rather than Pakistan. He

stressed that future FTAs with any country should incorporate the business community's suggestions to increase exports. He also pointed out that China imports meat from several countries but purchases a minimal amount from Pakistan. Therefore, the government should negotiate with China to increase meat imports from Pakistan.

Zubair Tufail mentioned that an FTA between Pakistan and Turkey would soon be signed, but Pakistan is currently facing challenges in trade with Turkey due to a 25% duty. Additionally, an FTA with Thailand is expected to be signed soon, but the government should prioritize Pakistan's interests before finalizing the agreement.

## US, UAE and UK top 3 destinations of Pakistani exports during July 2024

ISLAMABAD (APP): The United States (US) remained the top export destination of Pakistani products during the first month of the current financial year 2024-25, followed by the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United Kingdom (UK).

Total exports to the US during July 2024 were recorded at US \$476.017 million against the exports of US \$443.789 million during July 2023, showing an increase of 7.26 percent, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

This was followed by the UAE, wherein Pakistan

exported goods worth US \$216.918 million against the exports of US \$201.319 million last year, showing an increase of 7.74 percent.

UK was the third top export destination, where Pakistan exported products worth US \$183.303 million during the month under review against the exports of US \$151.554 million, SBP data revealed.

Among other countries, Pakistani exports to China stood at US \$160.100 million against US \$153.745 million last year, showing an increase of 4.13 percent while the exports to Germany were recorded at

US \$135.463 million against US \$131.079 million last year, data said.

During July 2024-25, the exports to Holland were recorded at \$124.547 million against \$110.059 million whereas the exports to Italy stood at \$96.024 million against \$89.297 million.

Pakistan's exports to Spain were recorded at \$106.706 million against the exports of US \$115.691 million while the exports to Afghanistan were recorded at \$88.065 million against \$ 46.262 million last year.

The exports to Bangladesh stood at US

\$57.866 million against US \$60.772 million.

Similarly, the exports to France during the month under review were recorded at US \$41.862 million against US \$43.678 million while the exports to Belgium stood at US \$59.674 million against US \$50.351 million.

Pakistan's exports to Saudi Arabia were recorded at US \$57.445 million during the current year compared to US \$49.084 million last year whereas the exports to Turkey stood at US \$33.766 million against US \$24.126 million.

### PSX gains 138 more points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with Bullish trend on Friday, gaining 138.55 more points, showing a positive change of 0.18 percent, closing at 78,488.22 points against 78,349.66 points on the last working day.

A total of 680,810,524 shares were traded during the day as compared to 599,820,775 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 21.186 billion against Rs 20.409 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 545 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 214 of them recorded gains and 180 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 63,106,709 shares at Rs 7.90 per share, Kohinoor Spinning with 44,638,709 shares at Rs.11.84 per share and Symmetry Group Limited with 38,685,354 shares at Rs 9.34 per share.

Hallmark Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 73.27 per share price, closing at Rs 806.01, whereas the runner-up was Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with a Rs 55.47 rise in its per share price to Rs 7,439.17.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 82.09 per share closing at Rs 17,498.93 followed by Sapphire Fibres Limited with Rs 69.43 decline to close at Rs 1,500.00.

## US consumer spending solid in July

WASHINGTON (Reuters): U.S. consumer spending increased solidly in July, suggesting the economy remained on firmer ground early in the third quarter and arguing against a half-percentage-point interest rate cut from the Federal Reserve next month.

The report from the Commerce Department on Friday also showed prices rising moderately last month, curbing inflation.

A jump in the unemployment rate to a near three-year high of 4.3% in July stoked fears over the economy's health, leading financial markets and some economists to put a 50-basis-points rate cut on the table when the U.S. central bank embarks on a widely anticipated policy easing in September.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell last week signaled that a rate cut was imminent, a nod to the worries over the labor market.

"There is nothing here to push the Fed to a half-point cut," said Conrad DeQuadros, senior economic advisor at Brean Capital. "This is not the kind of spending growth associated with recession."

Consumer spending, which accounts for more than two-thirds of U.S. economic activity, rose 0.5% last month after advancing by an unrevised 0.3% in June, the Commerce Department's Bureau of Economic Analysis reported.

The increase, which was in line with economists' expectations, implied that consumer spending maintained most of the momentum from the second quar-

ter, when it helped to boost gross domestic product growth to a 3.0% annualized rate. The economy grew at a 1.4% pace in the January-March quarter.

The increase in spending was across both goods and services, with outlays on motor vehicles and parts leading the charge. Consumers also spent more on housing and utilities, food and beverages, recreation services as well as financial services and insurance. They also boosted spending on healthcare, visited restaurants and bars and stayed at hotels.

Consumers also bought more recreational goods and vehicles as well as furnishings and long-lasting household equipment.

While the labor market momentum has slowed, it continues to generate decent wage growth that is helping to underpin spending. The slowdown in the labor market is mostly driven by a step down in hiring rather than layoffs.

Personal income rose 0.3% last month after gaining 0.2% in June. Wages climbed 0.3% after increasing 0.2% in June. Consumers are also saving less and tapping savings to fund their spending. The saving rate dropped to 2.9%, the lowest level since June 2022, from 3.1% in June.

"Consumer spending continues to surprisingly exceed all expectations, a clear indication that the economy continues to be in good shape," said Olu Sonola, head of U.S. economic research at Fitch Ratings.

The dollar rose against a

basket of currencies, while U.S. Treasury prices fell.

August's employment report scheduled to be released next Friday will likely determine the size of the September rate cut.

Most economists believe the Fed will resist a half-percentage-point rate reduction as the economy continues to hum along and inflation remains above the central bank's 2% target, though price pressures continue to subside.

The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index rose 0.2% last month after an unrevised 0.1% gain in June, the report also showed. In the 12 months through July, the PCE price index increased 2.5%, matching June's gain. The increase in PCE inflation was in line with economists' expectations.

Excluding the volatile food and energy components, the PCE price index rose 0.2% last month, matching the increase in June. In the 12 months through July, core inflation increased 2.6% after advancing by the same rate in June.

The Fed tracks the PCE price measures for monetary policy, and has maintained its policy rate in the current 5.25%-5.50% range for more than a year, having raised it by 525 basis points in 2022 and 2023.

"There's a lot of focus right now on the pace of rate cuts in the short term, but we believe it ultimately will matter more how deep the rate-cutting cycle goes over time," said David Alcaly, lead macroeconomic strategist at Lazard Asset Management.

### RTX to pay \$200m fine

WASHINGTON (Reuters): RTX Corp (RTX.N), opens new tab will pay a \$200 million fine to settle allegations it violated export laws by exchanging data and products with prohibited countries including China, U.S. State Department records dated Thursday said.

The fine stems from failure to abide by the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) by poorly classifying and controlling exports of defense articles, including classified ones, the documents said.

RTX voluntarily disclosed its mistakes and told investors on its July 25 earnings call that the company had aside about \$1 billion to resolve three separate matters related to export violations "primarily identified during the integration of Rockwell Collins and Raytheon Co. into RTX."

## Intel rises as report of chipmaker exploring options cheers glum investors

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Intel's shares rose more than 3% in early trading on Friday, as a report of the struggling chipmaker exploring options that could include a merger or a split induced some investor enthusiasm after one of the stock's worst slumps in decades.

The company is working with investment bankers and considering various options such as separating its flagship product business from its money-losing manufacturing unit, Bloomberg News reported on Thursday.

Intel is also discussing potentially scrapping some factory projects, the report said.

Building and expanding chip production sites is at the core of Intel's turnaround efforts focused on becoming a contract manufacturer for other chip firms - a capital intensive undertaking that has strained the company's finances.

Intel's market value was set to rise by more than \$4 billion on Friday, after falling below the \$100 billion mark earlier in August for the first time in three decades.

The report provided some relief to investors, many of whom see Intel splitting its business as an ideal option as the company trudges through the AI era and trails chipmakers like Nvidia (NVDA.O),

opens new tab and AMD (AMD.O), opens new tab.

Intel's shares have fallen about 60% so far this year, compared with a less than 2% year-to-date drop for AMD. Nvidia's shares have more than doubled in value this year.

Intel's disappointing quarterly report earlier in August, coupled with the company pausing its dividend and announcing layoffs impacting 15% of its workforce, have deepened the stock's slump.

