

**Cop shoots dead prisoner**  
**F.P. Report**  
QUETTA: Police constable shot dead a prisoner accused of blasphemy in the lock up of Police Station Quetta Cantt. Police constable Syed Khan Sirhadi gunned down a person namely Abdul Ali accused of blasphemy at Police Station Quetta Cantt. A man namely Abdul Ali resident of Kharotabad was arrested by authorities of Police Station Kharotabad after his video went viral uttering blasphemous remarks.



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ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairing the federal cabinet meeting.

## Federal Cabinet approves plan to boost Gwadar Port's operations

Saqib Mushtaq

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet on Thursday approved a proposal by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs to direct all government departments to route 50% of their imports, such as wheat, sugar, and fertilizer, through the Gwadar Port.

Earlier, the prime minister had issued the directives to increase the Gwadar port operations to ensure development and prosperity of the Balochistan province. He also directed that 50% of all public sector imports should be ensured through the Gwadar Port. The meeting of the cabinet was held here under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The cabinet also instructed to increase the volume of exports from Gwadar Port in the future. A subcommittee of the cabinet will be formed to submit a quarterly report on imports and exports through Gwadar Port to the cabinet. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Communications, approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Pakistan and Sri Lanka for the issuance of a commemorative postal stamp to mark the 75th anniversary of diplomatic rela-

tions between the two countries.

The Ministry of Industries and Production presented a report from the Cabinet Committee on Sugar Exports. The cabinet expressed satisfaction that, due to a well-timed decision on sugar exports, the country not only earned valuable foreign exchange, but sugar prices remained stable, and sugarcane farmers were adequately rewarded for their efforts. The cabinet, on the recommendation of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, also approved the reconstitution of the Board of Directors of the Korangi Fish Harbour Authority, Karachi.

The cabinet instructed that all provinces should be given representation on such government boards. Additionally, the cabinet directed that any government-owned corporations with incomplete boards should be fully constituted as soon as possible. On the recommendation of the Ministry of National Health Services, the cabinet approved the appointment of Muhammad Yaqoob, Assistant Director of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, as the Federal Inspector Drug Balochistan.

Likewise, on the recommendation of the Planning Ministry, the federal

cabinet approved an amendment to the Cabinet resolution dated October 30, 2013, regarding the appointment of Planning Commission members from the open market. Under this amendment, the salaries of Planning Commission members will now be set under the Special Professional Pay Scale-II (SPPS-II) instead of the Management Pay Scale.

Furthermore, the cabinet also approved setting the salary of the Chief Economist of the Planning Commission, to be appointed from the open market, under the Special Professional Pay Scale-I (SPPS-I). The cabinet, based on the recommendations of the Revenue Division and according to the Supreme Court of Pakistan's orders, approved the Federal Public Service Commission to conduct departmental promotion exams for the posts of Inspector Inland Revenue (BPS-16).

The cabinet endorsed the decisions made in the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) meeting held on August 29, 2024. The cabinet also ratified the decisions taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises held on September 2, 2024.

## President, PM pay tribute to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Major Raja Aziz Bhatti Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider) lauding his gallantry and sacrifice while safeguarding the country during the 1965 India-Pakistan war.

In their separately issued statements on the 59th martyrdom anniversary of Aziz Bhatti Shaheed, both the president and prime minister said that the whole nation saluted the great soldier for his matchless sacrifice and valor.

The president said that Aziz Bhatti fulfilled his responsibilities of defending the country bravely fighting the enemy in the 1965 India-Pakistan war. "The entire nation pays homage to its hero for sacrificing his life to protect the motherland. His eternal sacrifice is a bright example for us. We renew our pledge that we will be ready to make every possible sacrifice for our country," President Zardari stated.

In his statement, Prime Minister Shehbaz said, "Aziz Bhatti thwarted the enemy's evil designs with his bravery in the September 1965 war. His unshakable determination to defend his homeland forced the enemy to retreat, who otherwise had dreamed of capturing Lahore. He said that Aziz Bhatti Shaheed stood firm against the enemy, undaunted by their numerical superiority.

"His great sacrifice for the country's defense will be honored and kept alive forever in the history of Pakistan. His passion and dutifulness to fight the enemy without caring about his own life is an ideal example for the generations to come," the prime minister said. He said that the whole nation paid tribute to Aziz Bhatti Shaheed and other soldiers for sacrificing their lives to defend the country, which they would never forget.

## Arrested PTI MNAs produced in NA

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Ten arrested MNAs of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have been produced in the National Assembly for participation in the session. A heavy contingent of Islamabad police escorted the members to Parliament House, where they were handed over to the acting Sergeant-at-Arms.

The detained PTI members were Sheikh Waqas Akram, Zain Qureshi, Sher Afzal Marwat, Malik Owais Jhakar, Malik Amir Dugar, Ahmad Chatha, Zubair Khan Wazir, Syed Ahmad Ali Shah, Syed Naseem Ali Shah, and Yousaf Khan. These members are currently in police custody under physical remand.

## IMF board to discuss Pak's program on 25th

NEW YORK: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday confirmed that the Fund's board will meet on September 25 to discuss the \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Pakistan.

Addressing a press briefing on Thursday, IMF's spokesperson Julie Kozack said that the Fund had reached a staff-level agreement with Pakistan on the EFF in July. "We are very happy that we can say now that the board meeting is scheduled to take place on September 25," she said.

"This is following Pakistan obtaining the necessary financing assurances from its development partners. The new EFF arrangement... follows the successful implementation of the 2023 nine-month standby arrangement." She added that consistent policymaking has supported economic stability in Pakistan, most notably a resumption of growth, significant disinflation, and a significant increase in the country's international reserves.

Asked if Pakistan has received those assurances, she responded, "Yes." Responding to the development, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb expressed gratitude to those involved in the negotiations. In a statement from the finance ministry, Aurangzeb said, "By the grace of God, all matters with the IMF have been settled amicably."

He expressed gratitude to Prime



Minister Shehbaz Sharif's team, the IMF negotiators, and the relevant institutions. "These matters will be finalised in the meeting of the board of IMF this month," Aurangzeb said. "The economy is moving towards growth after stabilisation."

The finance minister added that the reduction in the policy rate will "increase investment and business activities in the country". "Increasing economic activities will create employment opportunities," Aurangzeb stated. "The common man has started getting relief from the trend of continuous reduction in the rate of inflation." — Agencies

## Imran's mily trial: IHC seeks clarification from govt

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday sought clarity from the federal government regarding the possibility of a military trial for incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan in the May 9 cases.

Justice Miangul Hasan Aurangzeb took up Thursday Imran's petition to pre-empt such a scenario. The petition had been filed last week under Article 199 of the Constitution, according to which a high court may take up a matter when "no other adequate remedy is provided by law".

Advocate Ali Uzair Bhandari appeared as Imran's counsel, while Assistant Attorney General Azmat Bashir Tarrar was present as the state counsel on behalf of Attorney General of Pakistan (AGP) Mansoor Usman Awan. Seeking clarification from the federal government on whether Imran's military trial was under consideration, Justice Aurangzeb adjourned the hearing till September 16.

During the hearing, Justice Aurangzeb noted that according to Imran's lawyer,

Inter-Services Public Relations Director General Gen Sharif had made the statement of Imran's trial. "If this is the case, then a clear stance should be given by the federation," the judge stressed.

"If we say today that 'there is no [trial] right now' but then you come to us tomorrow with an order of military trial, what will happen then?" he wondered. AAG Tarrar requested the court to first decide on the objections raised on Imran's petition. At this, the judge said he was removing the objections raised by the IHC registrar's office. Justice Aurangzeb recalled that the apex court's ruling from last year on civilians' military trials was in the field.

"Answer whether the matter of the PTI founder's military trial was under consideration. If there is nothing as such, then the petition will become infructuous. "[However], if there is anything as such under consideration, then we will hear this case and decide on it," the judge asserted. At the outset of the hearing, Bhandari informed the court that top government officials — referring to government spokesperson for legal affairs Barrister Aqeel

Malik — stated that Imran would be taken into military custody.

"All those are just political statements, nothing else," Justice Aurangzeb remarked, to which the lawyer replied that if they were political, then formulating his arguments was "easier". Bhandari highlighted that a "top military official [Gen Sharif] has also given this statement".

To this as well, Justice Aurangzeb replied: "What he said, too, was a political statement." Imran's counsel asked the judge to include it in the court order if it was a political statement. Justice Aurangzeb then ordered AAG Tarrar to seek clarification from AGP Awan on the government's stance on whether or not Imran would be tried under military laws.

When the hearing resumed after a short break, the judge reiterated that the government should submit its response to the query by September 16 (Monday). "Ministers have given threats to the PTI founder of a military trial. The PTI founder is a civilian," Justice Aurangzeb observed. "A civilian's military trial is a cause of concern for the petitioner and the court," he emphasised.



PESHAWAR: Afghan Consul General, Hafiz Muhib Ullah called on KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur.

## Asif flays Gandapur's statement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Thursday criticized Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur's statement about holding direct dialogue with Afghanistan, calling it a direct attack on the federation.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he said that no province has the authority to hold direct talks with any foreign country. He also highlighted the initiatives taken by the Speaker of the National Assembly to ensure the supremacy of Parliament.

The Minister said the Sunni Ittehad Council had not lost their representation due to the Speaker's issuance of production orders. He urged that the tradition set by Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq should continue, stressing the importance of following rules and laws.

Recalling past events, he pointed out that during the PTI regime, the former Speaker denied production orders of the arrested members.

## PM hails 2% policy rate cut

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) decision to reduce the policy rate by 2%, lowering it from 19.5% to 17.5%.

He expressed optimism that this move would stimulate exports, investment, business, agriculture and overall economic growth in the country. While presiding over a meeting of the federal cabinet committee, the prime minister expressed hope that the policy rate could gradually decrease to single digits, in line with the country's inflation rate.

Speaking on the ongoing discussions with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), he noted that the negotiations were progressing smoothly. He further highlighted that, as in the past, friendly nations had once again committed to assisting Pakistan during this challenging time. With these developments, Pakistan has now met the prerequisites to secure loans from the IMF.

"Our friendly and brotherly countries have come all the way to support us again," he said. He thanked the Ministry of Finance, other concerned departments and the ambassador of Pakistan to China who played an important role in getting support from the brotherly countries.

The prime minister stressed that after achieving the goal of macro economic stability, the government will now take measures to boost GDP growth of the country. As regards Israel's continued atrocities on Palestinians, the prime minister demanded the global community to stop Israel from doing war crimes in Palestine. Condemning Israel's barbarism in strong words, the prime

minister said, "today, the Israeli forces had killed six staff members of United Nations relief mission in Palestine while it also martyred 17 more Muslims in Gaza".

**IMO Secretary General calls on Premier:** Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

The prime minister warmly welcomed Secretary General Velasco and reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening collaboration with the IMO. He underlined Pakistan's desire for expanding fisheries and maritime trade, exploring offshore resources, promoting coastal tourism, and fostering a sustainable shipbreaking industry.

The prime minister said that his government was prioritizing the blue economy as a central pillar of its economic development strategy. He highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) in attracting investments and introducing modern technologies to advance fisheries and the shipbreaking sector. Through these efforts and with the support of IMO and international partners, Pakistan's visibility on the maritime map of the world would be further enhanced, he hoped.

PM Shehbaz Sharif renewed Pakistan's firm commitment to work with the international partners and the IMO to contribute to global efforts aimed at reducing maritime emissions. Secretary General Velasco appreciated the prime minister's leadership and Pakistan's proactive approach towards leveraging its maritime resources for economic progress and its role in the global maritime community.

## SBP reduces policy rate by 200bps to 17.5%

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) slashed the key policy rate by 200bps to 17.5% from the existing 19.5%, the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) announced on Thursday, as inflation eased to the first single-digit figure in nearly three years.

The new policy rate will be effective from September 13, 2024. As per a statement released by the central bank, both headline and core inflation fell sharply over the past two months. "The pace of this disinflation has somewhat exceeded the Committee's earlier expectations, mainly due to the delay in the implementation of planned increases in administered energy prices and favourable movement in global oil and food prices," it read.

During the meeting, the MPC acknowledged the inherent uncertainty related to these developments, which warranted a cautious monetary policy stance. In this regard, the Committee underscored the importance of the tight monetary policy stance in driving the sustained decline in inflation over the past year. The Committee noted the following key developments since its last meeting that have implications for the macroeconomic outlook.

Global oil prices have fallen sharply, though they remain volatile. SBP's FX reserves are around \$9.5 billion as of September 6, despite weak official FX inflows and continued debt repayments. Secondary market yields of government securities have declined noticeably since the last MPC meeting.

Inflation expectations and confidence of businesses have improved in the latest pulse surveys, while those of consumers have worsened slightly. The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) tax collection during July-August 2024 was lower than the target. Taking into account these developments as well as the potential risks to the inflation outlook and today's decision, the MPC assessed the real interest rate to still be adequately positive to bring inflation down to the medium-term target of 5% to 7% and help ensure macroeconomic stability. This would be essential to achieve sustainable economic growth over the medium term.

The SBP said that the recent high-frequency sales indicators reflect a moderate pick up in the economic activity. Domestic cement and POL sales (excluding furnace oil)

increased by 8.5% and 6.8% in a month-on-month basis in August, respectively. Latest business sentiment surveys also support this assessment of a moderate pickup, as manufacturing firms reported increased capacity utilisation during the past couple of waves.

"At the same time, the MPC noted that the outlook for the agriculture sector has weakened. This is attributed to an expected shortfall in cotton production from the government's target, given the decline in area under cultivation and a substantial drop in cotton arrivals by end-August 2024." On the other hand, the Committee observed that the continued ease in inflationary pressures and the unfolding impact of recent policy rate cuts will support the growth prospects in the industry and services sectors. On balance, therefore, the real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth outlook remained in line with the MPC's earlier assessment of 2.5% – 3.5% for FY25, the central bank stated.

As per SBP, the elevated workers' remittance inflows and a substantial improvement in export earnings offset an increase in imports and helped contain the current account deficit to

\$0.2 billion in July 2024. This robust trend in workers' remittances continued in August as well.

The global macroeconomic environment also turned favorable as manifested by the substantial softening of crude oil prices and relative easing of global financial conditions. "Going forward, import volumes are expected to increase, in line with the ongoing domestic economic recovery. However, the improvement in the country's terms of trade, mainly driven by softening crude oil prices, is expected to contain the overall trade deficit in FY25."

Moreover, the export earnings are expected to remain stable as the growth in high value added textiles is expected to compensate for the likely reduction in rice exports. "The MPC observed that these factors, along with robust workers' remittances, are expected to keep the current account deficit within the projected range of 0% to 1% of GDP in FY25. This contained current account deficit, along with the realisation of inflows planned under the IMF program, will help further strengthen SBP's FX reserves.

The SBP stated that during July-

August FY25, the FBR tax collection grew by 20.5%. The MPC noted that the pace of tax collection in the remaining months of FY25 needs to be significantly higher than the current rate to meet the revenue target for the fiscal year. "Meanwhile, the fiscal consolidation achieved in the past couple of years has supported monetary policy in bringing inflation down and restoring overall macroeconomic stability. As a result, the gross public debt to GDP ratio has recorded a significant improvement, declining from 75% at end-June 2023 to 67.2% at end-June 2024," it said.

Going forward, the MPC expected that the fiscal consolidation would continue through reforms aimed primarily at broadening of tax base and curtailing PSE losses (particularly by addressing energy sector issues), which would create additional space for social and development spending. "The broad money (M2) growth decelerated to 14.6% as of end-August 2024, from 16.1% at end-June, primarily due to more than seasonal retirements in private sector credit (PSC) and commodity operations financing," the statement read.

As per the SBP, the growth in

reserve money, after remaining subdued during FY24, somewhat reversed, but is still lower than its historical trend. From the liability side, deposits remained the mainstay of M2 growth. "The MPC emphasised that the planned official FX inflows will be critical for the government to reduce its reliance on the domestic banking sector, improve the NFA, and create space for lending to the private sector. The MPC also viewed that the currently subdued growth in PSC may pick up with the ease in financial conditions," it added.

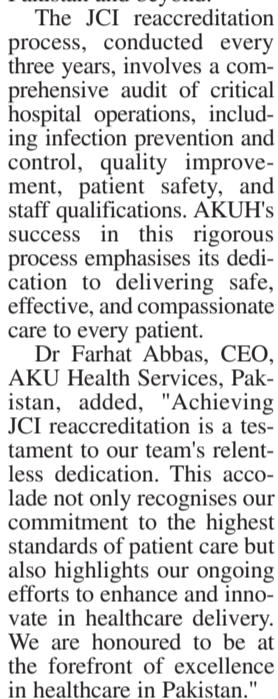
Maintaining its downward trajectory, headline inflation eased to single digit to 9.6% year-on-year in August 2024 from 12.6% in June 2024, for the first time in three years. Meanwhile, the core inflation declined to 11.9% from 14.1% "The Committee assessed that this decline reflected the impact of contained demand, reinforced by improved supplies of major food items, favourable global commodity prices and delay in upward adjustments in administered energy prices."

Moreover, the MPC assessed the near-term inflation outlook to be susceptible to some risks. Core inflation is still high and consumers' inflation expectations increased further in the latest survey.



## F.P. Report

AKUH and its Outreach Health Network have consistently raised the bar, not just meeting but exceeding the rigorous standards set by JCI. In 2015, AKUH, Karachi, became the first and only academic medical centre in Pakistan to receive JCI accreditation. "The reaccreditation by JCI reaffirms our commitment to excellence in healthcare," said Dr Sulaiman Shahabuddin, President and Vice Chancellor of the Aga Khan University. "At the Aga Khan University Hospital, we strive to provide care that meets and exceeds international standards, ensuring the safety



With the JCI gold seal,

## F.P. Report

Minister, Malayan Nazam.

She emphasised the need for foolproof security arrangements during the ongoing anti-polio campaign, which is crucial to safeguarding both the workers and the community. According to the police, more than 12,000 personnel have been deployed across the province to ensure the safety of polio workers. Lahore Capital City Police Officer (CCPO) Bilal Siddique Kamiana assured that a security alert would remain in effect until the successful completion of the campaign on September 15.

## F.P. Report

In Karachi, the ban will be enforced in District South on September 13, 14, 16, and 17. District East will see restrictions on September 13, 16, and 17, while District West will have the ban in place on September 16 and 17. In Hyderabad, the restriction will remain in effect from 12th Rajabi Awwal.

## F.P. Report

This was stated by Mr. Iqbal Detho, Chairman of the Sindh Human Rights Commission (SHRC), during a consultation on bonded labour and kiln worker rights in Sindh. The event, held at a local hotel, was jointly organized by the Society for the Protection of the Rights of

"Registration with NADRA is a crucial first step towards ensuring that brick kiln workers and their families can access essential services and benefits, including social security, healthcare, and education," stated Mr. Detho. He emphasized that a lack of official documentation often leaves these vulnerable workers susceptible to exploitation

In his speech, Mr. Detho highlighted the SHRC's role as a bridge between civil society and government in advocating for worker rights. He stressed the Commission's commitment to reviewing legislation, identifying gaps, and put forward recommendations for improvements to laws protecting labourers, particularly those trapped in

Discussions at the consultation centered around the Sindh Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 2015, its implementation challenges, and the need for stronger mechanisms to rehabilitate bonded laborers. The practice of "Peshgi," a system of debt bondage prevalent in the brick kiln industry, was identified as a critical area requiring further scrutiny and legislative action.

01. Instruction to Bidder can be obtained from this office on any working day or download from C&W website [www.cwd.gkp.pk](http://www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date /time.
02. The bidder should submit the E-bids as per KPRA Notification No.S.R.O.(14)/Vol: 1-24/2021-22 dated 10-05-2022.
03. A copy of the technical proposal in the required format is mandatory and to be uploaded as a part of E-bid before submitting Financial Bid.
04. Original copies of Call Deposit for bid security and bidding entry fee 0.03% should be enclosed in the Technical Proposal and shall reach to this office before closing time.
05. Legible scanned copy of bid security shall be submitted electronically along with the bid on E-bidding system.
06. All bidders are required to be registered with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act, 2023 Act No. XXI of 2013.
07. The financial bid will be opened after the approval of technical bids from competent authority.
08. Venue of Bid opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Highway Division Nowshera.

19. 2% security of bid price for each Tender in the shape of call deposit will be submitted by the firm in favor of Executive Engineer SS&TL Division Peshawar from any scheduled Bank of Pakistan. Bid security in shape of other forms (Pay Order etc) will not be accepted.
20. The bidders who quote their bid more than 10% below of estimated cost, shall also submit an additional security in the shape of call deposit equal to 8% of Engineers estimate at the time of bid submitted, otherwise their bid will be rejected.
21. Tender form will be issued only to owner of the firm or authorized person holding original CNIC, original power of attorney, original copy of PEC, Original Form "H", Original Partnership Deed.
22. If any bid found without security, the bid shall be treated as non-responsive.
23. Unbalanced bid/irpractically low bid shall be treated as non-responsive.
24. Before issuance of Tender form, the bidders / contractors who have an original experience certificate with completion certificate of similar nature under DISCOs/NTDC and will provide performance certificate from concerned offices. NTN, FBR Tax Return 2023-24, current bank statement of last 12 months, affidavit of nonblack listing and all attached documents with application i.e PEC, FBR, NTN, CDR (2% of Bid Cost) and Work Orders etc are genuine. If found fake at later stage, the firm will be held responsible for all consequences.
25. All PPRA rules are applicable & this advertisement also be available on PPRA Website.

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**PESHAWAR:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur offering feteah on the demise of mother of President Peshawar Press Club Arshad Aziz Malik and senior journalist Amjad Aziz Malik.

## By-elections for NCs/VCs in KP scheduled for Oct 20

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** : The second phase of by-elections for vacant seats in various Neighborhood Councils (NCs) and Village Councils (VCs) across different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will be held on October 20, 2024.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has issued the official schedule for the election process. The submission of nomination papers will begin on September 16 and will continue until September 19, 2024.

Candidates who submit their nomination papers will be listed on September

20, 2024, with the scrutiny of these papers taking place between September 21 and September 24. The approved list of candidates will be released on September 25, 2024. Candidates whose papers are accepted or rejected can file appeals between September 26 and September 28, 2024.

These appeals will be addressed by October 2, 2024. Those wishing to withdraw their nomination papers must do so by October 3, 2024. The final list of candidates, along with their respective election symbols, will be released on October 4, 2024. Polling for the by-

elections will take place on October 20, 2024, and the final results will be announced by the returning officers on October 23, 2024.

In line with the code of conduct set by the ECP, a ban has been placed on the promotion and transfer of government employees in these districts.

Furthermore, public officials, including the Prime Minister, Speaker, Deputy Speaker of the National and Provincial Assemblies, and Federal and Provincial Ministers, are prohibited from visiting these councils or announcing development projects until the elections are concluded.

## Rahman successfully defends Ph.D. dissertation

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** The National Centre of Excellence in Geology (NCEG) at the University of Peshawar is pleased to announce the successful public defense of Mr. Rahman Gul PhD research on glacier dynamics in the Karakoram and Himalayan mountain ranges here Thursday.

According to Press Release Mr Gul research was conducted under the expert supervision of Dr. Saad Khan, Assistant Professor at NCEG, and co-supervised by Dr. Muhammad Ali, Assistant Professor at the same centre. Mr. Gul's thesis explored innovative insights into glacier dynamics and the impacts of climate change on glacial landscapes. His research employed advanced geospatial techniques to analyze temporal and spatial changes in glacier altitudes and areas, offering valuable contributions to the field.

The thesis was evaluated by internationally renowned experts, including Dr. Shamsuddin Shahid from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Dr. Bo Yu from the Chinese Academy of Sciences China. The defense was further scrutinized by Dr. Siddique Ullah Baig from COMSATS University Islamabad as the external examiner and Dr. Iffat Tabassum from the Department of Geography, University of Peshawar as the internal examiner.

Mr. Gul has made significant contributions to the scientific community during his PhD journey. His research culminated in a published article in a prestigious international journal, with two additional articles currently under review.

Expressing his gratitude, Mr. Gul acknowledged the support and guidance of his supervisors, friends, and family.

## Toru claims transparency in wheat procurement

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru on Thursday strongly refuted allegations of corruption made by Federal Minister Amir Maqam regarding the provincial food department, calling them baseless and a propaganda tactic.

Speaking at a press conference at the Civil Secretariat in Peshawar, Zahir Shah said that the procurement of wheat this year was carried out with complete transparency, and the province saved over Rs.

8 billion during the procurement. He emphasized that the procurement was done at the government-fixed rate of Rs. 3,900 per 40 kilograms as set by the federal government. The minister added that provincial target for wheat procurement was set at 300,000 metric tons, out of which 208,000 metric tons were successfully procured.

Zahir Shah accused Amir Maqam of presenting misleading figures and engaging in negative propaganda, questioning Maqam's credibility by referring to him as a "pro-

tégé of Pervez Musharraf." He further alleged that Maqam had attempted to acquire wheat permits through illegal means, which were rightfully denied by the provincial government.

"Amir Maqam himself is the king of corruption and is now propagating false claims of corruption," Toru remarked, adding, "I challenge him to prove any corruption in wheat procurement, and I will resign if such allegations are proven."

Addressing the issue of poor-quality wheat in gov-

ernment warehouses, the provincial minister claimed that the substandard wheat was purchased by the previous caretaker government led by the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM). He asserted that the responsibility for this lies with the former caretaker government, and not with the current provincial government.

The minister also criticized Maqam for not raising his voice for the province's financial dues from the federal government, which amount to billions of rupees.

## Hadaf College shines in BISE Peshawar intermediate results

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** In a remarkable achievement, Hadaf College Peshawar secured top three positions in the Peshawar Board Intermediate Results 2024.

The results were announced during a prestigious ceremony held at the Abbottabad Board Auditorium, Abbottabad.

The event was graced by Faisal Khan Tarakai, Provincial Minister for Elementary & Secondary Education, as the Chief Guest.

Other notable attendees included Secretary Education, Mr. Masood Ahmad, and the chairmen of the Peshawar, Abbottabad, and Malakand Boards, along with various board officials.

Principals, teachers, parents, and the position holders themselves were also present to celebrate the occasion.

Hadaf College Peshawar



**Khansa Khan**  
1<sup>st</sup> position  
Pre-Engineering Group

**Noor ul Eeman**  
1<sup>st</sup> position  
Pre-Engineering Group

**Asawir Binte Asif**  
3<sup>rd</sup> position  
Computer Science Group

stood out for its exceptional academic performance, as its students clinched the top three positions in the Peshawar Board Intermediate exams.

Khansa Khan achieved the 1st position in the Pre-Engineering Group with an impressive 1146 marks, followed by Noor ul Eeman, who secured the 2nd position with 1135 marks in the

same group.

Asawir Binte Asif claimed the 3rd position in the Computer Science Group, scoring 1122 marks.

The management, teachers, and students of Hadaf College extended their heartfelt congratulations to the position holders for their outstanding accomplishments. The successful students attributed their

achievements to the blessings of Almighty Allah, the prayers of their parents, and the excellent coaching and guidance provided by their teachers.

This exceptional performance further strengthens Hadaf College Peshawar's reputation as a leading educational institution committed to excellence.

## Seminar of Pak-Afghan shared water organized at UET Peshawar

### F.P. Report

**PESHAWAR:** The Department of Agricultural Engineering, University of Engineering & Technology (UET) Peshawar in collaboration with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and USAID organized a one-day seminar on "Afghanistan-Pakistan Shared Water: State of the Basins" and the Launching Ceremony of the Web-Based Knowledge Platform for the nine shared rivers between Afghanistan and Pakistan. The aim of the seminar was to provide an overview of the Afghanistan-Pakistan river basins and to familiarize participants with the Web-based Knowledge Platform and its various features.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Chairman, Department of Agricultural Engineering, UET Peshawar welcomed the participants and highlighted the significance of the seminar for professionals, researchers and students. Dr. Zia further elaborated the importance of authentic data and converting data into information, knowledge and finally wisdom to help water professional and policy makers in addressing the present and future pressing water management challenges faced by the region.

Dr. Azeem Ali Shah, Chief of Party at IWMI; Mr. Muddasir Shah; and Dr. Hamid Gilani from New Mexico State University delivered detailed presenta-

tions on "Afghanistan-Pakistan Shared Waters: State of the Basins," "Development of the Afghanistan-Pakistan River Basins Knowledge Platform," and "Applications and Usability of the Afghanistan-Pakistan River Basins Knowledge Platform," respectively.

Prof. Dr. Qaisar Ali, Vice Chancellor of UET Peshawar, in his closing remarks appreciated the efforts of the Department of Agricultural Engineering, UET Peshawar, IWMI, and USAID for organizing the event. He emphasized the importance of better water governance and management considering the teaching of Islam by quoting Ahadees Mubarak regarding the judicious use of

water. In the end Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Chairman, Department of Agricultural Engineering, UET Peshawar and the organizer of the event thanked the entire participant for keenly attending the event and making it a success.

The seminar was attended by the officials and researchers from various organizations including, Irrigation Department KP, Agriculture Engineering Department KP, Soil Conservation Department KP, On-Farm Water Management Department KP, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce, University of Peshawar, University of Agriculture Peshawar, faculty members and a large number of students from UET Peshawar.

## Remembering Rahimullah Yusufzai - III

### Riaz Yusufzai

**I**n the case of Bin Laden, the United States increased this reward amount. In this article, he writes that the arrest of Ramzi Ahmed Yusuf and Aimal Kans, which was quickly followed by a \$20 million reward for helping capture them. He writes that their arrest has prompted a US attorney to comment that "Pakistanis will sell their mothers and grandmothers for a few dollars"

This article also highlights in detail the US's threats and extradition of bin Laden to the Afghan government and Afghanistan's continued denial. In the end, the author writes that Bin Laden has now become a household name in Pakistan. Many people have named their new-born sons Osama. Many others have changed their sons' names to Osama. Which coincidentally means lion.

Similarly, Rahimullah Yusufzai writes in an article published in The News titled "TALIBAN LET BIN LADEN BREAK HIS SILENCE" on January 1999. Osama bin Laden has spoken again and his views on America and Israel have not changed. His tone is still bitter and he wants Muslims all over the world to stand up to America because it was the biggest enemy of Islam.

Further writes that Osama Bin Laden spoke publicly for the first time since May 26 when he spoke to a group of 14 Pakistani journalists at his camp in Khost. Osama Bin Laden openly threatened "Crusaders and Jews". Tell them the war has just begun. Now the Americans must wait for the answer". Bin Laden's threats made headlines in the world media. Mullah Omar got angry with Bin Laden and said that before issuing any statement from Afghanistan's territory, permission must be obtained from the head of Afghanistan. Again, Bin Laden reluctantly accepted the Taliban's order to remain silent. Because Osama bin Laden had no other shelter. He goes on to write that later there were some incidents when the Taliban lifted the press ban on Osama bin Laden. Bin Laden made the most of the opportunity and took pains to say that he was not sick and rode horses daily in the Afghan desert. Security concerns prompted bin Laden's men to arrange the interview at night in a tent set up in the Afghan desert. He writes that bin Laden's associates were so alert during the interview that they erased a short video of their leader that the author captured on camera as he walked with the help of a cane. Along with this, a short of a group of armed people sitting in a crowded tent was also deleted. They

could not compromise on their security. In the same article, the author further writes that on a non-existent unpaved road about an hour and a half from Kandahar, he came face to face with the man whose name is a source of fear and terror in the world. Bin Laden does not look like someone who would sponsor bomb explosion to kill his targets as well as innocent people. Polite and soft-spoken, the tall and lean Saudi billionaire chose a life of hardship. He himself participated in the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s. Challenged the power of America and Saudi Arabia. He goes on to write that during the press conference, dressed in shalwar kameez, wearing a battle jacket and wrapped in woolen sheets to fight the extreme desert cold, bin Laden's voice became louder and his Arabic became more fluent as he turned to his favourite subject bashing America. During the conference, he recited the Holy Quran like a scholar to prove his point and answered every question as well as glorified Allah and declared that if it is considered a crime to incite jihad against the Jews and Americans to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Holy Kaaba, "then let history be a witness that I am a criminal."

In an article titled "THEIR LAST SANCTUARY" published in The

News International in January 1999, Rahimullah Yusufzai described the possible whereabouts of the world's most wanted man, other most wanted men and their rewards. The presence of Sheikh Taseer Abdullah a former police officer from Egypt along with Osama in southwestern Afghanistan during the interview in the camp, the late Sheikh Abdullah Azzam left his job as a lecturer at the Islamic University and gave full time to the Afghan Jihad. Bhai Shauwki Azzam Al-Islamboli, who shot and killed President Anwar Sadat at Cairo. During a military parade. In addition to Saudi and Egyptian defectors, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Yemen, Syria, Jordan, Palestine and Iraq and Ayman al-Zawahiri's family background in detail.

In the article "PLAYING THE BIN LADEN CARD" in The News International, May 1999, Rahimullah Yusufzai writes that a desperate Ms. Benazir Bhutto, during her second tenure as Prime Minister, blamed Bin Laden for bringing down her government conspired with Nawaz Sharif to overthrow her.