The stock is trading at about 24 times expected earnings, compared with a price-to-earnings ratio of 30.6 for AMD. Nvidia trades at 33.7 times expected earnings.



**FAISALABAD:** Farmers traditionally cultivate carrot crops in the field.





## In brief

## Army wins Jr Taekwondo C'ship

K A R A C H I (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Army emerged victorious at the National Under-17 Junior Taekwondo Championship, securing the top position with an impressive haul of 7 gold, 4 silver, and 2 bronze medals. Sindh's team claimed the second position with 2 gold, 7 silver, and 2 bronze medals, while Punjab's team finished third, earning 2 gold, 5 silver, and 1 bronze medal. The closing ceremony featured Korean Taekwondo master Kobong Kim as the chief guest, alongside Secretary of the Taekwondo Federation Murtaza Bangash and international Taekwondo player Najia Rasool. Medals and winning trophies were awarded to the triumphant athletes, celebrating their achievements in the competition.

## Inter-collegiate tournaments from Sept

HYDERABAD (APP): The board of Intermediate and Secondary education Hyderabad, Sindh on Friday has announced the inter-collegiate tournaments for the academic year 2024-25, scheduled to take place in September. In this context BISE sports section written a letter to Administration of colleges and Higher secondary schools in its jurisdictions. Students from districts including Dadu, Badin, Hyderabad, Jamshoro, Matiari, Tandu Muhammad Khan, TandoAllahyar, Thatta, and Sujawal are invited to participate in the tournaments. Thirteen sports disciplines, including bodybuilding, cricket, cross-country, cycling, football, hockey, and table tennis, will be featured in the events. Students can select their preferred games through their respective schools and colleges by September 10, 2024. The Education Board has set an age limit of 20 years for participating students and an entry fee of Rs100. The tournaments aim to promote sports and physical activities among students, and colleges are encouraged to participate fully.

## Kabaddi Academy to be established

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Kabaddi Association (IKA) is set to establish the Farid International Kabaddi Academy in the federal capital under the patronage of Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (PKF), with an objective to provide world-class training and fitness opportunities for players. The announcement was made during a meeting of IKA, chaired by President Rao Faisal Ur Rehman, said a press release. The meeting was attended by Muhammad Sarwar Rana Vice President, Rana Rizwan Arshad, Muhammad Shahzad Yasin, Sabir Hussain, Saifullah, Muhammad Shahid, Azhar Hussain Shah, Fida Hussain, Shafiq ur Rehman, Muhammad Waris, Ch. Mudassar Naseem, Ch. Khurram Gujjar and Nauman Jadoon. He said the academy will be established under the patronage and vision of PKF President Ch. Shafay Hussain. Rehman will serve as the president of Farid International Kabaddi Academy, with former Kabaddi champion and coach Rana Sarwar as vice-president. The academy aims to provide international-standard training and fitness opportunities for Kabaddi players, enabling Pakistan's young talent to emerge and excel in the sport.



RAWALPINDI: Persistent rain washed out the opening day, Pakistan vs Bangladesh, 2nd Test 1st day.

## Misbah-ul-Haq to mentor Wolves in Champions Cup

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain and all-format head coach Misbah-ul-Haq has been confirmed as mentor of the Wolves side for next month's Champions One-Day Cup, which will be played in Faisalabad from 12-29 September. On Thursday, Shoaib Malik was named as mentor of the Stallions side, while announcements of team names for the other three mentors - Saqlain Mushtaq, Sarfaraz Ahmed and Waqar Younis - will be made in the coming days.

While Shoaib Malik's Stallions has been allocated Sialkot Cricket Academy for training and practice during the 2024-25 domestic cricket season, Misbah's side has been allocated Faisalabad Cricket Academy to prepare for the events during the upcoming season.

The Champions One-Day Cup will feature country's 150 best of the best cricketers. This will be a 50-over tournament that will be played on a single-league format. All but 16 September match between Lions and Panthers, which will start at 9.30am, will commence at 3pm. There will be three playoffs in four days with the

final on Sunday, 29 September.

Misbah-ul-Haq's Wolves will take on Panthers on the opening day on 12 September, followed by matches against Stallions (15 September), Dolphins (17 September) and Lions (20 September).

Misbah ul Haq (Pakistan's most successful Test captain, who led his side to victories in 26 out of 56 Tests, including inspiring Pakistan to No.1 in the ICC Test Team Rankings in August 2016; in 2014, equaled the then world record of fastest Test century by hitting a 56-ball 100 against Australia in Abu Dhabi; featured in two 50-over World Cups, three T20 World Cups and three ICC Champions Trophy events; was a member of the side that played the final of the ICC T20 World Cup 2007 and won the tournament two years later at Lord's; one of the five Wisden Cricketers of the Year for 2017)

"I am excited to reunite with Wolves as a mentor and play a crucial role in shaping the future of our emerging cricketers. This role not only allows me to share my experience and knowledge to help them refine their skills but also gives me a

chance to complete some unfinished business from 2019 and bring my vision to life.

"The Champions One-Day Cup is an electrifying event where the best players in the country will compete fiercely in a format where every match is crucial. This tournament promises to deliver high-quality cricket to Faisalabad fans and inspire our players to perform at their peak, while also providing a platform for the PCB to showcase and elevate this premier event.

"I believe this tournament will be pivotal in discovering the next generation of talent who can be developed to represent Pakistan on the international stage. With upcoming ODIs against Australia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa, a home tri-series, and the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, there is no better time to identify and nurture our future stars."

Schedule of Wolves' matches (all their matches are at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad, and will start at 3pm):  
12 Sep - Wolves v Panthers  
15 Sep - Wolves v Stallions  
17 Sep - Dolphins v Wolves  
20 Sep - Lions v Wolves.

## Special athletes are our heroes: Abid Qadri

KARACHI (APP): President of the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), Syed Abid Qadri Jilani, has emphasized that special children are an integral part of our society, possessing immense hidden talents bestowed upon them by God.

"These children have showcased their abilities on the sports field, bringing honor to Pakistan on the global stage. Particularly, by winning gold medals at the Special Olympics World Games, they have elevated Pakistan's prestige worldwide and proven that their abilities are in no way inferior to others," he expressed these views while speaking at a reception held in his honor by the Chairperson of Special Olympics Pakistan, Ronak Lakhani.

The event was attended by former Pakistan Hockey Olympian Islahuddin, Vice President of POA Fatima Lakhani, POA Media Advisor Asif Azeem, Veena Masood, Secretary of Sindh Olympic Association Ahmed Ali Rajput, Senior

Vice President of Softball Federation of Pakistan Dr Farhan Essa, Chairperson Yasmin Hyder, Vice President Tehmina Asif, and KPT Sports Manager Major (R) Mehmood Riaz. POA President Abid Qadri further said that Islahuddin, who has participated in nine Olympic Games for Pakistan as a player, coach, manager, FIH judge, and BBC TV commentator, and has been honored with Nishan-e-Imtiaz, Pride of Performance, and Sitara-e-Imtiaz, is a hero for the entire nation.

Syed Abid Qadri praised the efforts of Special Olympics Pakistan, acknowledging the tireless work of Chairperson Ronak Lakhani and her entire team in providing equal opportunities for special athletes to participate in sports and secure their rightful place in society. He saluted their dedication and assured that Pakistan Olympic Association would fully support these special athletes in showcasing their

remarkable talents.

Olympian Islahuddin appreciated the hard work and passion of special athletes, who have earned recognition at both national and international levels, calling their achievements commendable and a matter of pride. SOP chairperson Ronak Lakhani congratulated Syed Abid Qadri on assuming the presidency of the POA and expressed her belief that the patronage of the Pakistan Olympic Association would serve as a milestone in the future development and promotion of Special Games.

POA Media Advisor Asif Azeem said that following Arshad Nadeem's gold medal win at the Paris Olympics 2024, the importance of other sports in Pakistan has been gaining attention. "Under the leadership of President Abid Qadri and Secretary General Muhammad Khalid Mahmood, the Pakistan Olympic Association will take further steps to promote Olympism in the country."

## Multan set to host South Africa women cricket team

MULTAN (APP): The district administration has completed arrangements to host South Africa's women cricket team for three T-20 matches at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

This was said by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Wasim Hamid Sandhu during a meeting with officials of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) regarding arrangements for the T-20 series here on Friday.