Ms. Bhutto's allegations were contained in an interview with the London-based Arabic newspaper Al-Hayat, which is owned by the Saudi royal family. The newspaper had previously reported that bin Laden had access to nuclear

and chemical weapons. The author rejected all these allegations in his article with logical proofs. Bhutto is probably playing the bin Laden card to gain sympathy in the West. He writes that like many other Pakistani politicians, he firmly believes that the road to Islamabad leads through Washington. This was the reason why Ms. Bhutto blamed bin Laden for bringing down her government. He writes Bin Laden had expressed his unhappiness even with the Nawaz Sharif govt and had advised it to seek God Almighty blessed instead of beseeching the US and toeing policies to appease Washington.

In an article titled "WHO SPEAKS FOR OSAMA" in The News International in September 1999, Rahimullah Yusufzai wrote about several jihadi commanders' close ties to bin Laden and the issuing of statements declaring jihad using his name. And he writes that his spokesperson is Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri of the Islamic Jihad group in Egypt, and there is no other spokesperson other than him. Naseer Ahmad Mujahid called newspapers from Peshawar and claimed to speak on behalf of Osama bin Laden. The man does not speak a word of Urdu, English, Pashto or Farsi. Mujahid said in the fax message, which begins with an Arabic phrase, that bin

Laden has declared war on the US and India. However, every time bin Laden wants to give an interview, he has to get permission from his Taliban hosts.

In an article published in The News in February 2000 entitled "GORBY'S BIN LADEN NIGHTMARE", Rahimullah Yusufzai provided historical context for reports that former Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev had accused Osama bin Laden of plotting to kill him and proved it to be a lie from the ground facts and termed it as a failed attempt to gain sympathy along with cheap popularity and described Chechen Muslim fighters as terrorists and bin Laden as the mastermind of Russian propaganda.

He writes that Gorbachev actually described his country's military intervention in Afghanistan as a "bleeding wound" and was looking for a way out. He writes that from Albania to the Philippines and from Jordan to Saudi Arabia, Somalia, India, Russia, America, Bin Laden's name came up as the perpetrator of international terrorism. But all these countries failed to prove the charge against Bin Laden. He writes that many countries considered bin Laden to be the root of current terrorism. He goes on to write that in such a situation, when countries and governments find it useful to

blame bin Laden for all acts of violence and terrorism in their own backyards. There should be no mistake one is looking for old Gorbachev. Gorbachev needed tricks like the assassination attempt on bin Laden to stay in the news. At the end he writes that "But it seems that, despite their obsession with Bin Laden even in the west few people are willing to buy the story spun by Gorbachev. Because something which happened rather did not happen eleven years ago has little value now."

In an article published in the news titled Osama stuns world "by producing another tap" on December 28, 2001, Rahimullah Yusufzai writes that this video contradicted the rumor that bin Laden had been killed in the two-week long American bombing of the Tora Bora area and writes that despite the collapse of the Taliban regime, bin Laden's nerves are strong. This was bin Laden's third video in three months.

The first was made available to Qatar's Al Jazeera television on October 2, the day the United States launched airstrikes in Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, and telecast that night. It received prime-time television coverage around the world and Contributed to breaking the monopoly of American media networks. The second tape, again provided to the Arabic-lan-

guage Al Jazeera, was telecast on November 3, and his tape has come to limelight at a time when the US military campaign in Afghanistan is said to be in its final stages. Bin Laden's beard has more white hair than in the two telecasts aired on October 7 and November 3 a year ago. The author writes that in the harsh environment and his constant struggle to avoid capture, Bin Laden's body had affected his health. But it did not break his spirit. Through these videos, bin Laden is trying to reach Muslims who are frustrated by their pro-Western rulers and their jihad against America and Israel. He has tried to provide justification".

Apart from this, a number of articles written by Rahimullah Yusufzai on Afghanistan and Osama bin Laden have been published in English newspapers "The News International and famous journals. But due to lack of space, a few short excerpts of the above 13 articles are being published for the readers in this issue so that on third anniversary of Rahimullah Yusufzai, their readers can enjoy the analysis of their favorite beloved journalist and respected personality. As well as the new generation can provide a window to enlighten themselves with thoughts and ideas of one of the great journalist of his time.

Concluded



## In brief

### Preparations for Eid-e-Milad F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: Preparations to celebrate Eid-Milad-ul-Nabi (SAW) on 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal with religious fervor and enthusiasm are underway in district Hafizabad. In this connection, people are decorating their homes, Masajid and business centres with colorful bunting, flags, banners, flexes, images of Khana Kaba and Rooza-e-Rasul (SAW) while buildings are being illuminated with colorful lights. Special stalls have been setup to sale decorative items at prominent places to attract people towards decorative items. Senior citizens, youth, children and women are purchasing banners, flexes, bunting, flags, colorful lights, model of Khana Kaba and Rooza-e-Rasul (SAW). On this occasion, rallies are being taken out from different places and Mehafil Melad also being held at homes, business centers, offices and Masajid in the district.

### Media role lauded F.P. Report

WANA: The newly appointed Commandant South Waziristan Scouts Colonel Muhammad Tahir met with the journalists of Wana Press Club in an introductory session. Led by Press Club President Mujeeb Rahman Wazir, the delegation comprised cabinet members and key representatives from the local media, on Thursday. During the meeting, Colonel Tahir highlighted the vital role of journalism, referring to it as a sacred profession that serves as the eyes and ears of society. He underscored the importance of responsible reporting and stressed that positive journalism can project a constructive image of the region to the world. The Commandant also expressed solidarity with the people of South Waziristan, acknowledging their struggles and hardships. Meanwhile, in the border area of Zalai, South Waziristan, a 3-year-old daughter of Maulvi Rehman Wali tragically lost her life when the roof of a room in their house collapsed due to the severe tremors from the earthquake. According to details, the incident occurred in the border area of Zalai, Lower Waziristan.

### Kissan cards distributed F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Minister for Agriculture and Livestock Punjab Syed Ashiq Hussain Kirmani along with Secretary Agriculture Punjab visited the Center for Supply of Chief Minister Kissan Card established in the office of Director Agriculture (Extension) Faisalabad and distributed Kissan Cards among the farmers. Speaking to the media on the occasion, the Provincial Agriculture Minister said that Kissan card will be operational from October 15th for timely purchase of quality agricultural inputs before sowing of wheat crop. The owners of 1 to 12 acres of agricultural land will be given interest-free loans from 30 thousand to 0.15 million. He further added that farmers will be able to purchase seeds, fertilizers and other agricultural inputs from 2160 registered dealers across the province with Kissan Card. Issuance of Kissan Card will help farmers to purchase agricultural inputs in time. He further said that Chief Minister Punjab is determined for agricultural development. This Kissan Card will be a game changer for the prosperity of farmers.



QUETTA: President Bar Association, Rehmat Ullah Kakar addressing a press conference.

## Road blockade suffers studies of female students

### F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: Learning and teachings activities have come to halt for the last three weeks in the lonely Government Girls' College, Landi Kotal as the female teaching staff cannot come to the institution due to road blockade at Bogiyari checkpoint by Koki Khel protestors, students and teachers said.

The only Government Girls College has 45 enrolled students, with 15 teaching staff members (non-local), commenced temporarily in the hostel building of Government Boys Degree College, Landi Kotal last year. The local female students regretted that the pro-

longed agitation of Koki Khel Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) had a devastating impact on the girls' studies and asked for alternative arrangements to save their valuable time.

When Principal of the college Nadia Irshad was contacted on the matter she said that infect hundred percent female staff was from Peshawar therefore teaching activities were completely suspended in the institution that suffered the local girls' students.

She maintained that online classes had been begun to save precious time of the female learners but urged the concerned authorities to play their due role to resume Pak-Afghan

highway to formally recommence teaching activities in the college.

The parents of the girls' students expressed their deep concern over the prolonged blockade and said it was a deliberate attempt to keep their daughters and sisters uneducated. They maintained that the suspension of road not only had a negative impact on academic performance of the students but would also increase the risk of dropout rates in female students in Landi Kotal. They demanded of the district administration and education department to adopt necessary actions to ensure girls' education uninterrupted.

## Fitrat assumes charge as Station In-charge F.P. Report



### F.P. Report

KHAR: Muhammad Quresh known by his pen-name as Dr. Fitrat Buner has taken charge as Station In-charge Pakhtunkhwa Radio Bajaur. Previously, he was working as Assistant Director Electronic Media and Projects at the Information and Public Relations Department Headquarters, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He has also worked as a producer at Pakhtunkhwa Radio Peshawar and Bajaur earlier.

As Assistant Director Electronic Media and Projects, Dr. Fitrat Buner played a significant role in granting financial powers to four radio stations in merged districts and opening DDOS in local accounts offices, resulting in the release of funds at the local level. The case for financial powers for the Wana Radio Station has been submitted to the Finance Department.

After taking charge, Dr. Fitrat Buner told journalists that Pakhtunkhwa Radio Bajaur FM 91.1 will soon start its broadcasts, and the outstanding payments to workers will also be cleared soon, for which a case has been submitted to the Director General.

He said that our effort is to provide broadcasting opportunities to local journalists in Bajaur and bring them towards radio journalism. Additionally, Pakhtunkhwa Radio Bajaur will continue to play a key role in raising awareness among the community.

## Two robbers killed

FAISALABAD (INP): Two dacoits were killed while three others managed to escape after encounters in Ghulam Muhammad Abad and Nishatabad police limits.

A police spokesman said on Thursday that four bandits snatched a motorcycle, Rs 40,000 and other items from Dania Naseer near Subhan Allah Chowk and escaped.

## AWKUM land sale Court issues injunction orders

### F.P. Report

MARDAN: On the application of the Loya Jirga, the additional session issued an injunction against the decision to sell university lands, after which the syndicate meeting held by Abdul Wali Khan University was canceled, while the students set up a protest camp in College Chowk against the government's decision in which representatives of different political parties participated.

According to the details, the scope of protest has widened on the provincial government's decision to sell the land of Bacha Khan Education Campus of Mardan. Additional Session Judge Nasrullah Khan's court issued an order to stop the syndicate meeting held at Abdul Wali Khan University on a petition filed through the mediation of Loya Jirga lawyer Muslim Shah Ariani Advocate after which Abdul Wali Khan's Registrar issued a declaration to cancel the syndicate meeting.

On the other hand, students of various colleges and universities organized a protest camp at College Chowk against the decision of the provincial government, in which various political and social figures also participated and strongly condemning the government's decision, announced to fight against it.

**BISE Mardan announces F. Sc result while girls' leads:** Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Mardan was topped by a girl student by securing 1147 out of total 1200 marks in the results of Higher Secondary School Certificate announced by relevant officials here on Thursday. The topper of BISE Mardan named as Rimsha Hijab belonged to the Peace School and College Nowshera. She secured first position by getting 1147 marks.

Jibran Khan of the Quaid-e-Azam College for Boys Mardan obtained second position with 1146 marks and Faiza Bibi of the Muslim Higher Secondary School

Gujrat Mardan with 1145 marks was declared as third position-holder. All the overall top-three position-holders belonged to pre-medical group.

In the Pre-Engineering group Shakeeba Ibad of The Readers College Swabi with 1144 marks, Laiba Shahid of the Ghazali College for Women Mardan with 1131 and Muhammad Usman Said of the Sudhum Science College Rustam Mardan with 1130 were declared as first, second and third position-holders respectively.

In the Science group, Umra Sayed of the KIPs Girls College Mardan secured first position by obtaining 1090 marks. Sapna Jabeen of the Peace group of school and college Mardan with 1080 marks stood second and Sayyed Muhammad of The Orbit College Shewa Adda Swabi got third position by obtaining 1079 marks.

Similarly, in the Humanities group, Lubna with 1095 marks, Habiba Ali with 1061 marks and Maryam Murad with 1062 marks were declared as first, second and third position-holders. All the three position-holders belonged to the same Government College for Women Mardan.

Ishrat Ali, controller of examinations announced the results of HSSC part-I and Part-II in a ceremony held in the auditorium hall of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education Mardan.

He apprised participants of the results-ceremony that in Part-I, a total of 46331 students appeared, out of whom, 37998 were declared as passed with overall 82.01 percentages. In Part-II, a total of 42873 candidates appeared, out of whom, 40105 succeeded with overall 93.54 percentages, he added.

On the occasion, Commissioner Mardan Division Muhammad Javed Marwat was the chief guest. In his address as chief guest, he advised and urged students to work hard if they were serious to get a bright future for themselves as well as for Pakistan. At the end, shields, medals and case prizes were distributed among the outstanding position-holders.

## CRA restores irrigation channel damaged in floods

### Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: In a significant step towards rehabilitation and resilience, the Community Resilience Activity North (CRA-N) has successfully rebuilt and restored a vital irrigation channel in Bahrain, Swat, damaged in the devastating 2022 floods.

The reconstruction project, one of five completed by CRA-N in Tehsil Bahrain, was inaugurated at a ceremony in the Shahgram Paklai area of Madyan, attended by prominent officials and local elders. The event marked a crucial milestone

in the region's recovery from the 2022 flood's destruction.

The restored irrigation channel will revitalize the once-barren fields, bringing relief to landowners who suffered significantly due to the flood damage. CRA-N administrators highlighted the completion of five projects in Tehsil Bahrain and two in Tehsil Matta, demonstrating their commitment to enhancing community resilience.

In addition to infrastructure development, CRA-N conducted training sessions in three villages - Cherbat, Shagai, and Paklai - focusing on flood risk manage-

ment and prevention strategies. Fifteen male participants from each village and women from the communities received valuable insights into mitigating flood-related dangers.

Speaking at the ceremony, Additional Assistant Commissioner Bahrain Ahmed Sher praised CRA-N's efforts, while Mohammad Ayub Khan of Irrigation emphasized the restored water channels' benefits for local landowners. The project exemplifies the collective efforts towards rebuilding and strengthening the community's resilience in the face of natural disasters.

## M.Phil scholars successfully defend thesis

### F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: Mr Zahid Ullah, an MPhil scholar in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Malakand (UoM), has successfully defended his MPhil thesis titled Mathematical Analysis of an Age-Structured HIV/AIDS Epidemic Model. His research was supervised by Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Associate Professor in the department, with Dr. Nigar Ali, Lecturer in the same department, served as co-supervisor.

The external examiner, Dr. Shamoona Jabeen, Assistant Professor at the University of Science and Technology, Bannu, commended the scholar's hard work and contributions. The Chairman of the

Department of Mathematics, Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, along with other faculty members, congratulated the scholar on this significant achievement and encouraged him to further pursue research in this area. Mr. Zahid Ullah expressed his gratitude to his supervisors, friends, and well-wishers for their support throughout his academic journey.

Meanwhile, Hammad Jehangir, an MPhil scholar in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Malakand (UoM), has successfully defended his MPhil thesis titled Modelling and Analysis of COVID-19 Epidemic with Vaccination at the UoM. His thesis was supervised by Dr. Nigar Ali, Lecturer Department of

Mathematics, and co-supervised by Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, Associate Professor of the said department.

The external examiner was Dr. Shamoona Jabeen, Associate Professor, Department of Mathematics at the University of Science and Technology, Bannu, who appreciated the hard work of the scholar.

The Chairman of the Department of Mathematics, Dr. Imtiaz Ahmad, and all the teachers congratulated the scholar on achieving this milestone and encouraged him to further explore the same area. The scholar, Mr. Hammad Jehangir, wholeheartedly thanked all his teachers, friends, and well-wishers for their support in his significant achievements.

## Governance matters: Public service delivery in conflict zone

### Muhammad Mushtaq Jadun

**FIRSTWHILE NWFP and Balochistan, due to their strategic position, have always been important as gateway to India from Asian States and Afghanistan. North West Frontier was created as Chief Commissioner Province, in 1901, and granted status of province under 1935 Act. Right from Mughal era 1526 to 1857, this area remained unstable which included inter and intra tribal wars, power conflict within Kabul, war of succession in Delhi, rebellion against Mughal Rule during tenure of Akbar and Aurangzeb. With the demise of Mughal dynasty region of Pakhtunkhwa came under Durrani Rule in 1747 followed by Sikh Rule 1818 and British in 1849.**

Throughout the British occupation of hundred years this region remained in turmoil. Apart from three Anglo-Afghan wars (1838, 1878 and 1919)

British, one third, army remained deployed in the then NWFP and tribal areas which constituted less than two percent of India. British carried out, about sixty five, major military expeditions. After independence, and till 2001, some five military operations were conducted. With the invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 a new decade of destruction started in the region, including merged tribal areas. More than three million Afghan refugees were settled in NWFP, Baluchistan Pushtun belt, and two border districts of Punjab and NWFP. Extensive damage was caused to environment of the province. Pressure on health and municipal services increased. Afghan air force bombarded Afghan refugees camps, throughout eighties.