The DC said that the district administration had completed arrangements for the cricket series starting from September 16 at the Multan Cricket Stadium. He said that directives had been issued for ensuring the beautification of the city, stadium and routes before the mega event.

He added that the matches would be played on September 16, 18 and 29 between Pakistan and South Africa's women cricket teams. He said that tight security would be made for the teams and officials.

## Persistent rain in Rawalpindi washes out Day 1 of 2nd Pakistan, Bangladesh Test

RAWALPINDI (AP): Persistent rain washed out the opening day of the second Test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday.

Bangladesh leads the two-match series 1-0 after it notched a historic 10-wicket win at the same venue last week when Pakistan was bowled out for an embarrassing 146 in the second innings on the fifth and final day.

Players and team officials stayed in the hotel and umpires called off the play at 12:05 p.m. local time with rain still pouring down and leaving the outfield submerged.

Both teams are in the bottom half of the World Test Championship standings with Bangladesh at No. 7

and Pakistan at No. 8, just above last-place West Indies.

An embattled Pakistan, which has lost four Test matches in a row since Shan Masood was elevated as captain last year, hasn't won a home Test since it beat South Africa in December 2021. The remaining four Test matches against New Zealand and Australia were drawn.

Pakistan dropped rusty fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi and named another left-arm Mir Hamza along with leg-spinner Abrar Ahmed in its 12-man squad.

Afridi, who was playing his first Test in eight months, was ineffective and had to wait until Pakistan took the third new ball to claim 2-88 as Bangladesh replied to Pakistan's 448-6 declared

with a strong total of 565.

Abrar was surprisingly released from the first Test squad and was asked to play in a four-day game against Bangladesh 'A' in Islamabad and Pakistan's ploy to go with an all-out pace attack in a home Test match after 28 years backfired.

In contrast left-arm spinner Shakib Al Hasan and off-spinner Mehidy Hasan Miraz took seven wickets in between them on a dramatic fifth day to skittle out Pakistan for its lowest-ever total against Bangladesh in 14 Test matches.

Bangladesh batters, led by Mushfiqur Rahim's resilient 191, were also among the runs with Shadman Islam, Mominul Haque, Litton Das and Mehidy all scoring meaningful half centuries.

## Ronaldo in Portugal squad for Nations League games

LISBON (AFP): Cristiano Ronaldo has kept his place in the Portugal squad for next month's UEFA Nations games against Croatia and Scotland despite an ineffective display at Euro 2024.

The 39-year-old failed to score as he appeared at a record sixth European Championship, with Portugal exiting in the quarter-finals, but he retains the backing of coach Roberto Martinez.

"When I quit the national team, I won't tell anyone in advance... At the moment what I want is to be able to help the

Selecao," Ronaldo said in an interview with Portuguese TV this week.

Ronaldo has started the new season with four goals in as many games for Saudi side Al-Nassr and is likely to continue to lead the Portugal attack with Paris

Saint-Germain striker Goncalo Ramos sidelined by an ankle injury.

While veteran defender Pepe announced his retirement from football at the age of 41 earlier this month, Martinez is looking to the future with Friday's call-up of 17-year-old Sporting Lisbon winger Geovany Quenda.

Chelsea left-back Renato Veiga and Lille defender Tiago Santos are other new faces in the squad for the games against Croatia and Scotland on September 5 and 8 in Lisbon.

**Squad: Goalkeepers:** Diogo Costa (FC Porto), Jose Sa (Wolves/ENG), Rui Silva (Real Betis/ESP)

**Defenders:** Ruben Dias (Manchester City/ENG), Antonio Silva (Benfica), Renato Veiga (Chelsea/ENG), Goncalo Inacio (Sporting Lisbon),

Tiago Santos (Lille/FRA), Diogo Dalot (Manchester United/ENG), Nuno Mendes (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Nelson Semedo (Wolves/ENG)

**Midfielders:** Joao Palhinha (Fulham/ENG), Joao Neves (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Vitinha (Paris Saint-Germain/FRA), Bruno Fernandes (Manchester United/ENG), Bernardo Silva (Manchester City/ENG), Ruben Neves (Al-Hilal/KSA)

**Forwards:** Joao Felix (Chelsea/ENG), Francisco Trincao (Sporting Lisbon), Pedro Goncalves (Sporting Lisbon), Rafael Leao (AC Milan/ITA), Geovany Quenda (Sporting Lisbon), Pedro Neto (Chelsea/ENG), Cristiano Ronaldo (Al-Nassr/KSA), Diogo Jota (Liverpool/ENG).



LORD'S: Nishan Madushka was out for 7, dragging one on from Chris Woakes, England vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, 2nd day.

## Verstappen quickest in opening F1 Italian GP practice

Monza (AFP): Max Verstappen was fastest in Friday's first practice session for the Italian Grand Prix, pipping Charles Leclerc to the top time as he tries to get his Formula One title defence back on track.

Championship leader Verstappen clocked one minute, 21.676 seconds, 0.228sec ahead of Leclerc who is the main hope for the massed ranks of Ferrari fans at Monza. McLaren driver Lando Norris, Verstappen's closest rival for the world title, was 0.241sec off the pace in third.

Norris trails by 70 points in the drivers' championship after a stunning win at last weekend's Dutch GP, the fifth straight race not to be won by Red Bull's Verstappen. Rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli's first ever F1 drive ended quickly and in spectacular fashion as he spun off the track with just four completed laps under his belt.

The 18-year-old was given a chance by Mercedes to drive George Russell's car but lost control at the Parabolica turn 10 minutes into the session and smashed into the trackside barriers, seriously damaging the front end. Antonelli said sorry as he climbed out unhurt, and Mercedes called

the incident "unfortunate but all part of the learning curve".

"He apologised first of all, and that is what you need to do when you bring a car back that looks a little bit like a Lego box falling on the floor," said team chief Toto Wolff. Wolff was unperturbed by the crash, saying that "no one's interested in F1 anyway" and adding that the Italian would get probably another chance in a Mercedes F1 car at the Mexican GP at the end of October.

Antonelli, who competes in the Formula Two championship for Prema Racing, is reported to be in contention to be Russell's teammate when seven-time F1 champion Lewis Hamilton switches to Ferrari at the end of year.

He was not the only driver to have problems at the Parabolica as Carlos Sainz nearly slid off and Franco Colapinto, another rookie who has replaced Logan Sargeant at Williams, hit the gravel at the same corner but managed to get his car back on the track. The second of Friday's two practice sessions gets underway at 1700 local time (1600 GMT).







## In brief

### ICT to launch e-stamping system

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration are fast-tracking the introduction of an e-stamping system, aiming to digitize all stamp paper transactions in the Federal Capital. In an urgent push to modernize revenue operations, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon held a key meeting with revenue officers, said the spokesman of ICT administration. Representatives from the Bank of Punjab (BoP) and Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) were also present. The meeting included briefings on various critical issues, such as revenue cases, the audit of housing society fees, and the ongoing computerization of revenue records. The DC emphasized the importance of expediting the resolution of pending revenue cases, instructing officers to prepare daily reports on their progress. Additionally, the DC directed that the computerization of records should be completed promptly to ensure that all stamp papers in Islamabad are issued online, marking a significant shift towards digital operations in the city. The ICT administration are committed to ensuring that these measures are implemented without delay.

### Police arrest two bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and street criminals and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Friday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Taxila Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Sheraz alias Sheri and Yousaf and recovered 10 stolen motorcycles and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. He informed that police team on the directives of superintendent of Police, Potohar was conducting raids to net the accomplices and facilitators of the accused.

### Special plan for tourists influx

RAWALPINDI (APP): Continuous temperature fall for a few days in the twin cities has culminated in the arrival of enchanting weather in Murree. The appeal creating environment has increased the expectation tourists influx on weekend. The Murree administration has place a special plan to facilitate the tourists, along with exercising the crowd management. According to the details, CTO Murree Mugees Ahmed Hashmi has issued a special traffic advisory for the tourists who are planning to visit Malika Kohsar Murree, in view of recent rains. He directed the traffic officers to perform traffic duty honestly so that the tourists coming to Murree would not get any trouble. "As it is a hilly area and according to SOP, driving license for entering Murree, fitness certificate of public service vehicles and provincial government SOP for entry of large vehicles should be strictly enforced", he said. The CTO further instructed the traffic personnel to avoid vehicles checking on main roads and ensure traffic flow. The administration directed the concerned departments to remain observant on bus stops, markets and on main touring places. On the other hand, the MET Office has already forecast heavy rain that heavy rainfall could risk the land sliding and flash flooding in vulnerable areas of Punjab and Kashmir.