Subversive activities, such as bomb blast, started. Due to presence of more than three million Afghan refugees crime rate increased. Initially the Afghan refugees were quite law abiding as they were ruled, for centuries,

by the kings. But soon our policing system corrupted them. Locals started using them in settling their enmities.

From 1990 to 1996 Intra factional war of Mujaheddin in Kabul was fought from here. Arrival of Taliban, in Kabul, by end of September, 1996 restored peace in Kabul. But the worst was yet to come in the shape of 9/11. By November 2001, the Americans, along with NATO, dislodged Taliban, regime in Kabul.

Sympathizers of Taliban from all over the country joined Taliban in waging a war against occupational forces in Afghanistan. It was a unique incident in the history that invasion of a neighboring country caused more damage to Pakistan. For the first time suicide attacks carried out in the NWFP and tribal areas.

Between 2002 to 2024 more than fifteen military operations were carried out in the settled and tribal areas. About seventy thousands died during two decades of

militancy. The decade from 2004 to 2014 was the worst period as administration and resultant the writ of the state was weakened. Major displacement of population in the form of internally displaced persons took place.

Militancy, earthquakes of 2005 and floods of 2010 not only caused immense damage to infrastructure but also adversely affected the public service delivery in the social sector and regulatory services. Major allocations, during Afghan Jihad 1980-1990, for development of social sector and infrastructure was made. Without developing the human resource and capacity building multifold increase in developmental budget led to wide spread corruption.

Narco business, coupled with proliferation of automatic weapons, posed major threat to law and order. Till 2001 the writ of the state was intact. Irrespective of debate of right or wrong the Afghan policy in 80s was in harmony with the religious and nationalistic senti-

ments of locals. After 9/11 the state policy came in direct conflict with the beliefs and ideology of locals. Islamic militancy almost crippled the administration. Military operations restored the writ albeit with huge loss of life on both sides.

During Afghan Jihad in eighties there was expansion in Federal Institutions such as Wapda, SNGPL, Pakistan Post, Benazir Income Programme and EOBI. The purpose of highlighting the historical background is that in a conflict zone, funding and expansion of infrastructure is fraught with the risks of corruption due to poor supervision as a consequence of weakening of writ of the state.

Public in such an environment is more prone to violation of rules and regulations, while the state agencies, using discretionary powers, commit illegalities and irregularities. Such an environment of management warrants robust monitoring system, and an effective, prompt accountability and dispute reso-

lution mechanism. The locals, especially from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, are allergic to protracted proceedings in civil courts. A country having forty percent poverty, coupled with geographic, social and financial barriers, warrants cheap, prompt alternate dispute resolution system, through an effective system of administrative justice. Provincial governments established Right to Public Service Commission, Right to Information, Provincial Ombudsman and women commissions.

Federal Ombudsman office was established back in 1983, now operating with seventeen Regional Offices, four in KP. Other Federal Institutions are Tax, and Banking Ombudsman, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Protection against harassment at workplace. There is need to strengthen the administrative justice system as it is prompt, cheap and offers alternate dispute resolution, which is in harmony with the cultural norms of locals.



MEXICO CITY: MPs and Senators holding flags as they hold protest against judicial reforms.

## Russia says it could ‘combine’ with China if they faced a threat

MOSCOW (Reuters): Russia said that its partnership with China was not aimed against third countries but the two powers could "combine potential" if faced with a threat from the United States. "I would like to remind you that Moscow and Beijing will respond to 'double containment' by the United States with 'double counteraction'," Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said when asked about a possible deployment of US missiles in Japan.

The Japan Times reported on Sept. 7 that the United States had expressed an interest in deploying a Typhon mid-range missile system to Japan for joint military exercises. "It is clear that both Russia and China will react to the emergence of additional and very significant missile threats, and their reaction will be far from being political, which has also been repeatedly confirmed by the two countries," Zakharova told reporters at her weekly briefing.

She said Russia and China had a strategic partnership that was not aggressive in its intent. "Our relations are not directed against third countries... and double counteraction does not contradict this. This is a defensive position, this is not an initiative to target other countries," Zakharova said in answer to a question from Reuters. "But if an aggressive policy of attack is being implemented against us from one centre, why don't we combine our potential and give an appropriate rebuttal?"

Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping signed a "no limits" partnership deal in 2022, less than three weeks before Putin sent his troops into Ukraine. In May this year they

agreed to deepen what they called their "comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation" for a new era. The two countries have not declared a formal military alliance, although Putin last week described them as "allies in every sense of the word".

Russia and China have staged military exercises together, including naval drills that started. Putin, overseeing the launch of the manoeuvres, warned the United States against attempts to outgun Russia by building up its military power in the Asia-Pacific region.

Meanwhile, the Kremlin told the West that any decision to allow Ukraine to strike Russia with long-range Western missiles would deepen what it called the direct involvement of the US and Europe in the war and would trigger a response from Moscow. The warning came as senior Ukrainian government officials pressed US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and British foreign minister David Lammy, on a joint visit to Kyiv, to allow Ukraine to fire long-range US ATACMS missiles and British Storm Shadow cruise missiles at targets deep inside Russia.

Washington has previously been reluctant to supply Ukraine with long-range weapons over fears that this could escalate the 2-1/2-year-old conflict, but there are signs its stance may be shifting. US President Joe Biden said his administration was "working that out now" when asked if he would lift restrictions on Kyiv's use of missiles such as ATACMS.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters Moscow suspected a US decision to let Kyiv fire such missiles into Russia had already

been taken and that there would be a response if that happened. "It (our response) will be an appropriate one," said Peskov.

"The involvement of the United States of America and European countries in the conflict over Ukraine is direct, and each new step increases the degree of this involvement," he said. Vyacheslav Volodin, the chairman of the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, and a close ally of President Vladimir Putin, said Moscow would be forced to use "more powerful and destructive weapons" against Ukraine if Kyiv started firing long-range Western missiles at Russia.

"Washington and other European states are becoming parties to the war in Ukraine," Volodin said on Telegram. Sergei Ryabkov, one of Russia's deputy foreign ministers, was cited by state news agencies as saying Moscow was worried about what it regarded as a potentially dangerous escalatory scenario and would move to destroy any new deliveries of long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine by the United States.

"As was the case with past US arms deliveries to the Kyiv regime, they will all be destroyed," TASS cited Ryabkov as saying. "But the dangers and risks are growing." The long-range US Army Tactical Missile Systems (ATACMS) have a range of up to 190 miles (305 kms) while the British Storm Shadows have a reach of around 155 miles (249 km). Ukraine is already firing both at Russian targets on territory internationally recognised as Ukraine but wants to use them to hit bases inside Russia itself.

## US grants Egypt \$1.3b in military aid, overriding rights conditions

WASHINGTON (Reuters): The Biden administration is overriding human rights conditions on military aid to Egypt, a State Department spokesperson said, granting the US ally its full allocation of \$1.3 billion this year for the first time during this administration, despite ongoing concerns over human rights in the country.

The announcement comes as Washington has relied heavily on Cairo - a longstanding US ally - to mediate so far unsuccessful talks between Israel and Hamas on a ceasefire deal to end the war in Gaza. Of the \$1.3 billion in US foreign military financing allocated to Egypt, \$320 million is subject to conditions that have meant at least some of that sum has been withheld in recent years.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken told Congress that he would waive a certification requirement on \$225 million related to Egypt's human rights record this year, citing "the US national security interest," the spokesperson said by email. "This decision is important to advancing

regional peace and Egypt's specific and ongoing contributions to US national security priorities, particularly to finalize a ceasefire agreement for Gaza, bring the hostages home, surge humanitarian assistance for Palestinians in need, and help bring an enduring end to the Israel-Hamas conflict," the spokesperson said.

Democrat Chris Murphy, who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Middle East subcommittee, said Washington had previously withheld military aid from Egypt on human rights grounds while maintaining its strategic relationship with the country. "It's no secret that Egypt remains a deeply repressive autocratic state, and I see no good reason to ignore that fact by waiving these requirements," Murphy said.

Cairo has remained a close regional ally of Washington despite accusations of widespread abuses under President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's government, including torture and enforced disappearances. Sisi denies there are political prisoners in Egypt. He says stability and security

are paramount and authorities are promoting rights by trying to provide basic needs such as jobs and housing. The war in Gaza, sparked by the Oct. 7 attacks by Palestinian militants on southern Israel, has increased Washington's reliance on Cairo for diplomatic efforts like the ceasefire talks. Much-needed humanitarian aid for Palestinians in Gaza also enters from Egypt.

Blinken issued a similar waiver on the human rights conditions last year but withheld a portion of the military aid over Egypt's failure to make "clear and consistent progress" on the release of political prisoners. This year, he determined that Egypt had made sufficient efforts on political prisoners to release \$95 million tied to progress on the issue, the spokesperson said.

They cited Egypt's efforts to draft legislation to reform pretrial detention and the broader penal code, its release of some political prisoners and a move to end travel bans and asset freezes associated with foreign funding for non-governmental organizations. Rights groups have

questioned how effective the draft legislation on pretrial detention would be for ending abusive practices and say some human rights lawyers remain under travel bans.

Seth Binder, director of advocacy for the Washington-based Middle East Democracy Center, said that while about 970 prisoners had been released since last September, at least 2,278 Egyptians were arbitrarily arrested over the same period, according to data collected by the center and Egyptian human rights groups. "There's no reasonable assessment where one could say there's been progress on the human rights situation in Egypt. It remains a huge crisis," Binder said, pointing to the tens of thousands of political prisoners still held in the country.

The State Department spokesperson said Washington was continuing "a rigorous dialogue with the Egyptian government on the importance of concrete human rights improvements that are crucial to sustaining the strongest possible US-Egypt partnership."

## Cuba's 'migratory stampede' has no end in sight

HAVANA (Reuters): Cuban lab chemist Deisy Herrera was crushed when her two sons left the island in search of a better life. "Those were terrible times," the 61-year old pharmaceutical worker said in tears during an interview at her home in Havana. "When you have kids, you never think they will leave. But we all know the situation here."

It is no secret that Cuba's economic crisis has prompted a record-breaking exodus of its citizens - far exceeding similar mass migrations off the island, including the 1980 Mariel boatlift. But even within Cuba, population scientists debate the scope of the country's population decline, with recent estimates ranging from around 10% since 2020, to nearly one in five residents in the past two years alone.

"There are other countries where (that) has happened, but they have been in wartime," said Juan Carlos Albizu-Campos, a Cuba-based economist and population scientist who works for the Christian Center for Reflection and Dialogue in Cuba. Albizu-Campos, who has studied Cuba's demographics for 30 years, surprised many in July when he estimated the island's population had fallen dramatically to 8.62 million, an 18% decline in 2022 and 2023 alone, numbers he described as a "migratory stampede."

Most Cuban migrants head for the United States. Juan Carlos Alfonso Fraga, of Cuba's official statistics agency ONEI, puts the population at 10.1 million, far above Albizu-Campos estimate but still an "important decline" of 10% since 2020.

The difference between the two estimates comes down to technical details that experts told Reuters are best resolved by a census. But a formal population count has been delayed until at least 2025, officials say. While the scale of the migration remains unsettled, population experts agree the majority of those leaving are young, able-bodied workers.

Official data has for decades shown that birthrates, too, have dropped dramatically in Cuba, now well short of the rate necessary to replace those who pass away each year. One in four Cubans are now over 60 years old, according to data released by ONEI in July, an increasing burden for the country's health care system and its economy.

Antonio Aja, director of the University of Havana's Center for Demographic Studies, says that dynamic - a low birthrate and soaring migration - makes Cuba a standout. "When you look at the statistics from the US, Europe and some countries in South America, you see they are receiving immigrants... and that rejuvenates the population structure," Aja told Reuters. "In Cuba's case, we are losing both population and our young people."

## Two Maldivian ministers quit

COLOMBO (Reuters): Two junior ministers in the Maldivian government, who were suspended for disparaging Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi this year, have resigned ahead of a proposed visit by President Mohamed Muizzu to New Delhi, an official said.

Malsha Shareef and Mariyam Shiuna in the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Information and Arts were disciplined along with fellow minister Abdulla Mahzoom Majid in January for comments they made on social media platform X. They labelled Modi a "clown", "terrorist" and "puppet of Israel" in response to his promotion of tourism in the Indian islands of Lakshadweep, viewed as a signal to pro-China Muizzu who had pledged to end Maldives' "India first" policy.

The comments had angered New Delhi and sparked a campaign by some Indian celebrities on social media to promote local tourism, which dented Indian arrivals in globally popular Maldives, whose 1,192 islands in the Indian Ocean are dotted with luxury resorts.

## Iran's president slams West over war in Gaza

BAGHDAD (AP): Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian slammed the West, saying that Israel is "committing massacres" in the war in Gaza and using European and American weapons to do so. Pezeshkian, who spoke in Baghdad at the start of his first visit abroad since taking office, is hoping to cement Tehran's ties to Baghdad as regional tensions increasingly pull both majority Shiite countries into the widening Middle East fray.

Iran has been a staunch supporter of the Palestinian militant Hamas group since its Oct. 7 attack on southern Israel that sparked the war in the Gaza Strip. More than 40,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza since the war erupted, according to local health officials. The war has also caused vast destruction and displaced around 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, often multiple times. "The Israeli entity is committing massacres against women, children, young men and elderly. They bomb hospitals and schools," Pezeshkian said.

"All these crimes are being committed by using European and American ammunition and bombs," he added, without elaborating. Ahead of Pezeshkian's arrival, an explosion struck a site near Baghdad International Airport used by the US military. There were no reported casualties and the circumstances of the explosion were unclear.

The US Embassy later described it as an "attack" on the Baghdad Diplomatic Services Compound, an American diplomatic facility, and that it was "assessing the damage" and the cause of the explosion. It

didn't provide further details. Pezeshkian's visit is significant for both countries. For Iran, its relationship with Iraq remains crucial for economic, political and religious reasons - something that has especially been true since the US-led 2003 invasion of Iraq toppled dictator Saddam Hussein, who launched a bloody, years-long war against Iran in the 1980s.

Baghdad, meanwhile, has been trying to balance its relationship with Tehran, which backs powerful Shiite militias in the country, as well as with the United States, which maintains a force of 2,500 troops in Iraq that remain in battle with remnants of the once-dominant extremist Islamic State group. The American troops remain both a literal and rhetoric target for Iran, particularly as Israel's nearly year-old war on Hamas in Gaza grinds on. Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani told reporters during a joint news conference with Pezeshkian that the two neighboring countries signed 14 memorandums of understanding to boost relations. He also pledged that Iraq's airspace will not be used for attacks on the Islamic Republic - an apparent reference to Israel.

Pezeshkian, who was sworn in as Iran's new president in July, is also to visit Shiite shrines in the Iraqi holy cities of Karbala and Najaf, a railroad project to link the southern city of Basra to Iran and Irbil, the capital of Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region. Still, there have been tensions between Iran and Iraq, particularly after Iranian missiles hit sites in Iraq in

attacks over the past six years, targeting Kurdish militias, a base housing American forces and also what Tehran alleged were Israeli sites in Iraq. Iran also fired missiles and flew drones over Iraq in its unprecedented direct attack on Israel in April. That attack followed a suspected Israeli strike on an Iranian diplomatic compound in Damascus, Syria, that killed two Iranian generals and five officers, as well as a member of the Lebanese Shiite militia Hezbollah, an Iranian ally.

The Islamic Republic has also threatened further retaliation against Israel over the July assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran, which could include another missile barrage. Iraq also needs the close ties to maintain Baghdad's supply of imported Iranian natural gas to meet its electricity needs. A barter deal for Iraqi crude oil has seen the supply continue, though US sanctions targeting Tehran over its rapidly advancing nuclear program have put pressure on Baghdad. Meanwhile, the United States and Britain formally accused Iran of supplying short-range ballistic missiles to Russia to use against Ukraine, announcing new sanctions on both Moscow and Tehran.

The continued presence of US troops in Iraq remains a concern for Iran. Since the Israel-Hamas war broke out, Iraqi militias allied with Iran have targeted US forces here, leading to American airstrikes targeting the militias. Iraqi politicians continue to debate the issue of whether to back having American troops remain in the country.

## Philippines looks to ease tension with China

MANILA/BEIJING (Reuters): The Philippines will stick to its position on Sabina Shoal, it said on Thursday, even while exploring ways to ease tension in the area during "frank and candid" talks with China on managing disputes in the key waterway of the South China Sea.