# No NRO to be given to PTI founding Chairman: Ahsan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Friday reiterated that no National Reconciliation Ordinance (NRO) would be given to the founding Chairman of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Imran Khan and he had to prove his innocence in the courts of law.

Responding to various points raised by Leader of Opposition Omar Ayub Khan in the National

Assembly, the minister said almost all PML-N senior party leaders remained in jails and proved their innocence before the courts. PTI leadership during their rule always asked for receipts from PML-N leaders but now they were not providing their receipts to the courts in corruption cases like 190 million pounds.

"PTI leaders should follow those principles and scales which they set for

the then opposition members (PML-N) during their tenure," he said.

He went on to say that PTI leadership was now seeking NRO but it would not be given to them rather they should clear themselves from the courts.

Regarding provision of facilities to Imran Khan at Adiyala Jail, Ahsan Iqbal said the best possible facilities like 5 stars hotel were available to the PTI founding chairman in the jail.

## Riphah collaborate BISP for public empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Representatives from Riphah International University held an important meeting with Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), to discuss potential projects for mutual collaboration aimed at enhancing public welfare and betterment.

The Riphah team, led by Mr. Muhammad Junaid Khan, included Mr. Mehr Ali and Mr. Waqar Khan, were engaged in discussions with key members of the BISP team, including Mr. Idrees Mian, Director General of Complimentary Initiatives; Mr. Irfan Ullah

Khan, Director of Media; and Ms. Maryam Sikandar, Deputy Director of Media.

Senator Rubina Khalid expressed her keen interest in the various educational initiatives of Riphah especially the recently establish RIHCA - RIPHAI Institute of Hospitality and Culinary Arts. She appreciated RIPHAI's contribution in terms of offering growth oriented and modern learning opportunities to the public.

The primary objective of this meeting was to establish a strong public-private partnership between Riphah International University and BISP. Both parties explored various

avenues for collaboration, with a particular focus on skill development programs and scholarships.

These initiatives are designed to support the beneficiaries of BISP by providing them with essential skills and educational opportunities, ultimately contributing to their socio-economic uplift. Additionally, Senator Rubina Khalid proposed engaging fresh graduates of media and mass communication for internships in BISP's media wing. She also suggested organizing a graphic design competition at the inter-university level to raise awareness about BISP's mission.

## Sanaullah promises govt relief for struggling consumers

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Adviser on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Friday has reassured the public that the government is taking concrete steps to reduce electricity bills and expressed confidence that these measures would yield tangible results which will provide much-needed relief to consumers in the coming months.

In an interview with private news channel Sanaullah said that the government is taking concrete steps to address the issues faced by consumers, including high electricity bills and inflation.

"The government is fully committed to providing relief to consumers,"

Sanaullah said, adding, we understand the difficulties faced by the common man and are working tirelessly to address them."

Sanaullah also highlighted the government's efforts to increase power generation capacity, improve energy efficiency, and enhance regulatory oversight to prevent profiteering. Sanaullah warned that Imran Khan will not find any relief in the coming days, as the government will continue to take decisive action against those who engage in unlawful activities.

He emphasized that the rule of law will prevail, and those who challenge the state's authority will face consequences. Responding

to another query about Cabinet share with PPP, he confirmed that the offer stands, but the party's decision is still pending.

The government has expressed willingness to consider their request, acknowledging the party's significant contribution to the government's formation, he added. "We believe in collaborative governance and want to work together with all stakeholders, including the PPP, to drive progress and prosperity in Pakistan," Sanaullah said.

He added that the government is open to constructive criticism and suggestions from the PPP, which will help refine policies and initiatives for the betterment of the country.

## Friends of Police Internship program concludes

RAWALPINDI (APP): 15th batch of Friends of Police Internship program started here at Police Lines Headquarters according to the vision of Inspector General of Police (IGP) Punjab Dr. Usman Anwar, has concluded. Member Provincial Assembly, Shazia Rizwan participated in the internship program as special guest. Senior Superintendent of Police, Investigation Saba Sattar during the program gave lectures on various fields of police working and policing to the students of various educational institutions.

The students were informed about Police Station working, Police Service Centers, Front Desks, various

Police Apps, Traffic Police, legal and judicial proceedings. The students also visited Special Initiative Police Station, Police Lines Headquarters, Command and Control Room, Traffic Headquarters, Police Service Center Liaquat Bagh and Legal Branch.

The internship program would help to further improve community policing with the support and consultation of the students and youngsters, Shazia Rizwan said. SSP Investigations said that the Internship Program was started with an aim to spread awareness about policing and further improve it. Youth could play an important role in improving police

working and service delivery, the SSP said.

The SSP said that the purpose of the internship program is to make the citizens, especially young male and female students, helpful for effective policing, crime prevention, drug prevention in educational institutions and other social problems and community policing.

The Friends of Police could play an effective role as responsible citizens for the betterment of the society, detection and prevention of the crimes, Saba Sattar added. At the end of the ceremony, MPA and the SSP distributed certificates among the students participated in the Friends of Police Internship Program.



ISLAMABAD: Schoolgirls and their mother are navigating a flooded road due to heavy rainfall in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo

## Thalian interchange providing partial relief to commuters: Tarar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Law and Justice, Human Rights, and Parliamentary Affairs, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, on Friday addressed a calling attention notice about the Thalian Interchange, which is situated between the Chakri and Islamabad Toll Plaza. He noted that this interchange, developed during the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) administration, offers partial relief to commuters traveling to Islamabad International Airport.

Senator Tarar's comments were in response to concerns raised by Senator Mohsin Aziz. Aziz had highlighted the lack of a dedicated route from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to Islamabad Airport, a route currently only available to traffic from Punjab.

This issue was raised during a Senate session point of order, approved by the Presiding Officer.

Senator Tarar explained that the Thalian Interchange, located between Chakri and Islamabad Toll Plaza, provides reasonable access to the airport and nearby villages, including Thalian. He dismissed allegations of provincial discrimination, emphasizing that the federal government aims to facilitate all travelers without political motives. He assured that the matter would be addressed with the Minister for Communications.

The Presiding Officer referred the issue to the Standing Committee on Communications. Senator Mohsin Aziz had originally called attention to the fact that there is no dedicated

access from the M-1 motorway section to the Islamabad Airport for travelers coming from KP. While there is a designated route from Punjab, travelers from KP do not have similar access.

Additionally, Senator Abdul Shakoor raised a separate issue regarding the delay in providing gas supply to Tehsil Gulistan, Qilla Abdullah, Balochistan. Despite the project's inauguration in 2014, work was halted in 2015 after being approved by the then Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at the request of Mashar Mahmood Khan Achakzai. Senator Shakoor requested an update from the Minister for Petroleum on why the project remains incomplete?

This matter was also referred to the Standing Committee on Petroleum.

## WASA drains rainwater in low-lying areas

RAWALPINDI (APP): Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) Rawalpindi here on Friday drained the rainwater in low-lying areas. According to a WASA spokesman, following heavy rain in the twin cities, the water level started receding from Nullah Lai at 1 PM.

The highest rainfall was recorded 57 MM at PMD, H-8 today, the spokesperson said. He further informed that 52 MM rainfall was recorded at Shamsabad, 32 MM at Kutchery, 50 MM at Saidpur, and 21 MM at Bokra. On the special directives of Managing Director, WASA, Muhammad Saleem Ashraf, drainage of rainwater from low-lying areas of the city was being completed, the spokesperson said adding, traffic was normal on city roads as water was not stagnant anywhere.

The WASA spokesman informed that the Meteorological Department had forecast more rains. He said that the agency had completed all the arrangements to cope with urban flooding. The leaves of the staff had been canceled and heavy machinery was deployed at vulnerable points, he added. Today water level reached at 8.5 feet at Kattarian and 6 feet at Gawalmandi. The Agency was on high alert to cope with any situation and monitoring the water level situation in Nullah Lai, he added.

## Redressal Committee reviews transfer cases of teachers

RAWALPINDI (APP): Divisional Grievances Redressal Committee here on Friday reviewed transfer and posting cases of 98 teachers. According to a Commissioner Office spokesman, Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak presided over the Divisional Grievances Redressal Committee which approved 48 transfer cases after necessary scrutiny.

Deputy Commissioner, Rawalpindi Waqar Cheema and other committee members besides district education officers from across the division participated in the meeting. The Committee reviewed in detail appeals of 98 teachers for transfers and postings and approved 48 cases.

17 cases of Rawalpindi district out of total 49 were approved. 22 out of 31 cases of Attock district were approved. 3 out of 5 cases of Jhelum district and 6 out of 13 cases of Chakwal district were also approved. The Committee was informed that 45 inter-district cases were under process in Rawalpindi district.

Progress on under-process cases should be expedited, Engineer Amir Khattak directed the officers concerned. "We all should make efforts to facilitate the people rather than to create hurdles in the legitimate activities," the Commissioner added.

Aamir Khattak on the occasion gave instructions that before rejecting a case

due to incomplete documents, the applicant should be asked to complete the papers. The teachers should be accommodated in nearby schools if the desired position is not vacant, he directed. The Committee also reviewed the transfer cases of Kotli Sattian and Murree.

Engineer Aamir Khattak instructed the authorities that by taking onboard Deputy Commissioner Murree, it should be ensured that there would be no shortage of the teachers in far-flung areas due to the transfers.

All possible facilities could be provided to the teachers so that they could perform their duties of education and training with peace of mind, he added.

## Efforts afoot to address Isoolites water woes

ISLAMABAD (APP): As the federal capital's population continues to grow unhindered, the city's natural resources are under extreme pressure with water availability becoming the top most challenge for the authorities.

Although Capital Development Authority (CDA) - the top civic amenities provider to the capital residents - is making every possible effort to overcome the shortfall in water availability through numerous measures, the situation demands a holistic approach for a long-term solution.

Since Islamabad's population grew more than double during last 20 years or so, the pressure on already available resources like Simly, Rawal and Khanpur dams has increased manifold. Then the development of more and more housing societies to meet the residential demands of people shifting to capital from other cities has made the situation further challenging. Depleting underground water resources and climate change is another looming challenge.

"Although the situation is challenging, yet the Capital Development Authority (CDA) has initiated several measures to address the shortfall," stated Sardar Khan Zimri, Director General of Water Management at the CDA.

"With the population growth and emergence of new settlements, increase in water demand is natural and the Authority is fully cognizant of its duties," he said. "Therefore, we are looking for more options and proposed construction of two new dams, Shahdara and Chiniot Dam, to augment existing water supply."

To improve efficiency of water system, Zimri said, the CDA plans to modernize water distribution network and sewage treatment plants. "These upgrades aim to reduce water losses and enhance overall effectiveness of water management system."

Zimri said the CDA Board has approved pre-feasibility studies for Shahdara and Chaniot Dam to speed up the planning process and has requested WAPDA to conduct pre-feasibility study for Dotara Dam, a site located 41 km upstream of Khanpur Dam. "If the civic agency succeeds in laying gravity tunnel from Dotara Dam via Shahdara, it would be able to generate around 10 to 13 megawatt electricity as well."

He also mentioned to a project for enhancing water storage capacity of Khanpur Dam, controlling seepage, unfair use of water and its theft through open channels resulting in loss of 40 to 50 per cent water share for the Capital.

"The CDA has requested WAPDA to conduct pre-feasibility and once federal capital gets its due water share, the CDA would be able to supply water to at least 10 more sectors," Zimri said. "We have also decided to resume work on non-completed water con-

duction pipeline from Shah Allah Ditta reservoir to Sector I-11, I-12, I-14, I-15, I-16 etc. Tenders have been called for three missing portions from Shah Allah Ditta to Sector G-13 with starting work on one portion. Moreover, the CDA Board's has also approved amendments in building by-laws for rooftop rainwater harvesting."

Additionally, the CDA, he said has installed 94 filtration plants across Islamabad to ensure clean drinking water for residents as per the WHO standards. "The quality of water supplied through these plants is regularly monitored by the CDA Lab and cross-checked by organizations like PCRWR, NIH, and Pak-EPA."

Zimri informed that CDA is also undertaking significant long-term projects to secure more reliable water supply and "one such project is the 'Conduction of Water from Indus River System at Tarbela Dam for Islamabad and Rawalpindi. This project aims to develop a perennial source of potable water to meet both current and future demands for twin cities."

The growing population has rose water demand to around 120 million gallons per day (MGD) and if this trend continues the demand would further increase exerting extra pressure on available water resource.

Similarly, the groundwater table that was around 10 meters deep in 1960s has now gone down to 60 to 120 meters.



ISLAMABAD: Motorcyclists taking shelter under the bridge of Faizabad Interchange during heavy rain in the Federal Capital. —APP Photo



### Ministry provides free eye treatment

FARAH (TOLONews): The Ministry of Public Health, by sending a team of six doctors to Farah province, has treated 400 patients suffering from eye diseases. The doctors said they have treated these patients for free over a period of ten days. "The Ministry of Public Health had given us a target of 353 patients to treat, but because there were more patients, we added 50 more, especially those whose eyes had cataracts.

## The Frontier Post

Safar 25 1446 — Saturday, August 31, 2024

### Afghanistan become a terrorist safe haven: McCaul

WASHINGTON (Amu TV): Afghanistan has once again become a terrorist safe haven, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul warned on the third anniversary of the U.S. military's withdrawal from the country. In a sharply worded statement, McCaul condemned the Biden administration's handling of the exit, arguing that the chaotic departure has not only reignited terrorist threats in the region.

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

# Afghanistan plans to buy air defense system from Russia: Official

KABUL (TOLONews): The Taliban's head of logistics, Abdul Basir Saberi, expressed the group's need for Russian air defense systems.

Saberi plans future purchases of Russian-made equipment to enhance Afghanistan's air defense capabilities.

In an interview with Russia's state news agency TASS, Saberi emphasized the need for weapons for air defense and airspace control.

He acknowledged Russia's advanced technological capabilities in national defense systems.

The Taliban currently possesses ground military equipment, as stated by their logistics chief. This includes equipment left behind by the Americans after their withdrawal from Afghanistan in August 2021.

Saberi noted the



Taliban's current use of remaining American weapons and equipment for border protection. He expressed satisfaction

with the functionality of these American weapons.

Saberi asserted the Taliban's capability to protect borders with their

current arsenal fully.

Despite not being formally recognized by Russia, the Taliban maintains extensive political

relations with the country.

Amidst these challenges, the Taliban regime faces significant obstacles on the international stage, including sanctions imposed by Western powers and the broader international community.

These sanctions reflect concerns over human rights violations, particularly concerning women's rights, and the need for the Taliban to form an inclusive government that respects diversity within Afghanistan.

Furthermore, international reluctance to formally recognize the Taliban government is compounded by ongoing issues related to combating cross-border terrorism. These multifaceted challenges underscore the complexities the Taliban must navigate to gain broader acceptance and legitimacy on the global stage.

# OIC urges Afghanistan to review decisions on girls and women

KABUL (Khaama Press): Tariq Ali Bakht, representing the Islamic Organization for Cooperation in Afghanistan, met Amir Khan Muttaqi, acting foreign minister of the Taliban, on Thursday.

According to an OIC statement, the meeting took place during the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers' 50th session in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

They discussed reviewing the Taliban's current decisions on girls' education and women's employ-

ment during the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers' 50th session in Yaoundé, Cameroon.

The meeting aimed to address Afghanistan's security, humanitarian, and economic challenges, including efforts to combat terrorism and drug trafficking.

As Afghanistan grapples with these issues, the plight of women and girls remains severe. Restrictions on education and employment opportunities continue to exacerbate the humanitarian crisis. Many women and girls face barriers to access-

ing education, while others cannot pursue careers or participate fully in society.

The Taliban's policies have significantly limited women's rights, constraining their ability to contribute to the country's development and stability.