The Southeast Asian nation's sustained presence at the feature, aiming to monitor what it suspects to be China's small-scale reclamation activities has angered Beijing, turning the shoal into their latest flashpoint in the contested waters. During meeting of officials in Beijing, China vowed to "firmly uphold its sovereignty" and reiterated a demand for the immediate withdrawal of a Philippine coast guard ship anchored at the shoal since April.

"I reaffirmed the Philippines' consistent position and explored ways to lower the tension," Philippine Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Theresa Lazaro said on X, posting a picture of her handshake with Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Chen Xiaodong. "We agreed to continue discussions on areas of co-operation, especially on hotline mechanism, coast-guard cooperation, and marine scientific and technological co-operation."

The two had a frank and candid exchange of views, the Philippine foreign ministry said in its statement. The Sabina Shoal, which China refers to as Xianbin Reef, and Manila as Escoda Shoal, lies 150 km (93 miles) west of the Philippine province of Palawan, well within its

exclusive economic zone. The two nations have traded accusations of intentional ramming of each others' vessels in a series of clashes last month, just after reaching a pact on resupply missions to a beached Filipino naval ship in the Second Thomas Shoal.

China claims sovereignty over most of the China Sea, overlapping into maritime zones of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam. In 2016 the Hague arbitration tribunal voided China's expansive and historical claims, a decision Beijing rejects. The Philippine navy has said it has recently monitored 207 Chinese vessels, including 'maritime militia boats' within the country's EEZ, with dozens observed near Sabina Shoal.

## Hong Kong hits out at US Congress

HONG KONG (AP): Hong Kong's government said the US House of Representatives twisted facts in an attack on the city as it passed a bill that could close its representative offices in America, while Beijing threatened to take countermeasures if they are shuttered.

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office Certification Act was part of a series of China-related legislative proposals being scrutinized by the House this week. Many of the proposals scheduled for a vote appear to have both Republican and Democratic support, reflecting a strong consensus that congressional actions are needed to counter Beijing. If approved, the measures would still need to clear the Senate and be signed by the US president before officially becoming law. They are expected to increase diplomatic tensions between the world's two largest economies, which see each other as rivals in many areas and have conflicting views over various issues, including on Hong Kong.

Hong Kong's Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development Algermon Yau strongly condemned the bill's passage, saying it was political slander against the laws that safeguard national security and smeared the city's human rights situation "without any reason at all." He said the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong had surveyed its members and found that about 70% of respondents felt no negative impact from the Beijing-imposed security law. He said there are about 1,200 American companies in the city.

"The passing of the bill ... actually is not creating any benefit to anybody at all," he said. The Hong Kong government said in a statement that the attack on the semi-autonomous Chinese city was "politically driven," violated international law and "grossly interferes" in Hong Kong's affairs. The office of China's Foreign Ministry in Hong Kong also issued a strongly worded statement, saying if the US pushed the bill forward and shut the offices, China would take resolute countermeasures. In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said the act politicizes normal trade cooperation and is "very egregious." Mao said Hong Kong is the second-

largest source of trade surplus for the US, warning the move would ultimately jeopardize America's own interests.

"China urges the US to stop pushing forward the bill, so as not to cause more harm to the stability and development of China-US relations," she said. The bill passed the US House with bipartisan support, 413-3. It proposes to require the White House to remove the extension of certain privileges to the three Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the US - in Washington, New York and San Francisco - if the city no longer enjoys a high degree of autonomy from China, and for other purposes.

Under the proposals, the US secretary of state would need to determine whether the offices merit the privileges. If the answer is no, the offices would have to terminate their operations within 180 days after that determination is delivered to Congress. Republican Representative Chris Smith, chair of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China, said in a statement that the act is a "necessary next step in tangibly demonstrating our solidarity with the persecuted citizens of Hong Kong."

## BD ramps up border vigilance as thousands of Rohingya flee Myanmar

DHAKA (Reuters): Bangladesh has ramped up vigilance at its border with Myanmar, with at least 18,000 Rohingya Muslims crossing over in recent months to escape escalating violence in Myanmar's western Rakhine state, officials in Dhaka said.

The influx of refugees from Myanmar has mounted as fighting escalates between the troops of the ruling junta and the Arakan Army, the powerful ethnic militia that recruits from the Buddhist majority. "Thousands of

Rohingya have fled to Bangladesh and many are waiting to cross. The situation is dire," said a foreign ministry official, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to talk to media.

The new arrivals add to more than one million Rohingya refugees already living in overcrowded camps in Cox's Bazar district after they fled a military-led crackdown in Myanmar in 2017. They have little hope of returning to Myanmar, where they are largely denied citizen-

ship and other basic rights. Arrivals have more than doubled from what the government estimated earlier this month, despite Bangladesh repeatedly saying it cannot accept more Rohingya refugees as resources are already stretched thin. "The vigilance at the border has increased, but managing our 271 km (168 miles) border with Myanmar is challenging, especially without a security counterpart on the other side," said another government official, who spoke on condi-

tion of anonymity.

The official said many Rohingyas were desperate and were finding ways to cross into Bangladesh. The government was yet to make a decision on whether to register those who have entered recently and are living in refugee camps, said the foreign ministry official. "If we decide to register them, it could open the floodgates, and that's something we can't afford," he said. "But at the same time, how long can we ignore this issue? That's the real question."

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# Harris scores over Trump in debate

**I**T seems that the Donald Trump-Kamala Harris televised presidential debate on Tuesday has been for Democrats what it was not in the Trump-Joe Biden television faceoff months ago. That debate forced Biden to step aside, and Vice President Harris who has stepped into the race has taken full control of the reins on Tuesday.

The New York Times, with its liberal credentials, and The Wall Street Journal, with its pro-business conservative stance, agreed that Harris got under Trump's skin. But WSJ said that the ABC anchors were a great support to Harris, and that they let her off lightly while scrutinising Trump relentlessly.

The WSJ had however to concede that Harris scored over Trump, without making any of her policy stances clear. The apparent success of Harris and the flustered Trump in the debate does not guarantee that Harris will win the battle of the ballot on November 5. There is no doubt however that Harris has ever since she was made the Democrat presidential candidate restored the balance in the contest, and that she has even gained ground for the Democrats.

The debate showed that the aggressive Trump knows how to punch his way when he feels that he can corner a yielding opponent, which was indeed the case with Biden. But when faced with an aggressive opponent, who knows a thing or two about cornering the rival, then Trump does not stand the ground. He resorted to extreme retorts like the immigrants eating domestic pets in Ohio. It revealed his virulence on the immigration issue but it did not expose the real problems that immigration posed.

There were doubts before Tuesday whether Harris had it in her to defend herself and articulate policy. She leaves the issue undefined. Instead, she had adopted the offensive strategy, and she was left attacking Trump's obviously weaker aspects. It was confidence and pugilistic strategy that won her the evening. This exposes the vulnerable Trump on many fronts. He had had an easy time through the months leading to the Republican nomination. He did not participate in the party primaries.

He was contemptuous of the tradition of primaries as he went on his aggressive spree. It is also the case with Harris that she did not face the Democrat primaries, and it is doubtful whether she should have survived the ordeal. She did not in 2020. Biden's late decision to quite enabled her to reach the nomination podium without much ado.

The television debate in presidential elections which was first held in 1960 between Democrat John Kennedy and Republican Richard Nixon went the way of charismatic Kennedy.

But in the polls, Kennedy scored past Nixon with a bare one per cent edge in the popular vote. And Nixon managed to win the 1968 and 1972 presidential polls against Democrats who were at war with themselves in the tumultuous late 1960s.

So, the photogenic image on the television screen does not win presidential elections. The challenge from Trump remains substantial because his voter base of disgruntled and frustrated poor whites and the Christian evangelicals stands quite strong, and the opinion polls show that Harris has sneaked past Trump by a few percentage points.

The battle between Trump and Harris shows that America remains a deeply divided country on political ideology, on the state of affairs in the economy, and on the issue of immigration. Trump is not an ideological conservative. In many ways, he does not believe in the traditional Republican values. That makes him a weak candidate. His rancorous populism does attract the crowds but it does not offer solutions to America's problems. Harris too is not rooted ideologically though she is mouthing the liberal verities rather vaguely. It is a strange election in many ways.

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# Reviving educational values through the Life of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

Muhammad Mohsin Iqbal

The education curriculum of Pakistan holds immense potential to shape the future of the nation by embedding core values, ethics, and knowledge essential for holistic development. In this light, the integration of the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), known as Sirat-ul-Nabi, into our curriculum can offer a profound framework for nurturing not just academic excellence but also moral and spiritual growth in students. Sirat-ul-Nabi is a complete guide on how to live a life of integrity, compassion, and righteousness, offering lessons on governance, personal behavior, and societal interaction. These lessons should not be merely relegated to Islamic studies, but interwoven into the broader fabric of Pakistan's educational system.

One of the most profound aspects of the Prophet's (PBUH) life was his commitment to knowledge and learning. His first revelation emphasized the importance of reading and seeking knowledge, "Iqra" (Read), which underlines the Islamic view that education is a fundamental right for every individual, irrespective of gender or social status. The Quran states, "Are those who have knowledge equal to those who do not have knowledge?" (Surah Az-Zumar, 39:9), underscoring the divine emphasis on acquiring education. In Pakistan, where access to quality education remains uneven, it is vital to draw upon this lesson. The curriculum should ensure that the right to education is safeguarded and extended to all segments of society, particularly girls and children from marginalized communities. The Quran explicitly stresses equality in education and learning for both men and women: "...And say, 'My Lord, increase me in knowledge'" (Surah Taha, 20:114). Sirat-ul-Nabi advocates for an inclusive and egalitarian approach to education, which should be at the heart of our reforms.

The life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) also teaches the importance of ethical behavior, justice, and empathy, which are values that can transform

individuals and societies. Implementing these principles within the Pakistani curriculum would mean incorporating character-building as a core part of education. Instead of focusing solely on rote memorization or technical skills, the curriculum should encourage students to reflect on their moral responsibilities as human beings and as Muslims. For instance, students should be taught the importance of truthfulness, kindness, patience, and justice-values that the Prophet (PBUH) upheld throughout his life. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The best among you are those who have the best manners and character" (Sahih Bukhari). Such lessons, if incorporated from an early age, can contribute to building a more ethical, compassionate, and just society.

The curriculum should also include a focus on the practical implementation of Islamic teachings in everyday life. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was not just a spiritual leader but also a statesman, military commander, and reformer. His life offers valuable lessons on leadership, conflict resolution, diplomacy, and social welfare. These aspects of his life can serve as case studies in subjects like civics, history, and political science, demonstrating how Islamic values can be applied to solve modern problems. For instance, students could study the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah as a model of negotiation and peace-making, or examine the concept of Zakat (charity) and its relevance to modern-day social justice issues. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "The one who looks after a widow or a poor person is like a warrior who fights for Allah's cause" (Sahih Bukhari). These lessons would help students understand how Islamic principles can be adapted to contemporary contexts, fostering a sense of civic duty and moral leadership.

Moreover, the teachings of Sirat-un-Nabi stress the importance of critical thinking and inquiry. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) encouraged his followers

to seek answers, reflect, and use reason to understand the world around them. Unfortunately, the current curriculum in Pakistan often discourages critical thinking in favor of rote learning. By adopting the Prophet's approach, we can reform our education system to promote curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills. The curriculum should encourage students to question, debate, and engage with ideas, rather than merely memorizing facts. The Quran invites believers to reflect on the signs of Allah: "Do they not reflect upon the Quran, or are there locks upon their hearts?" (Surah Muhammad, 47:24). This approach would not only produce more intellectually capable individuals but also help students develop a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings, free from dogma or extremism.

A balanced education system must also recognize the importance of both religious and secular knowledge. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) exemplified the harmonious coexistence of religious devotion and worldly affairs. He was deeply spiritual, but he also emphasized the importance of practical skills and knowledge necessary for daily life.

The Quran says, "And He taught Adam the names of all things" (Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:31), highlighting the importance of worldly knowledge. The Pakistani curriculum must reflect this balance. While religious education is important, subjects like science, mathematics, economics, and technology should also be given equal importance. Integrating Islamic principles with modern disciplines can create a more holistic educational experience, where students are prepared to navigate the complexities of the modern world while staying rooted in their religious identity.

Incorporating Sirat-un-Nabi into the curriculum also means fostering a sense of unity and brotherhood among students. The Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) was known for uniting people from dif-

ferent backgrounds and tribes under a common cause. In a country as diverse as Pakistan, it is essential that our education system promotes unity and tolerance among students of different ethnicities, sects, and backgrounds. Lessons on the Prophet's inclusivity, his efforts to eradicate tribalism, and his respect for different cultures should be a central theme in subjects like social studies and history. Allah commands in the Quran, "Hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided" (Surah Al-Imran, 3:103). This will help students appreciate diversity and foster a more cohesive and tolerant society.

Additionally, the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH) encourage self-discipline and hard work, qualities that are essential for personal and national development. The Prophet (PBUH) said, "Verily, Allah loves that when anyone of you does a job, he should perfect it" (Al-Bayhaqi). In today's world, where instant gratification and shortcuts are often glorified, Sirat-un-Nabi offers timeless lessons on perseverance and dedication. These values can be instilled in students through extracurricular activities, school policies, and teaching methods that emphasize effort, consistency, and ethical conduct in all endeavors.

In conclusion, Pakistan's education curriculum has the potential to be a transformative force by integrating the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). By doing so, we can foster not only academic excellence but also ethical and moral development in our students. The teachings of Sirat-ul-Nabi provide a comprehensive guide for personal conduct, social justice, leadership, and the pursuit of knowledge—all of which are crucial for building a peaceful, prosperous, and just society. Implementing these principles within our education system will ensure that the future generations of Pakistanis are equipped with both the intellectual and moral tools to face the challenges of the modern world while staying true to their religious and cultural heritage.

# No clear favorite yet for US elections

Dr. Amal Mudallali

**T**HE surprise of the American presidential elections debate was the emergence of Vice President Kamala Harris as a formidable opponent, but this will not decide November's outcome, which is still a toss-up between her and former President Donald Trump.

The key question is how this face-off has affected the opinions of voters in the country's key swing states. However, if Trump had thought he would gain the initiative, he was proven wrong. Harris, having already had a meteoric rise in opinion polls, seemed to have placed the former president on the defensive.

The Democratic Party candidate came with a thoughtful strategy, and he presented, as she noted convincingly, the same old arguments used against former opponents. She managed to seize the initiative and win the debate, even in the opinion of those opposed to her. Harris showed that she is ready for her country's highest political office.

Heading into the debate, polls showed Trump slightly ahead, or neck-and-neck with Harris, especially in the swing states that will decide the elections.

The New York Times/Siena poll a day before the debate showed that in the seven swing states Harris was leading with 1 percent, 49 percent to 47 percent, in Wisconsin, Michigan and North Carolina, while Trump was leading in Georgia 49 percent to 48 percent, and they were tied in Pennsylvania, Nevada and Arizona.

Harris came into the debate with 28 percent of likely voters saying they did not know her and wanted more information about her policy positions. Defining herself more clearly to these voters will likely be the key variable that will determine her success in November.

She has other challenges. Polls are showing that her surge in popularity has started to stall, indicating that the honeymoon she had after replacing President Joe Biden as party candidate, is over.

During the debate, Harris faced intense pressure to perform and tackle Trump on his record, especially his convictions and character. The former president meanwhile had to discredit Harris as a worse copy of Biden and highlight issues on the economy and immigration.

The consensus view on the outcome appears to be that she managed to get under his skin and bait him, so that he appeared defensive rather than focus on her record and decisions as a key player in the Biden administration.

The former president had a strong start and accused the Biden-Harris administration of "destroying the economy." He highlighted the effects of high inflation on living standards, saying "the economy is a disaster for the middle class, but also for every class." Harris spoke about creating an "opportunity economy" to help the middle class.

The candidates sparred on issues ranging from immigration to abortion, and accused each other of being a threat to democracy. But Harris knew how to provoke Trump by questioning the size of his rallies, and accusing him of wanting to implement the controversial Project 2025, allegedly backed by wealthy, rightwing conservatives, if elected.

Trump has always denied any connection to the project and he repeated that during the debate. But Harris doubled down on the claim, looking into the camera, to indicate she was addressing

the public and voters, saying "he has no plan for you, he has only tax cuts for the rich."

She also accused him of playing a role in the 2021 attack on Congress, but Trump said he had nothing to do with it and was just asked to give a speech. He shifted the blame on former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, saying she rejected his offer to deploy the National Guard to protect Congress.

Trump further accused the Democrats of orchestrating court cases against him so that they could win the election.

On foreign policy, they accused each other of being inadequate. Harris said Trump was "weak and wrong," adding that world leaders were "laughing" at him. He countered by saying that leaders "of other countries think they (Biden and Harris) are weak."