This situation underscores the urgent need for international support and advocacy to improve conditions for Afghanistan's women and girls, ensuring their rights are protected and opportunities are expanded amid ongoing challenges.

# Mining minister meets senior Turkmen officials



HERAT (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum Hedayatullah Badri during his trip to Turkmenistan met separately with the country's Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Deputy Cabinet, the Minister of Oil and Gas, the heads of TAPI, Industry and Urban Development and Railway Directorate.

The ministry's spokesperson Homayoun Afghan announced that Badri discussed with the

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan about TAPI, TAP, railway line, optical fiber, oil and gas and trade deals. He also shared his opinions and suggestions about oil and gas and TAPI project with the relevant Turkmen officials.

The Minister of Industry and Urban Development of Turkmenistan expressed his interest in iron mining and the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum assured all-round coopera-

tion in this field, and also proposed to build a joint complex in Herat province.

In a meeting with the head of Turkmenistan's railway department, Badri, while pointing out the importance of the railway, demanded the development of the railway to Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif.

He added that this work is not only important for Afghanistan, but also good news for the countries of the region.

## 600 Panjshir youths recruited into IE's forces

KABUL (TOLONews): Mohammad Agha Hakim, the governor of Panjshir, told TOLONews that 600 youths in Panjshir province have been recruited into the ranks of the Ministry of Defense forces based on the order of the leader of the Islamic Emirate.

According to Mohammad Agha Hakim, another 2,000 youths will be recruited within the framework of the Ministry of Interior in the near future. Two hundred youths from the 600 positions allocated by the leader of the Islamic Emirate have been transferred from the Panjshir recruitment center to the Ministry of Defense.

The governor of Panjshir said: "There was an exceptional order from Amir al-Mu'minin for the youths of Panjshir to be recruited into the National Army of the Ministry of Defense. This process was ongoing, and yesterday, two hundred people were transferred from Panjshir to the Ministry of Defense's recruitment center."

Hasan Al-Banna Hadid, head of the Panjshir recruitment command, said: "It was approved for those whose ages were between 18 to 21. We tried to complete the six hundred, and thank God, two hundred were remaining, of which a hundred were transferred yesterday and another hundred will be transferred today. The Ministry of Defense has prepared a new quota for the youth of Panjshir."

The youth who have been recruited into the ranks of the Ministry of Defense forces say they are happy and asked the authorities to provide opportunities for other youth in the ranks of the security forces. "We have come from Panjshir to join the Islamic Emirate's army recruitment. We hope to be included in the task, and tomorrow, God willing, we will be transferred," said Ramin, a resident of Panjshir.

"We are very happy with the Islamic Emirate for providing this opportunity for us so that the youth can come and work in the National Army," said Mohammad Nazim, another resident of the province.

# Ministry responds to UNAMA concerns

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Vice and Virtue has issued a statement dismissing the concerns of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) regarding the ministry's new law, describing them as baseless and rooted in Western ideologies.

The ministry's statement highlighted that the law is based on Sharia principles and Hanafi jurisprudence, and therefore, should not be criticized. The ministry urged UNAMA not to compare Afghanistan with Western theories and non-Islamic societies.

The statement reads: "All provisions of this law have been drafted in light of Sharia principles and Hanafi jurisprudence. Criticizing this religious law is tantamount to criticizing Islam and Sharia rul-

ings, and such baseless criticism should cease."

"Interfering in a law based on Sharia is an insult to Islam, and it would be better if foreigners did not insult Islam," said Sayed Akbar Agha, a political analyst.

The statement further notes that the Islamic Emirate is committed to implementing Sharia rulings and that countries and organizations should respect Afghanistan's religious and cultural values instead of criticizing this law.

Additionally, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue has announced that it will no longer cooperate with UNAMA due to what it describes as misleading propaganda by the organization.

The statement added: "The Islamic Emirate is committed to the imple-

mentation of Sharia rulings. Due to UNAMA's misleading propaganda, the Ministry of Vice and Virtue will no longer cooperate with this organization."

"Every country designs and upholds its laws according to its religion, traditions, culture, and customs. However, cutting ties with international organizations is not in the best interest of the Afghan people," said Salim Paigir, another political analyst.

Earlier, the acting minister of Vice and Virtue called on scholars worldwide to address any questions or concerns they may have about the ministry's new law.

Mohammad Khalid Hanafi stressed that the law has been created with significant effort, and the ministry is prepared to provide answers on this matter.

## Asif Durani: Women's rights remain issue

KABUL (TOLONews): Asif Ali Durani, Pakistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, welcomed the Islamic Emirate's efforts in combating corruption, reducing drug production, and improving security, during the launch of a book titled "The Return of the Taliban: International and Regional Perspectives."

However, Durani says that there are still concerns about the prohibition of girls' education and women's right to work in Afghanistan. "Significantly, while many have acknowledged the positive aspects of change in Afghanistan 3 years ago including less corruption, drastic reduction of poppy cultivation and improvement in the overall security situation, there are concerns for girls' education and women's right to work, something no society -- Islamic or otherwise -- will allow to happen," Durani said.

Sohail Mahmood, head of the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad, also emphasized the need for the Islamic Emirate to fulfill its commitments to establishing an inclusive government and respecting human rights.

Sohail Mahmood said: "The interim government needs to abide by the pledges they made in Doha relating to inclusivity, respect for the rights of all afghans, and above all not allowing Afghanistan's territory to be used against any country," Abdul Mateen Qani, spokesperson for the Ministry of Interior, told TOLONews that the production of narcotics in the country has nearly reached zero.

"The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan has acted with seriousness, decisiveness, and wise management in eradicating narcotics and has achieved significant success. You can see that drug production in Afghanistan is nearing zero," he added.

Islamic Emirate officials have previously emphasized that countries should not interfere in Afghanistan's internal matters, particularly regarding human rights issues and girls' education.

# Reactions to Khudadadi's Bronze Medal Win



PARIS (Khaama Press): Several domestic and international organizations have hailed Zakia Khudadadi's victory at the Paralympic Games as historic and a testament to women's resilience in the face of fear and ignorance.

Zakia Khudadadi, a Parataekwondo athlete and refugee team member, secured her first Paralympic medal during the Paris Paralympic Games on Thursday. She claimed bronze after defeating athletes from Cuba and Turkey.

The UN Refugee Agency congratulated

Zakia Khudadadi, describing her achievement as "a testament to the incredible power of sport in transforming lives."

Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, also lauded Khudadadi's victory on his Twitter page, calling it "exciting" and stating that it "carries a message of hope and empowerment for millions of refugee women."

Human Rights Watch described this victory as historic for Afghanistan's women, noting that it came just days after the Taliban announced new restrictions

against women.

The Taliban has banned women from sports and responded cautiously to Khudadadi's victory, allowing women only limited roles such as teaching and nursing. Zakia Khudadadi's achievement at the Paralympics stands as a beacon of hope and empowerment for Afghanistan's women amidst ongoing challenges and restrictions imposed by the Taliban.

Her victory symbolizes resilience and determination in the face of adversity, resonating both nationally and internationally.

# AWCC activates 4G internet services in Shirzad

NANGARHAR (Ariana News): Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC) officials say they have activated 4G internet services for the first time in Shirzad district of Nangarhar province.

Attallah Sahil, head of AWCC in the eastern zone, said that this company has decided to expand telecommunication and internet services in Nangarhar in the future.

The local officials also welcomed this move of Afghan Wireless and said

that the residents of this district were deprived of telecommunication services for the past 20 years.

This area used to be a war zone. Here, people did not use the internet. It is hoped that people's problems will be resolved with the activation of 4G internet services," said Shukrullah Sedaqat, deputy police command in Nangarhar.

The local residents, while thanking the officials of Afghan Wireless, have asked them to further expand the services of this

company in this district.

"We are very grateful to the employees of Afghan Wireless," said a Nangarhar resident. "We are very happy, we want such cooperation to continue," said another resident.

Since the IEA's takeover, AWCC has covered not only Nangarhar but also many remote areas of eastern provinces such as

Kunar, Laghman and Nuristan, which in the past did not have telecommunication services due to war and insecurity.

# Applicants complain about high cost of birth certificates



KABUL (TOLONews): A number of applicants for birth certificates in the capital have complained about the high cost of obtaining these cards.