On the Middle East, Harris repeated her previous statements on Israel and Gaza by saying she supports Israel's right to defend itself. But she also highlighted the suffering of the Palestinians, and said she supports a two-state solution, and self-determination for the Palestinians.

Trump missed the opportunity to speak about his record in the Middle East. He did not mention the Abraham Accords between Israel and several Arab countries, which he considers his achievement in the region. Instead, he accused Harris of hating Israel, and said "Israel wouldn't exist within two years" if she wins the election. He also accused her of "hating the Arab population" without explaining how he came to this conclusion.

Ukraine was another hot and divisive issue between the two candidates. There was considerable criticism after the debate of Trump's answer to a question about whether he wants Ukraine to win, and if this would be in America's interest. Trump said he wants to "get this war finished and just get it done" and proposed a negotiated deal.

In contrast, Harris recounted the Biden administration's help to Ukraine and said: "If Donald Trump were president, (Russia President Vladimir) Putin would be sitting in Kiev right now." She said Putin was a threat to Europe.

Even on the withdrawal from Afghanistan, considered the biggest misstep on foreign policy for the Biden administration, Harris managed to use it against Trump, accusing him of "negotiating directly with a terrorist organization called the Taliban."

Trump's missed opportunities were greeted with disappointment and criticism from some Republicans, especially on Capitol Hill, and among his staunchest allies, including Sen. Lindsey Graham.

Trump and his campaign officials blamed the moderators of the debate and ABC News for their bad night. As for Trump's avid supporters, there seems to be nothing that will change their minds about him, especially not a debate.

Trump did manage to make a potent point during his closing remarks, by asking Harris why she did not carry out tasks she had promised the public while in the White House. This is surely a valid question, and should stick in the minds of voters.

Trump might have lost the battle, but he could still win the war if he manages to keep his lead in the swing states. Election day is weeks away and the candidates have ample opportunity to make up for their mistakes, or commit fatal ones.

# Time to make Netanyahu an offer he can't refuse

Ross Anderson

Corleones has never been questioned. Don Vito concludes: "Now listen, whoever comes to you with this Barzini meeting, he's the traitor. Don't forget that." And that is how the unfortunate Sal Tessio came to sleep with the fishes.

Netanyahu now finds himself in a similar bind to that of the Corleone family. He is weakened and surrounded by enemies who would very much like to consign him to the dustbin of political history: indeed, thousands of them regularly take to the streets of Tel Aviv demanding just that.

This is entirely of Netanyahu's own making. The events of Oct. 7 in southern Israel were not just an unspeakable horror for the victims and their families, although they were certainly that; they were not just

a gut punch for the state of Israel itself, although they were that too; they were also a personal and political disaster for Netanyahu, for two reasons.

First, the Hamas attack took place on his watch: "Mr. Security" was asleep at the wheel and took his eye off the ball, choose your own metaphor. Second, astute Israelis understand very well that Netanyahu has always had a conflicted relationship with Hamas. He has done just enough to keep it in check with occasional forays into Gaza — "mowing the grass," as the Israeli military calls such operations — to ensure that it never becomes an existential threat to Israel.

At the same time, he has turned a blind eye to the flow of cash and weapons

that keeps Hamas afloat, because he needs it as a Palestinian people under a united leadership, ready to negotiate the independent statehood they so richly deserve, and while Hamas exists that cannot happen. The Oct. 7 attack ended all that, forcing Netanyahu into a declaration that the war on Gaza would not end until Hamas had been destroyed — an outcome that he knows he cannot achieve, and does not even wish to.

And so, beset by foes, Netanyahu needs friends. But look at them. His main allies are the far-right extremist religious bigots Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich — the Chuckle Brothers of Israeli politics. No one outside Israel (and

few inside for that matter) understands why either of them holds public office: in any civilized country they would not be in government, but in jail for inciting racial hatred. Indeed Ben-Gvir has been indicted on numerous occasions and convicted of incitement to racism, possessing terrorist propaganda and supporting terrorism.

These two are keeping Netanyahu in office against the wishes of most Israelis, but they have never concealed their contempt for him and have made it clear that, if he wavers at any point in the reduction of Gaza to an uninhabitable wasteland — or, better yet, inhabited only by Israeli settlers — they will topple his government.

It is at this point that Netanyahu may face the trap that the Barzinis tried to set

for Michael Corleone. A mainstream Israeli politician — maybe Yair Lapid, maybe Benny Gantz — will come to him with an offer: end the war, bring the hostages home and we'll prop up your government with the votes you need to survive. Their intention, of course, will be the opposite: to end the war, yes, but to boot Netanyahu out of office and force an election in which he would be comprehensively defeated. It may be, of course, that Netanyahu will see this coming. You don't get to survive as Israeli prime minister for nearly 17 years, on and off, without being a political strategist of not inconsiderable ability: he makes Machiavelli look like Forrest Gump. On the other hand, that would be to underestimate the insatiable lust for power that has sustained Netanyahu throughout his life.

# Cheney’s policies as VP caused immense human suffering on a global scale

**I**N an unsurprising yet telling development, Republican former Vice President Dick Cheney has thrown his support behind the Democratic presidential nominee, Vice President Kamala Harris, over his party’s candidate, framing former President Donald Trump as an unprecedented threat to the United States. On its face, this endorsement might appear as a principled defence of democracy from a longstanding Republican stalwart. But beneath the surface lies a troubling irony.

Cheney, the architect of some of the most disastrous foreign and domestic policies of the early 21st century, now seeks to claim the moral high ground. The legacy of his policies – particularly the havoc unleashed during the Iraq War and the broader “war on terror” – continues to reverberate globally, causing suffering and instability that far surpass anything Trump has wrought to date.

During Tuesday’s presidential debate, Harris proudly touted Dick Cheney’s endorsement as a badge of honour – a moment as baffling as it was revealing.

Embracing a man whose policies left a trail of death and destabilisation in their wake as a champion of American values lacks any semblance of moral clarity. Cheney, whose hands are stained with the blood of countless innocents from Iraq to Guantanamo, who undermined American democracy and terrorised countless innocent Americans under the “war on terror”, should not be celebrated, especially by someone seeking the mantle of progressive leadership.

Cheney’s tenure as vice president under George W Bush is synonymous with neoconservative ambition, a vision of American dominance built on military intervention and disregard for international law. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is perhaps the most glaring example of this approach. Alongside President Bush, Cheney pushed for a war based on false premises, most notably the existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq, and a supposed link between Saddam Hussein’s regime and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Both claims were categorically debunked in the years that followed, yet the human and financial costs of the war are staggering.

Estimates of Iraqi civilian deaths range from hundreds of thousands to well over a million, depending on the source. This war destabilised an entire region, paving the way for the rise of extremist groups like ISIL (ISIS) and contributing to ongoing cycles of violence and displacement. The political vacuum created by the toppling of Hussein remains unfilled, as Iraq continues to grapple

with internal conflicts and external influences.

Domestically, the costs were equally profound. The war drained trillions from the United States economy, money that could have been directed toward infrastructure, education or healthcare. Thousands of US troops lost their lives, and many more returned with life-altering physical and psychological wounds.

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**Embracing a man whose policies left a trail of death and destabilisation in their wake as a champion of American values lacks any semblance of moral clarity. Cheney, whose hands are stained with the blood of countless innocents from Iraq to Guantanamo, who undermined American democracy and terrorised countless innocent Americans under the “war on terror”, should not be celebrated, especially by someone seeking the mantle of progressive leadership. Cheney’s tenure as vice president under George W Bush is synonymous with neoconservative ambition, a vision of American dominance built on military intervention and disregard for international law. The invasion of Iraq in 2003 is perhaps the most glaring example of this approach. Alongside President Bush, Cheney pushed for a war based on false premises, most notably the existence of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) in Iraq, and a supposed link between Saddam Hussein’s regime and the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Both claims were categorically debunked in the years that followed, yet the human and financial costs of the war are staggering.**  
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Veterans of the Iraq conflict have some of the highest rates of PTSD and suicide among recent generations of American soldiers, underscoring the toll of this misadventure.

And yet, those celebrating Cheney’s endorsement of Harris over Trump are now portraying him as a defender of democracy, as if the destabilising effects of his policies were somehow a lesser evil. The truth is that while Trump’s brand of populist nationalism has damaged the social fabric of the United States, the neoconservative project Cheney helped lead caused immense human suffering on a global scale – far beyond anything Trump has so far accomplished.

Cheney’s endorsement of Harris, framed as a repudiation of Trump’s divisiveness, conveniently ignores his own role in eroding civil liberties in the US and across the world.

One of Cheney’s signature policies, the “war on terror”, brought with it the expansion of executive power and a profound shift in the relationship between the American government and its citizens – especially Muslim Americans.

The Patriot Act, passed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, granted the US government sweeping surveillance powers, many of which were abused in the name of national security. Cheney was one of the most ardent advocates of these measures, arguing that extraordinary threats required extraordinary responses. In practice, these measures disproportionate-

Ziyad Motala

ly targeted minorities, particularly Muslim Americans.

Programmes like the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) singled out men from predominantly Muslim countries, leading to widespread racial profiling and unconstitutional detentions. Muslim communities in the US were left

American history.

Under Cheney’s influence, the Bush administration sidelined diplomacy, dismissing warnings from the international community and bypassing the United Nations Security Council. The war not only violated international law but also undermined the very principles of sovereignty and self-determination that the US purported to champion.

immigrants, people of colour, and marginalised groups. His rhetoric has fuelled political violence and stoked deep divisions within American society. But the scope of Cheney’s policies, especially those that played out on the world stage, exceeds Trump’s in terms of sheer human suffering. The wars Cheney championed, particularly the Iraq War, claimed hundreds of thousands of lives and displaced millions. The torture and surveillance programs he helped oversee have left a lasting legacy of fear and suspicion, both at home and abroad.

What makes Cheney’s endorsement, and the Democratic Party’s embrace of it, particularly galling is the way in which they gloss over these past sins in order to paint him as a guardian of American values. While Trump’s rhetoric and policies may have caused harm within the US, Cheney’s decisions inflicted untold suffering on far more people all across the globe. The selective moral outrage they direct at Trump while embracing Cheney as a saviour of democracy, is a testament to the hypocrisy of the liberal political establishment in the country.

As we navigate American politics, we must be careful not to view figures like Cheney solely through a partisan lens. His critique of Trump, while valid in some respects, cannot erase the devastating impact of his own policies. Cheney’s endorsement of Harris should not be interpreted as an act of moral courage, but rather as a cynical attempt to rehabilitate his public image in the face of a deeply divided country.

Ultimately, both Trump and Cheney represent different forms of danger to American democracy and global stability. While Trump has undeniably stoked internal divisions and undermined democratic norms, Cheney’s actions as vice president set the stage for some of the most catastrophic conflicts of the 21st century. His policies eroded civil liberties, violated human rights, and destabilised entire regions, leaving a legacy of fear and instability that continues to haunt the world today.

Yet, despite the overwhelming evidence of the war’s catastrophic consequences, Cheney has never fully reckoned with his role in bringing about this disaster. By endorsing Harris, he is attempting to paint himself as a responsible elder statesman, but his track record tells a different story – one of hubris, miscalculation and indifference to human suffering.

One of the reasons Cheney’s endorsement may resonate with some Democrats and centrists is the perception that Trump represents an existential threat to American democracy. Trump’s brand of populism, his encouragement of far-right extremism, and his open disregard for democratic norms have indeed damaged the political fabric of the US. However, Cheney’s legacy of violence and imperialism abroad, coupled with his domestic assault on civil liberties, presents a far more troubling picture of the threats to democracy.

Trump’s most egregious actions have played out on American soil, targeting

# To confront terrorism, a multifaceted approach is required

Dr. Majid Rafizadeh

**T**HE 23rd anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks was marked this week. In the aftermath of 9/11, America launched its “War on Terror,” invading Afghanistan and Iraq and overthrowing their regimes. Yet, more than two decades on, terrorism remains an ongoing global threat and questions about how best to confront and combat it continue to surface.

While some politicians, policy analysts and scholars believe that military actions have played a significant role in combating terrorism, the complexities of this issue make it clear that no single approach can effectively eradicate it. Terrorism is a multifaceted problem, influenced by political, social, economic and ideological factors.

As a result, addressing these elements in isolation is insufficient. What is really needed is a comprehensive, multifaceted approach that integrates various strategies and resources to deal with terrorism’s root causes, prevent its spread and manage its long-term impacts.

Military interventions have limitations. For example, following the Sept. 11 attacks, the US government swiftly initiated military operations in Afghanistan, targeting the Taliban regime that it accused of providing safe haven to Al-Qaeda, the group responsible for the attacks.

The operation, dubbed “Enduring Freedom,” was initially successful in dislodging the Taliban from power and dismantling key elements of Al-Qaeda’s network. However, the Taliban have now returned to power and the resurgence of both groups has cast doubt on the long-term effectiveness of military solutions.

The subsequent invasion of Iraq in 2003, justified by the perceived threat of weapons of mass destruction and the connection to terrorism, further underscored the challenges of using military might to fight terrorism. Although Saddam Hussein’s regime was toppled, the political and economic instability that followed gave rise to various insurgent groups and eventually contributed to the emergence of Daesh.

These military interventions demonstrate that, while force can temporarily weaken terrorist organizations and disrupt their operations, it is far from a lasting solution. The primary issue with military-only strategies is that they often fail to address the root causes of terrorism. They may lead to a short-term victory, but without long-term strategies to promote political stability, governance and economic development, the underlying conditions that foster terrorism will persist.

This is why international cooperation and diplomatic initiatives are

essential components of a multifaceted strategy to combat terrorism.

Terrorism is a global problem and addressing it requires the collaboration of multiple nations, institutions and agencies. Many terrorist groups operate transnationally, using borders to their advantage to evade law enforcement and military forces. A coordinated international effort is necessary to prevent the flow of funds, arms and fighters that fuel terrorist organizations.

This cooperation can include sharing intelligence, freezing terrorist assets and creating policies that disrupt terrorist financing. International cooperation also allows for the establishment of global standards for prosecuting terrorists and extraditing suspects. However, more needs to be done to address the deep-rooted problems in regions that have become breeding grounds for terrorism.

In addition, international cooperation and diplomatic efforts should focus on building long-term peace and stability in conflict-ridden areas. Diplomatic interventions must seek to resolve these conflicts through peaceful means. Otherwise, military actions in these regions are likely to be counterproductive, contributing to further radicalization and terrorism.

Terrorism is not just a military or a political issue, it is also an ideological one.

Many terrorist groups are driven by radical ideologies that justify violence against civilians in the name of nationalism, political beliefs or religion. These ideologies must be confronted with an equally strong counter-narrative.

Governments, civil society organizations and religious leaders must work together to discredit the ideologies that fuel terrorism.

This involves educating the public on the dangers of extremism and highlighting the hypocrisy and moral bankruptcy of terrorist organizations, while promoting moderate interpretations of religion.

Countering ideological extremism also means addressing the grievances that terrorist groups often exploit, such as poverty, social injustice and political oppression.

One of the most effective ways to prevent radicalization is through education. Providing young people with access to quality education can empower them to think critically and resist the lure of extremist propaganda.

Additionally, promoting tolerance and cultural understanding through interfaith dialogues and community programs can help reduce tensions between different ethnic and religious groups, decreasing the chances of

radicalization.

Economic conditions also play a significant role in the spread of terrorism. In many cases, terrorism thrives in regions where poverty, unemployment and a lack of opportunities create fertile ground for recruitment. Terrorist organizations often prey on vulnerable populations, offering financial incentives or exploiting economic despair to gain support.

To combat terrorism effectively, it is essential to invest in economic development and poverty alleviation programs in regions susceptible to terrorist influence. These efforts should focus on creating jobs, improving infrastructure and providing access to education and healthcare. When people have the means to provide for their families and improve their quality of life, they are less likely to turn to violence or extremist ideologies.

Moreover, economic development can help to stabilize regions that are prone to conflict. Strong economies are less likely to be destabilized by internal or external threats, making them less attractive to terrorist organizations. Investing in economic development is a long-term strategy, but it is one of the most effective ways to reduce the appeal of terrorism.

Another essential element of a multifaceted approach to combating terrorism is community engagement. Governments and law enforcement agencies ought to work closely with local communities to identify and address the early signs of radicalization. Community leaders, religious figures and educators can play a crucial role in preventing individuals from being drawn into terrorist organizations.

There could also be some de-radicalization programs that offer former extremists a path back into society. These programs can provide psychological support, vocational training and opportunities for individuals to reintegrate into their communities. In other words, by offering a way out, de-radicalization programs can reduce the number of active terrorists and prevent further recruitment.