The applicants are also calling for an increase in the number of distribution branches.

Abdul Wahid, an applicant, said: "The price is very high—200 dollars for those who get it remotely. The services available in Kabul should also be extended to the provinces."

Another applicant, Idris, said: "The number of sites

should be increased. There are more facilities here compared to other areas."

However, the spokesperson for the National Statistics and Information Authority said that obtaining a birth certificate in person at the Asan Khedmat office costs 700 afghani, while obtaining it remotely costs \$200.

Mohammad Halim Rafi, the spokesperson for the National Statistics and Information Authority, stated: "Those living abroad must submit their residence permit, the

original Tazkira (national ID card) or a color copy of it, along with their documents, to our office. After the authority reviews the application, a decision will be made, and the birth certificate will be issued in the applicant's absence. I must also mention that the cost for this service is 200 USD."

According to the spokesperson for this authority, more than 70,000 birth certificates have been distributed since the beginning of this solar year.





**KARACHI:** A view of sea waves seen from a residential apartment, following reports from Pakistan Meteorological Department of a potential cyclonic storm that could develop over the Arabian Sea, at Clifton Beach.

## Israeli military says it killed Hamas commander in West Bank

JERUSALEM (Reuters): Israeli forces killed a local commander of the militant group Hamas in the flash-point city of Jenin on Friday as they pressed a major operation in the occupied West Bank for a third day, the Israeli military said.

The military said Border Police forces had killed Wassem Hazem, who it said was the head of Hamas in Jenin and was involved in shooting and bombing attacks in the Palestinian territory. Two other Hamas gunmen who tried to escape the car they were all traveling in were killed by a drone, it said. Weapons, explosives and large sums of cash were found in the vehicle, it said. There was no immediate comment from Hamas.

In the village of Zababdeh, just outside Jenin, a burnt-out car riddled with bullet holes stood against a wall where the driver crashed the vehicle after being pursued by an Israeli special forces unit, residents said. Villager Saif Ghannam, 25, said one of the two other men who escaped from the vehicle was killed just outside his house by a small drone strike that shattered the windows, while a second man was killed a short distance away.

Ghannam said Israeli forces had removed the bodies but large pools of blood lay on the ground where he said the men were killed. The incident occurred as Israeli forces kept up a large-scale operation involving hundreds of troops and police that was launched in the early hours of Wednesday morning in Jenin and Tulikarm, another volatile city in the

### Jordanian, Iranian foreign ministers discuss Gaza and West Bank crises

LONDON: Jordan's foreign minister and his Iranian counterpart on Friday discussed increased Israeli aggression in the occupied West Bank as well as measures to end hostilities in Gaza. Ayman Safadi and Abbas Araghchi spoke over the phone, Jordan News Agency reported. During their conversation, Safadi emphasized that halting Israeli aggression in Gaza was the first step in preventing a regional war. Safadi also congratulated Araghchi on his appointment and wished him well in his new position. The two ministers followed up on the talks held by Safadi with the Araghchi's acting predecessor Ali Bagheri Kani in Tehran on Aug. 4. They also spoke on a variety of other topics, while emphasizing the "need to maintain open communication between the two countries in order to address any unresolved matters and build partnerships based on respect and cooperation," Jordan News Agency added. The two ministers agreed to meet next month at the UN General Assembly sessions in New York City. — Arab News

northern West Bank, as well as the Jordan Valley.

Israeli armored personnel carriers backed by helicopters and drones pushed into Jenin and Tulikarm on Friday while armored bulldozers plowed up roads to destroy roadside bombs planted by the militant groups. The escalation in hostilities in the West Bank takes place as fighting between Israeli forces and Hamas militants still rages in the Gaza Strip nearly 11 months since it began, and clashes with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement in the Israel-Lebanon border area have intensified.

In the first two days of the West Bank operation, at least 17 Palestinians were killed, including the local commander of the Iranian-backed Islamic Jihad forces in Tulikarm. Since the Hamas attack on Israel last October that triggered the Gaza war, more than 660 Palestinians

— combatants and civilians — have been killed in the West Bank, according to Palestinian tallies, some by Israeli troops and some by Jewish settlers who have carried out frequent attacks on West Bank Palestinian communities.

Israel says Iran provides weapons and support to militant factions in the West Bank — under Israeli occupation since the 1967 Middle East war — and the military has as a result cranked up its operations there. The British government said on Friday it was "deeply concerned" by Israel's operation in the West Bank and said there was an urgent need for de-escalation. "We recognize Israel's need to defend itself against security threats, but we are deeply worried by the methods Israel has employed and by reports of civilian casualties and the destruction of civilian infrastructure," a Foreign Office statement said.

### PHC grants transit bail to Sanam Javed

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) has granted transit bail for 10-days to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf female activist Sanam Javed and ordered her to appear before the relevant courts within the stipulated time, on Friday.

The counsel Ali Zaman advocate informed the court that two First Information Reports (FIRs) had been registered against the petitioner in Lahore and one in Mianwali district.

PHC's Justice Khurshid Iqbal asked why Sanam Javed had approached Peshawar High Court when she was a resident of Lahore. The lawyer replied that this was her first transit bail application and she had not applied for bail anywhere else before.

PHC's single bench comprising of Justice Khurshid Iqbal granted transit bail and ordered Sanam Javed to appear before the relevant courts within 10 days. The court also ordered her to deposit a surety bond of Rs. 1 lakh.

Speaking to the media at PHC after hearing, Sanam Javed said that she had come to the Peshawar High Court to seek transit bail. PTI activist added that she was always afraid of arrest and had to keep applying for bail. She added that the situation in Punjab is bad and that women were being treated unfairly. She claimed that 13 cases had been registered against her, and she had been acquitted in 5 and obtained bail in 8 cases. PTI worker said that she was always afraid of arrest, which was why she had applied for transit bail in Peshawar.

### 10 Balochistan dists declared calamity hit

E.P. Report

QUETTA: Ten districts of Balochistan have been declared disaster hit after devastating rains across the province on Friday. The calamity-struck districts were Ziarat, Kalat, Sah-  
abpur, Lasbela, Awaran, Jafarabad, Kachhi, Austa Muhammad, Loralai and Chaghi. Rains claim 29 lives.

As torrential rains wreaked havoc across the country, at least 29 people lost their lives and 15 injured in Balochistan. According to PDMA report, the rains, which started since July 1, have caused widespread damage to infrastructure and crops. The rain has caused damage to several houses, with 858 completely destroyed and 13,896 partially damaged. In addition to the loss of lives and property, the rains have also caused significant damage to crops, with 58,799 acres of crops and 41 kilometres of roads affected. The PDMA report also stated that seven bridges have been damaged, while 373 animals have died due to the heavy rains. On the other hand, the NDMA has issued a warning of more rains in the coastal regions of Sindh over the next 24 hours.

### Rain threatens flooding in Kotli

E.P. Report

KOTLI: In response to the ongoing monsoon rains and the potential risks of landslides and flooding, Kotli's Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Haq Nawaz led an emergency meeting on Friday. The session was attended by key officials including DSP Sardar Ikhtiar Ahmed, DEO Syed Jamshed Bukhari, AC Naqem Akhtar Chaudhry, and Rescue 1122 Officer Majid Razaq.

The meeting focused on preparations and measures to mitigate the impact of heavy rains expected from August 28 to 31. Authorities discussed and issued directives to various departments to address the situation.

A committee was formed to address encroachments and restore waterways, with the municipality overseeing water removal on Stadium Road in collaboration with the Public Works Department. The meeting also outlined responsibilities for different agencies: the municipality was tasked with cleaning sewers and manholes, the Health Department was instructed to ensure staff presence at district and rural health centers, and Rescue 1122 was advised to maintain operational readiness and coordinate with private ambulance services.

## 12 more terrorists killed in Tirah Valley IBOs: ISPR

E.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have neutralised at least 12 terrorists during the intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Tirah Valley, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

"Since 20 August 2024, security forces are conducting extensive intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Tirah Valley, Khyber District, on the reported presence of Khwarij," said the military's media affairs wing in a statement.

On August 28 and 29, troops effectively engaged the terrorists' locations where after intense fire exchange, 12 militants of "Fitna-Al-Khwarej" were sent to hell," the military's media wing said while referring to the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militants. The statement further said that these operations have resulted in a major setback to the TTP and its affiliates, adding that so far, 37 terrorists have been "sent to hell", while 14 others have suffered serious injuries.

The military reaffirmed its commitment to restoring peace, saying that the IBOs

will continue till peace is restored in the area and terrorists are eliminated, as the security forces are determined to wipe out the menace of terrorism from the country. Meanwhile, at least five terrorists were killed and three others injured during separate IBOs in Balochistan's Kech, Panjgur and Zhob districts.

A statement issued by the ISPR said the security forces are conducting extensive IBOs to hunt down the perpetrators of the Balochistan incident. According to the military's media wing, the operations are being conducted in the backdrop of cowardly terrorist activities that targeted innocent civilians across Balochistan on August 26. "On night August 29-30, in three separate IBOs in District Kech, Panjgur and Zhob, five terrorists were sent to hell by the security forces, while three terrorists got injured during the intense fire exchange," said the statement.

Moreover, sanitisation operations will continue until all perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of these atrocious acts are brought to justice, it added. The IBOs were launched after at

least 23 passengers on Monday were killed after being offloaded from passenger buses and trucks in the Rarasham area of Balochistan's Musakhel. Separately, at least 10 people, including police and Balochistan Levies personnel, were martyred in a gun attack in Kalat.

Furthermore, at least 14 brave sons of soil, including 10 security forces soldiers and four personnel of law enforcement agencies (LEAs), were martyred in clearance operations, wherein at least 21 militants were neutralised.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the security forces for carrying out operations against the terrorists involved in killing innocent people in Balochistan.

The prime minister paid tribute to the officers and personnel of the armed forces for killing five terrorists and injuring three others in different operations in Panjgur, Kech and Zhob districts. "The war against terrorists will continue till complete elimination of this scourge. We will make an example of those trying to create disorder in the country," he remarked.

## Third offshore patrol vessel PNS Hunain arrives

E.P. Report

KARACHI: Third Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) PNS HUNAIN arrived in Karachi. Upon arrival, an impressive reception ceremony was held at PN Dockyard. Commander Pakistan Fleet Vice Admiral Muhammad Faisal Abbasi was Chief Guest on the occasion.

While addressing the ceremony, Commander Pakistan Fleet highlighted that addition of PNS HUNAIN in PN fleet will significantly enhance Pakistan Navy's capability of safeguarding Maritime frontiers of Pakistan. He also emphasized that induction of such multipurpose



state of the art platforms will provide vital support to ongoing PN Maritime security patrol in Indian Ocean. PNS HUNAIN is a multipurpose medium sized Offshore Patrol Vessel equipped with state of the art electronic warfare, anti-ship, anti-air warfare weapons and sensors, self

protection and terminal defence system. The ship was built and commissioned in July this year at Damen Shipyard, Romania. Reception ceremony of PNS HUNAIN was attended by large number of PN Officers, CPOs/ Sailors and families of crew members.

### Russian attack on Kyiv kills 6

KYIV: A Russian attack on the the eastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv has killed at least six people, including a 14-year-old girl, and wounded dozens of others, Ukrainian officials have said. "Occupiers killed a child right on the playground," Kharkiv mayor Ihor Terekhov said in a statement on the Telegram messaging app on Friday. Three other people were killed in a 12-storey apartment block that caught fire as a result of the attack, he said.

"Unfortunately, the death toll has risen to six people," Kharkiv regional Governor Oleg Syngubov said in a post on Telegram hours after the attack. A 14-year-old girl was among those killed, Interior Minister Igor Klymenko said. At least 55 people were wounded, he said. A video from the site shared by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's chief of staff Andriy Yermak, showed huge flames and heavy black smoke rising from the upper floors of a residential building.

"Russians hit civilians again," Yermak said on Telegram. Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, and the surrounding region have long been targeted by Russian attacks, in particular, by highly destructive guided bombs. Moscow's forces attempted to capture Kharkiv in the early stages of their invasion but were pushed back. They launched a new ground offensive in the Kharkiv region in May.

"We need strong decisions from our partners to stop this terror," Zelenskyy said in a post on social media. "We need long-range capabilities," he added, referring to Kyiv's appeals to allies to lift restrictions on the use of Western-supplied missiles inside Russian territory. "We need the implementation of air defence agreements for Ukraine. This is about saving lives," he added. — Aljazeera

## IHC seeks approved amicus brief on Dr Aafia case

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: A single bench of Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaque here Friday asked that the approved amicus brief would be presented before the court on Monday and if it is not presented the secretary ministry of foreign affairs (MoFA) would have to appear before the court in person, warning that if he failed to appear in the court on Monday a fine of Rs1 million would be imposed on him.

However, Aafia Movement chairperson and noted neuropsychician of the country Dr Fowzia Siddiqui has said that the objective of filing this petition is to save the life of Dr Aafia and seek her safe repatriation to Pakistan.

According to a press release issued today, she said that we don't have any interest in any inquiry or revenge. We just want early repatriation of Aafia so that her medical treatment could be started without any further loss of time. She said the condition of Aafia is worrisome and her life is in danger. She said whenever the Pakistan embassy officials visit her they found her condition deteriorated. She said our prayer in the petition is that Dr Aafia should be released on compassionate grounds. As per details, the honourable court heard the constitutional petition (3139/2015) of Dr Fowzia Siddiqui about the release of her sister Dr Aafia Siddiqui.

The court in its order sheet said that the learned AAG along with MoFA officials has reverted with a rather dubious stance that they could agree to the amicus brief only after the entire Motion for Compassionate Release is shared with MoFA. Much discussion has taken place in the Courtroom today which I do not consider it necessary to reproduce in this order, except that it is quite clear to the Court that the legal advice to the Ministry has been inadequate in the context of the

### AG directed to submit report on Azhar's brothers in Court

E.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has directed the Attorney General to submit a detailed report on the missing persons related to the recovery of Azhar Mashwani's brothers. Chief Justice Aamer Farooq presided over the case, with the petitioner's lawyer, Babar Awan, and the Attorney General appearing in court.

The Attorney General informed the court that the matter has been brought before higher authorities and stated that the two missing individuals are not in the custody of any agency. He further requested Dr. Babar Awan to share information with him so that further action could be taken.

Chief Justice Farooq inquired about the location from where the individuals went missing. Babar Awan responded that they disappeared from Lahore, and later, agencies contacted them, stating that the individuals were in their custody. He added that Azhar Mashwani's wife was prevented from leaving the country, and Mashwani was asked to delete certain material and refrain from tweeting in the future. Babar Awan read documents to the court and explained that after approaching the Lahore High Court, they withdrew the application and filed it in Islamabad.

language of the proposed amicus brief, in not distinguishing between the factual assertions to be made in the Motion and the prayer for grant of that Motion leading to Dr. Aafia's release.

The last paragraph of the draft motion expressly states that "The amicus refrains from commenting on the factual disputes underlying Dr. Siddiqui's conviction, recognizing that this falls within the purview of the appropriate US Court. Amicus respectfully urges the Court to adjudicate her motion for compassionate relief with the utmost care and empathy".

I fail to see how this in any manner tantamount to endorsement of the factual contents of the Motion to be filed. Further, the Ministry's attempt at getting embroiled in the contents of the Motion itself is completely uncalled for given that the Ministry has had little or no role to play in marshaling the facts together for the purposes of the Motion which has been done by Mr. Smith. An amicus WP no. 3139/2015 brief is what it is and does not extend beyond what is stated there. In the circumstances, I find MoFA's stance entirely

unreasonable and not well-thought.

The court order said on the next date, learned AAG and Director (America) are expected to come up with a solid reason to withhold the in-principle agreement to file the amicus brief, and if they do not return with instructions to proceed accordingly, then they shall ensure that the Secretary, Minister of Foreign Affairs, is present in person in Court on 02.09.2024 (Monday) at 10:00 am to answer how filing the proposed amicus brief in any manner prejudices the Government's position. In case of his non-appearance, should it be necessitated per the aforesaid sentence, costs of Rs.1 million will be imposed on the Government?

The court order further said the progress per Mr. Duggal on the prisoner transfer agreement is occurring well. He is also directed to provide a firm date, which must not be far out in the future, by which the Government will transmit the draft PTA to the Government of the United States for its consideration.