In summary, as we reflect on the 23 years since the Sept. 11 attacks, it is clear that confronting terrorism requires a multifaceted approach.

Military interventions alone are insufficient to defeat terrorism, as they fail to address the root causes that fuel its spread. A comprehensive strategy that includes international cooperation, ideological counter-narratives, economic development, education, diplomacy and community engagement is essential to reducing the threat of terrorism in the long term.

# Lebanon should not be a puppet controlled by Hezbollah

**C**A R E T A K E R Prime Minister Najib Mikati this week expressed, during a meeting with ambassadors and acting representatives of the UN Security Council’s member states, Lebanon’s readiness to engage in indirect negotiations with Israel to achieve a ceasefire and end the ongoing war in the south of the country between Hezbollah and the Israeli army, amid escalating exchanges of fire and Israeli threats to expand the conflict.

Moreover, following the meeting, Foreign Minister Abdallah Bou Habib, who is affiliated with Gebran Basil’s Free Patriotic Movement and a Hezbollah ally, confirmed this wish for a ceasefire. The caretaker government emphasized that Hezbollah might reject such negotiations and that Lebanon would try to convince the group if the state accepted a ceasefire agreement.

The foreign minister’s declaration stirred controversy in Lebanon, but for all the wrong reasons. Indeed, no one questioned how a sovereign state acts as a go-between for an armed militia. What a

derelict state of affairs it is when Lebanon needs to seek the approval or permission of an armed militia on national decisions. There is no need for controversy and the only clarity is that every step taken by the government is either to deflect international pressure on Hezbollah or to be part of its tactics, done with its approval and planning.

We must remember that it was also revealed a week prior to these Lebanese declarations that senior US and Israeli officials held a virtual meeting at the request of the Biden administration to discuss de-escalating tensions with Lebanon and preventing a full-scale conflict between Israel and Hezbollah. In all these discussions, the only mention of Lebanon was related to the geographical movement of refugees as a result of the ongoing military confrontation. They were only about negotiating with Hezbollah as if an entire country had been erased. The international community has continued to legitimize this armed militia.

The key point is that all parties understand that these de-escalation efforts, which are mostly pushed by

the current US administration as the war in Gaza continues, are for the reestablishment or confirmation of the rules of engagement

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**The key point is that all parties understand that these de-escalation efforts, which are mostly pushed by the current US administration as the war in Gaza continues, are for the reestablishment or confirmation of the rules of engagement between Israel and Hezbollah and to avoid a new front. They understand that nothing more will be achieved. It is hence a shameful situation whereby the Lebanese state is reduced to acting as a go-between for an armed militia. The sovereign state is either willingly executing Hezbollah’s orders or is a part of its deception plans. In both cases, it is an outrageous situation. Yet, I must ask: does anyone still believe there is a separation between the Lebanese state and Hezbollah? Do they apply this nonsense the same way they mention an armed branch and a political branch within this Iranian-backed militia? Does anyone still believe this? Or are they just pretending? The eradication of Lebanon in the international dialogue is a dangerous situation. And no one seems to care.**  
.....

between Israel and Hezbollah and to avoid a new front. They understand that nothing more will be achieved. It is hence a shameful situation whereby the Lebanese state is reduced to acting as a go-between for an armed militia. The sovereign state is either willingly executing

Khaled Abou Zahr

Hezbollah’s orders or is a part of its deception plans. In both cases, it is an outrage-

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one still believe this? Or are they just pretending? The eradication of Lebanon in

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the international dialogue is a dangerous situation. And no one seems to care. We must also remember how the Lebanese state had to seek Hezbollah’s permission to pursue negotiations with Israel on delineating the common maritime borders to allow both countries to exploit gas reserves in

the Mediterranean Sea. It was in October 2022 that the US mediated this agreement. Under this agreement, Israel retained full

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Israeli side. Go figure. Lebanon has yet to see any enhancement of its economic situation or infrastructure from this agreement. The inherent corruption in the rule of a militia is a guarantee it will never see the benefits.

It was interesting that, in his declarations, Bou Habib mentioned that a future ceasefire decision would require a new resolution, not an amendment of UN Security Council Resolution 1701. Despite apparent questioning from Hezbollah on these declarations, this solution plays into the group’s wishes of only applying one part of the 2006 resolution – and not the one that forces it to surrender its weapons. In any case, Hezbollah knows that, just like any other agreement, any new one would be an obligation on the rest of Lebanon while it is exempt.

On the other hand, Israel’s main demand for any diplomatic agreement with Lebanon is that Hezbollah’s forces withdraw at least 10 km away from the border. And a key condition is establishing a reliable method to verify that Hezbollah’s militants have left the area and not

returned. There is zero chance of any international institution being capable of guaranteeing this today. While the Lebanese state is under the control of Hezbollah, the south of the country, in the geographical sense, no longer belongs to Lebanon but to Hezbollah.

While we all seek an end to the conflict, we cannot allow for Hezbollah to once again usurp the decision on war or peace. We cannot allow Hezbollah to decide when Lebanon should negotiate and when it should sit silent. The Lebanese state should not be a tool to deflect international pressure away from Hezbollah’s actions. We cannot allow the sovereign Lebanese state to be a puppet in the hands of this Iranian-backed armed militia.

The US hinted at the possibility of real de-escalation between Israel and Hezbollah after a ceasefire in Gaza, but the reality is that, as long as Hezbollah acts as the sovereign Lebanese voice, there is little hope for stability. Lebanon will continue to be erased in a game of deterrence and war cycles between Israel and Hezbollah.



# SCCI fears end to export, flight operations and cargo service from KP

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Opposing the implementation of cess on export from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Fuad Ishaq expressed fear that the provincial government move will not only end export from KP but also international flight operations, cargo/shipping services and Pak-Afghan transit trade badly affected.

The SCCI chief asked the provincial government to immediately withdraw the cess on Export.

According to details, a meeting was held at Chief Minister Secretariat on

Thursday where the enforcement of cess on export from KP was discussed.

The meeting was attended by SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, office bearers of various chambers and traders associations.

A impression was given during the meeting that there was agreement between chambers, exporters and provincial government that to collect 1 percent cess on export, which was strongly rejected by SCCI chief Fuad Ishaq in the meeting and stated that cess will completely end export from KP, besides flight operations, cargo/shipping

services and Pak-Afghan transit would also be hurt, which isn't beneficial for national and provincial economy.

Fuad went on to say that cess was not implemented in any other province of the country but KP government has enforced on export which was tantamount to discriminatory attitude.

The chamber president was adamant to his stance, asking the provincial government to withdraw 2 percent cess that will help to increase export, trade and business and provide maximum employment opportunities to people and smooth run businesses and industries in the province and

also stabilized the economy.

Talking about bilateral trade on the occasion, Fuad Ishaq said that under SRO-121, there was no duty or tariff imposed on the transit trade that is carried out from Afghanistan through Pakistan.

Therefore, he said there is not no duty and tariff imposed on the transit trade, and there is no justification for imposing cess on exports by the provincial government.

He expressed fear that imposition on cess on exports from KP would also extremely hurt Pak-Afghan bilateral trade, particularly the transit trade.



KARACHI: Youngsters selecting and purchasing local made shoes from a roadside vendor.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Eight ships, CMA CGM La Scala, Marathopolis, HPC Vision, New Levant, Khairpur, Mayagas-1, Lusail and CI Anzi He Container, Fertilizer, PEAS, Mogas, LPG LNG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Grain Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal, Engro Vopak Terminal, Port Gas Power Terminal and Pakistan International Bulk Terminal respectively on Wednesday.

Meanwhile two more ships, CD Fortune and Ab Serena scheduled to load/offload Sand and Chemicals are arrived at outer anchorage port on same day.

Thirteen ships were engaged at PQA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, CMA CGM La Scala, Marathopolis, Au Taurus and Simaisma left the port on today morning, while another ship 'Maya Gas-1' is expected to sail on Thursday.

## Lost Car Registration Card

I have lost my car registration card for vehicle number (AGF 902). If found, please contact me at +92 336 5500157, email: saima-hashim@gmail.com

## Public Notice

Public at large is informed that Mr. Faiz Muhammad Son of Shah Afzal is owner of Plot no. 171 Sector B/III zone 3 Regi Model Town Peshawar. He has given his power of attorney to Mr. Naeem Ul Haq S/o Imtiaz Ul Haq via Deed No. 1153 BAHU No. 4 volume No. 238 date 12 September 2024. Now Mr. Naeem Ul Haq wants to transfer the said plot through a given attorney. Therefore if any Bank, department, firm or individual has any objection on this transfer, he should contact the under-signed with written proof within 15 days. Otherwise, the plot shall be transferred and later on no claim shall be entertained. Housing Officer (Transfer), Regi Model Town Peshawar.

## PSX turns around to bullish trend, gains 365 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Thursday turned around to bullish trend, gaining 365.82 points, a positive change of 0.47 percent, closing at 79,017.62 points against 78,651.80 points on the last working day.

A total of 584,276,012 shares were traded during the day as compared to 532,732,689 shares the

previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 16.364 billion against Rs. 14.735 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 439 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 212 of them recorded gains and 167 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 60 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading

companies were Kohinoor Spinning with 60,745,513 shares at Rs 8.87 per share, WorldCall Telecom with 57,978,199 shares at Rs.1.43 per share and TPL Properties with 32,499,453 shares at Rs.9.35 per share.

Pakistan Tobacco Company Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs.49.07 per share price, closing at Rs 918.78.

## COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

The C&W Division Chitral upper Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic bids from eligible firms/contractors in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 amended upto 10.5.2022 on single stage single envelop procedure for the following work (s).

S.#	Name of work	Required category of PEC	Bid Security i/c stamp duty RS.	Tender Fee @ RS.	Period of completion	Last date and time of submission of E-Bid	Date and time of opening of bid
1	AOM&R TO GOVT; ROADS IN DISTRICT CHITRAL UPPER FOR THE YEAR 2024-25 SUB HEAD:-			0.303%			
1	AOM&R TO ALL GOVT; ROADS/ BRIDGES IN SUB DIVISION BOONI-I (BOONI & MASTUJ)	C-6 & Above	66050/-	897/-	As per work order	09.10.2024 12:00 PM	09.10.2024 12:30 PM
2	AOM&R EMERGENT NATURE WORK TO ALL GOVT; ROADS/ BRIDGES IN SUB DIVISION BOONI-I (BOONI & MASTUJ)	C-6 & Above	118750/-	1500/-	As per work order	09.10.2024 12:00 PM	09.10.2024 12:30 PM
3	AOM&R TO ALL GOVT; ROADS/ BRIDGES IN SUB DIVISION BOONI-II (TORKHOW & MOLKHOW)	C-6 & Above	66290/-	900/-	As per work order	09.10.2024 12:00 PM	09.10.2024 12:30 PM
4	AOM&R EMERGENT NATURE WORK TO ALL GOVT; ROADS/ BRIDGES IN SUB DIVISION BOONI-II (TORKHOW & MOLKHOW)	C-6 & Above	118750/-	1500/-	As per work order	09.10.2024 12:00 PM	09.10.2024 12:30 PM

1. Bid solicitation Documents and instructions to bidders can be obtained from the office on any Working day or downloaded from C&W Website (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date/time. 2. The bidders should submit their E-Bids as per KPRA notification No. SO (14)/Vol.1-24/2021-22 dated 10.05.2022. 3. Complete detail of bid security in shape of CDR i.e Bank Name, CDR number(s) and date(s) must be submitted electronically along with E-bid on the E-bidding system 4. All bidders are required to be registered with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority under Finance Act, 2013 Act No. XXI of 2013. 5. Venue of bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer C&W Division Chitral Upper

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
C&W DIVISION CHITRAL UPPER

INF(P)

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## GOVERNMENT OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA

### COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT

### NOTICE INVITING E-BIDDING

(Single Stage Single Envelop E-Bidding System)

C & W Department (Building Division, Bannu), Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa invites electronic Bids from eligible firms /contractor in accordance with KPRA procurement rules 2014 on single stage single envelop procedure for the following works.

S. No.	Name of Work	Required category of PEC	Tender Entry Fee	Bid Security+ S/Duty	Period of completion	Last date of submission and time	Date of opening and Time
1.	Expansion of Emergency Rescue Services (Rescue-1122) to Tehsil Level and Estabdt: of Sub Station in KP, ADP No. 1030/210476. 1. SH: Constrn: of Sub Station (Rescue-1122) at Tehsil Kakki District Bannu (Provision of 10-KVA Solar System & CCTV Cameras.	C-6 EE-11	0.03%	Rs. 94560/-	As per Work Order	04/10/2024 At 12:00 H	04/10/2024 At 12:30 H
2.	2. SH: Constrn: of Sub Station (Rescue-1122) at Tehsil Miryan District Bannu (Provision of 10-KVA Solar System & CCTV Cameras. 3. SH: Constrn: of Sub Station (Rescue-1122) at Domel District Bannu (Provision of 10-KVA Solar System & CCTV Cameras.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 94560/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
2.	Expansion of Emergency Rescue Services (Rescue-1122) to Tehsil Level and Estabdt: of Sub Station in KP, ADP No.1008/50132. SH: Constrn: of Sub Station (Rescue-1122) at Kala Khel District Bannu (Provision of 10-KVA Solar System & CCTV Cameras	-do-	-do-	Rs. 94560/-	-do-	-do-	-do-
3.	Constrn: of Community Centre at Mira Khel District Bannu. ADP No.1159/220690 District Dev: Plan for Bannu. SH: Provision of 10-KVA Solar System.	-do-	-do-	Rs. 102000/-	-do-	-do-	-do-

Bid documents and instruction to bidders can be downloaded from C&W web site (www.cwd.gkp.pk) before the submission date/time. a. Bid security 2% in shape of call deposit (in Original) and 0.03% Tender Firm Entry Fee of the estimated cost in cash (non-refundable) should be enclosed along with bidding documents. b. The contractors quoting their bids upto a limit of 10% below Engineer Estimate shall submit bid security to the extent of 2% of Engineer Estimate only. c. The contractor quoting their bids more than 10% below upto 20% below on Engineer Estimate shall submit alongwith their bids 8% Additional Security of Engineer 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 and the 2% bid security shall be forfeited in favour of Govt. and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. d. Similarly, a contractor quoting bid more than 20% below shall submit with his bid an additional security on Engineer Estimated Cost equal to the differential amount of submitted bid and Engineer Estimate alongwith detail rate analysis. In case of more than 20% below bids if the bid is not accompanied by the detailed rate analysis and / or required amount of additional security then the said bid shall be considered as non-responsive. All the securities submitted alongwith such non responsive bid shall be forfeited in favour of Govt. and the 2nd lowest bidder and so on will be considered accordingly. e. 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. f. The procuring entity may offer the contract to next lowest bidder after due diligence in the context of financial difference between such two bids and the market analysis in order to discourage cartel making and to protect public interest at large. g. The bidder must be enlisted with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Revenue Authority as per KPRA Rules. h. Pay Order is not acceptable as per Notification No. of KPRA vide No. KPRA/M/E/Estt:/1-12/2017-18, dated: 05/04/2018. i. Bid security of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd lowest electronic bidder for the specific work will be retained by the Department till the approval of bids. j. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Finance Act XXVII of 2019 2nd Schedule under S.No. 14, in case of projects funded under the Government's ADP Budget, Tax shall be charged at the rate of Two Percent (2%). k. Venue of bids opening is office of the Executive Engineer, Building Division Bannu,

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER  
BUILDING DIVISION BANNU

INF(P)

2356/24

## FFC signs MOU with HBL to boost farmer financing



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC), a

key contributor to national growth, has partnered with Habib Bank Limited (HBL) to promote agricultural

financing in Pakistan. The MOU was signed at FFC's Head office.

This partnership aims to

enhance credit accessibility for farmers and provide tailored financial solutions to meet their needs.

This initiative strengthens FFC's commitment to fostering agricultural development and improving farmers' livelihoods across Pakistan. HBL's involvement highlights a shared vision of promoting sustainable agricultural growth by expanding financial access and boosting productivity.

Both companies expressed their enthusiasm for the collaboration, emphasizing its potential to make a positive impact on farming communities nationwide. They also reiterated their commitment to create an enabling environment for agricultural innovation and progress.

## Committee selected winning design based on quality: SBP

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) initiated the process for designing of the new banknote series in January this year with the announcement of an Art Competition for thematic design ideas of new banknote series. The Art Competition was aimed to encourage local artists and engage public in the design process in line with international best practices.

The art entries submitted by the local artists were

evaluated by a committee of renowned artists and the winning entries of this competition were announced on September 5, 2024.

The announcement of the art competition results has been interpreted by a section of media and public as shortlisting of the designs of new banknote series.

The aim of announcing the art competition results, however, was only to appreciate the efforts of the artists and encourage them with monetary prizes.

One of the winning

designs projected religious diversity and highlighted different religions being practiced in the country. Some segment of the public wrongly interpreted it as an attempt to project a particular religion.

The Art Committee has selected the winning design only based on its art quality and the theme of religious diversity and nothing else.

It is clarified that the banknote designs that have won the art competition are not the short-listed designs for the new series.

The actual designs of the proposed new series are being designed by reputed international firms selected through a competitive process. The firms will submit their design proposals by December 2024 and the finalized designs duly approved by the SBP Board will be submitted to Federal Government for approval by January 2025.

The SBP would initiate the printing process for the new banknote series after the approval by the Federal Government.

## 59 illegal connections disconnected: SNGPL

## F.P. Report

LAHORE: In its ongoing efforts to curb gas theft, Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has carried out a series of operations across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Islamabad, resulting in the disconnection of 59 illegal connections and the imposition of fines amounting to Rs 1.8 million. In Lahore, the crackdown led to the disconnection of 7 illegal connections, accompanied by fines totaling Rs 0.30 million. Faisalabad witnessed the removal of 5 illegal connections, with fines amounting to Rs 0.061 million. Meanwhile, in Sheikhupura, 2 connections were cut off, and a significant fine of Rs 0.83 million was levied.

In Multan, the team disconnected 19 connections for illegal gas usage and 4 additional connections for compressor use. Sahiwal saw 4 illegal connections severed, along with a Rs 0.38 million fine for gas pilferage.

## Super Asia hosts ceremony



## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Organized an important ceremony for Super Asia MDS Limited's Trainee Development program, focused on becoming an ACCA Pakistan - Approved Employer. Super Asia hosted the event at its Gujranwala head office, with leadership from both Super Asia and ACCA Pakistan attending.

Notable attendees Muhammad Faisal Afzal, CEO of Super Asia - Umar Ashraf, Director Super

Asia, Muhammad Usman Qazi, Group CFO and Iqbal Cheema, CFO.

Representing from ACCA Pakistan Aamir Saleem, Head of Business Development and Mohammad Shahid, Business Development Manager.

This event marks a significant collaboration between Super Asia and ACCA, likely benefiting the professional development of future trainees under the ACCA framework and exploring other avenues of collaboration.



## RE-TENDER NOTICE

The Jail invites re-tender for the raw ration for the remaining financial year 2024-25 from contractors/firms registered with the Revenue Department Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Tender documents with list of items required may be obtained from the office of the Superintendent Central Jail Bannu free of cost during office hours (except holidays) 2 hours before the time of opening of tenders up-to 26.09.2024.

The supply of items will be done at the jail gate during the financial year 2024-25. This tender can also be downloaded from the departmental website of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement Regulatory Authority.

### Conditions:

- Re-tender documents with details of items (completed) must be deposited in sealed envelopes dated 26.09.2024 by 11:30 AM in the boxes kept in the Central Jail after which no tenders will be allowed.
- Tenders will be opened on 26.09.2024 at 12:00 in the office of the Superintendent Central Jail Bannu in the presence of members of the appointed committee, tenderers or their authorized representatives. Also, if any of the tenderers or their authorized representatives have any objection or complaint, they can present it to the members of the committee.
- Before receiving the tender documents, the contractor must deposit a security deposit of Rs.10 lakh (refundable) in the form of call deposit in the name of the Superintendent, Central Jail. In the absence of security, the relevant tender form and list of items will not be issued.
- Collected call deposits will be forwarded to the concerned bank for verification and no call deposit will be returned without verification. If during verification any call deposit is found fake then departmental action will be taken against the concerned contractor as per bank rules and prevailing law of Government of Pakistan.
- The concerned firm / contractor shall pay all taxes imposed by the Government of Pakistan, including Income Tax, Sales Tax, Professional Tax, Stamp Duty, DPR Charges etc. as may be enforced by the Government from time to time.
- In case of failure in supply, supply of non-standard items or violation of rules and regulations, the concerned contractor will be blacklisted and his security deposit will be forfeited by the government. And a fine can also be imposed on him.
- The committee chairman and appointed committee members will have the power to reject the tender of any contractor/firm in whole or in part by assigning reasonable cause.
- The final approval of the contract will be given by the Competent Authority.

TAHIR SHAHBAZ KHAN WAZIR  
Superintendent Central Jail

INF(P)#2390/24



# The Champions Cup: can it live up to the hype?

LAHORE (Cricinfo): There's a small town in Northern California called Willow Creek, primarily known for its rumoured sightings of the mythical creature Bigfoot, a large, hairy primate believers insist walks among the woodlands. There has never been credible evidence of such a creature existing, but that hasn't stopped enthusiasts from fervently maintaining it exists, impervious to any arguments to the contrary.

Little more than a quirky anecdote, you might think, and one with no real consequence. But Bigfoot believers care deeply about maintaining the health of the ecosystem that nurtures it, and campaign to protect California's ancient redwood trees, a rare example of mainstream conservation and fringe belief existing in symbiotic congruity.

Which brings us, surprisingly neatly, to Pakistan's Champions One-Day Cup, starting Thursday and running until September 29. The PCB has waxed lyrical about its importance and the various benefits it will bring, at times as unconstrained by evidence as those in Willow Creek. It will provide Pakistan with a depth of fresh player talent, despite nearly all of the players involved already within the system. Performances will be analysable through data and statistics, though similar records also exist for previous domestic one-day tournaments. It will help Pakistan through their busiest home season in decades, even though the internationals are dominated by Test matches and this is a white-ball cricket.

But, like the Bigfoot belief, there's an unquestionable peripheral benefit; the hype around the tournament has brought a level of interest previously unthinkable for a local domestic event. This is effectively a Pakistan Cup with bells and whistles, but few beyond the most committed could tell you much about what happened at the 2023 iteration of that tournament, or even who ended up winning.

This time, all the stops have been pulled out. The prize money pool is nearly half that of the PSL, and the five mentors are collectively paid around an additional PKR 25 million per month, the sum total of their three-year contracts costing the board approxi-



mately PKR 900 million. For context, the winners of last year's Pakistan Cup - Peshawar - were awarded prize money of PKR 5 million, approximately the salary of one mentor for one month in this year's competition.

Just about every international Pakistan cricketer is available to play, with white-ball coach Gary Kirsten flying in, and red-ball coach Jason Gillespie joining later.

The competition has been slotted into Pakistan's only available international window until the middle of April 2025, which is saying something because even the PSL, the PCB's real prestige project and largest money spinner for much of its existence, has to fight for space in an increasingly cramped cricket calendar.

Next year, it must

accept cohabiting alongside the IPL. The Champions Cup games will all be televised and live-streamed, and each of the five sides have dedicated media houses as official media partners. Artificial intelligence has been marketed as a key feature in the selection of squads.

Meanwhile, Faisalabad's Iqbal Stadium, once a prominent

of any more in the near future tangled up in messy wrangling between local administration and the PCB.

England's upcoming Test tour has demonstrated the urgent need for more hosting options for Pakistan, with Lahore and Karachi's unavailability miring the schedule in confusion and disarray. Reopening the Iqbal Stadium to its sporting possibilities with an event so coveted by the PCB can only help Pakistan as the board desperately looks to spread Test cricket out into smaller cities.

There are some curious and haphazard choices, though that in Pakistan cricket is hardly unique. The decision against aligning each of the five sides with city or region names makes it trickier to cultivate an identity. A late change of name from Wolves to Markhors for the Misbah-ul-Haq mentored side on the eve of the tournament casts light on the fluid nature of a competition the PCB is somehow both building from scratch and regenerating in its umpteenth edition. Three of the teams found sponsors on the day before, while two - at the time of writing - are actively looking.

The questions about financial sustainability have already been asked, and remain as pressing as they are unanswered. The scepticism about whether the Champions Cup represents a calculated change in strategy or an ephemeral vanity project, and concern over what it means for the board's commitment to the PSL, lingers.

But when the Panthers take on the Markhors tomorrow, the numbers who tune in will be orders of magnitude greater than those who watched Lahore Whites beat Lahore Blues in the opener of the Pakistan Cup last year. This will be a clash between sides captained by Shadab Khan and Mohammad Rizwan; Saad Nasim and Imran Butt led those two last year. It will attract attention to rival any domestic one-day competition around the world, with as strong a roster as is possible and that is hardly the worst silver lining. And in a tournament where AI's role has been trumpeted so proudly, there will be plenty of time after it ends to determine if its purported long-term benefits were artificial, and if it was really all that intelligent.

## ‘It was really quiet’ - Smith wants more from GB fans

LONDON (BBC): British fans have been urged to act "like a football crowd" to push their Davis Cup team towards the knockout stage of the men's team competition.

Britain play Argentina in Manchester on Friday and Canada on Sunday, as they look to progress from the group stage.

On Wednesday, they won 2-1 in their opening tie against Finland.

But, in a round-robin format where the margins are tight, Britain could be left to rue not being able to clinch a clean sweep in the best-of-three contest.

After singles wins for Dan Evans and Billy Harris, Evans and Neal Skupski were narrowly beaten in the deciding doubles.

bles by Finnish pair Harri Heliövaara and Otto Virtanen.

The atmosphere among a crowd of just over 6,000 - in a 24,000-capacity arena where the upper tier was curtailed off - was muted at times during the doubles.

"I urge those coming on Friday and Sunday to empty the tank," said British captain Leon Smith.

"You see it at the French Open, it's like a football crowd. It makes a difference at the end of a long day.

"It was really quiet out there and we have to make the most of that home advantage."

During the doubles match Evans often attempted to whip up the crowd, which was understandably sparse given the midweek slot in school term time.

Smith said he had emphasised to his players how important starting with a 3-0 win would be, given they eventually scraped through last year on the back of a trio of 2-1 victories.

"We talked about it at 2-0. We can't fault [Dan and Neal's] efforts - they were bang on it. It was a shot here and there. But 3-0 would have been lovely," added Smith.

"It would have helped if the crowd could have played a bit more part in it, creating noise and energy the whole way."

The size of Davis Cup



ADELAIDE, AUSTRALIA: Aidan Simmons of the Wanderers shoots for goal past Ryan White and Zach Clough of Adelaide United during the 2024 Australia Cup Quarter Final match between Adelaide United and Western Sydney Wanderers at ServiceFM Stadium, on Thursday in Adelaide, Australia.

## Rashid back for South Africa ODIs, but Ibrahim and Mujeeb unavailable

DUBAI (Cricinfo): Afghanistan legspinner Rashid Khan is set to be back in ODIs for the first time since the World Cup last October-November, after being named in the 17-member squad to face South Africa in the upcoming three-match series in the UAE.

However, Afghanistan continue to miss the services of mystery spinner Mujeeb Ur Rahman, who is still recovering from a sprain in the index finger of his right hand, even as they left out wristspinner Noor Ahmad. Chief selector Ahmad Shah Sulimankhil said offspinner AM Ghazanfar, who had made his ODI debut in March, "will cover" for Mujeeb against South Africa.

But Rashid's return helps make up for Mujeeb and Noor's absence. Rashid was ruled out of Afghanistan's ongoing one-off Test against New Zealand, with

Trent Rockets in the Hundred, as a result missing the last week of the competition, before facing back issues again at the SCL, where he played three games.

Meanwhile, Afghanistan have also called up uncapped medium-pace bowler Bilal Sami, and top-order batters Darwish Rasooli and Abdul Malik for the ODIs against South Africa. While Rasooli has played seven T20Is and Malik has played two Tests, Sami is yet to represent Afghanistan in any format.

According to an ACB release, Malik was called up to act as cover for the injured opening batter Ibrahim Zadrán, whose ankle sprain first forced him to miss the one-off Test against New Zealand, and now rules him out of the ODIs against South Africa.

The three-match ODI series begins on September 18, with all games to be played in Sharjah. This will be the first time that Afghanistan and South Africa will be facing-off in a bilateral ODI series, having only met at the 2019 and 2023 World Cups before.

For Afghanistan, this series will serve as preparation for the Champions Trophy early next year, for which they qualified for the first time by finishing sixth in the league stage of the 2023 World Cup.

Afghanistan squad for South Africa ODIs

Hashmatullah Shahidi (capt), Rahmat Shah, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Ikrám Alikhil, Abdul Malik, Riaz Hassan, Darwish Rasooli, Azmatullah Omarzai, Mohammad Nabi, Gulbadin Naib, Rashid Khan, Nangeyalia Kharote, AM Ghazanfar, Fazalhaq Farooqi, Bilal Sami, Naveed Zadrán, Fareed Ahmad.

## Pakistan, Malaysia, India earn wins in Asian Champions Trophy

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan, Malaysia and India claimed significant victories on day four of the Hero Asian Champions Trophy 2024 at the Moqi Hockey Training Base in Hulanbuir, China.

According to details, the stakes were high, with teams pushing for semifinal spots, and the action on the field did not disappoint.

Pakistan continued their unbeaten run with a convincing 5-1 win against China, moving up to second place in the standings. Ahmad Nadeem (36', 56') and Hannan Shahid (46', 60') led Pakistan's charge, each scoring twice. Pakistan weathered an early surge from the hosts, who created several scoring opportunities but failed to capitalize.

Rehman Abdul (23') opened the scoring for

Pakistan, and Nadeem and Shahid's clinical finishing sealed a comprehensive victory. Despite a late goal from China's Jiesheng Gao (48'), Pakistan's defense remained unshaken.

Hero of the Match, Hannan Shahid, praised his teammates: "It's a collective effort. We are learning with each match, and today, we showed discipline by conceding fewer cards."

Malaysia's determination was evident as they secured a hard-fought 5-4 win over Japan, climbing to fourth in the points table. With goals from Syed Cholan (12', 40'), Norsyafiq Sumantri (21'), Syarman Mat (47'), and Kamal Abu Azrai (48'), Malaysia held off a resilient Japanese side.

Hero of the Match, Aiman Rozemi, expressed the team's resolve: "After our

## Jon Rahm enters 3 DP World Tour events in attempt to qualify for next year's Ryder Cup

NEW YORK (Yahoo Sports): Jon Rahm is trying to stay eligible for the Ryder Cup next fall. Whether the DP World Tour will let him do so, however, remains to be seen. The LIV Golf member and former top-ranked golfer in the world has signed up for three DP World Tour events this fall, starting with the Spanish Open later this month. Rahm is still prohibited from competing in that Tour's events after he left for LIV Golf.

The DP World Tour has levied an undisclosed amount of fines against Rahm for leaving for LIV Golf without a waiver, and he is still refusing to pay. If Rahm doesn't pay, he would have to file an appeal and win in order to return to the DP World Tour —

which others have done in the past.

Rahm said Wednesday ahead of this week's LIV Golf event in Chicago that he is in conversations with the DP World Tour about how to move forward.

In order to remain eligible for the European Ryder Cup team, Rahm must play in four DP World Tour non-major championship events before the end of the season. The Paris Olympics counted as one, but he still needs three more. After the Spanish Open, Rahm said he intends to play in the Alfred Dunhill Links Championship at St. Andrews in Scotland in October, and then at the Andalucia Masters in Spain two weeks later.

If he is allowed to play in those three tournaments,

Rahm would be eligible for next year's Ryder Cup — though European captain Luke Donald would likely need to use a captain's pick on him, as Rahm won't have many opportunities to earn qualification points while playing on the LIV Golf circuit. The Ryder Cup is set for next September at Bethpage Black in New York. The Europeans rolled over the United States last year in Rome.

While there's plenty of time for Donald to get his team together — and Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund is still in negotiations with both the PGA Tour and DP World Tour, so things could change there at any moment — Donald has said he's open to bringing Rahm into the fold next fall. Rahm just has to follow the rules like everyone else.

Meanwhile, Rory McIlroy said that he wasn't trying to send a message by signing up for a made-for-TV event that will pit two of the best PGA Tour players against two of the top attractions on LIV Golf.

"We all thought it was a good idea," McIlroy said Wednesday at the Irish Open, "and something that hopefully is a sign of things to come in the future."

PGA Tour stars Scottie Scheffler and McIlroy will square off against LIV's Bryson DeChambeau and Brooks Koepka in Las Vegas in mid-December.

McIlroy has said for much of the past year that the warring sides need to reach a deal for the good of the sport, and that fans deserve to see the best play-



ers in the world together more than just four times a year at the major championships. This match, McIlroy said, was him doing his part.

"We wanted to do something that all golf fans could get excited about," he said. "It's a way to show golf fans that this is what could happen, or these are the possibilities going forward. I've been saying this for a long time. I think golf and golf fans should get to see us more than four times a year. That's what we've tried to do."

Representatives from the PGA Tour and Saudi Public Investment Fund reportedly met this week in New York City as talks progress on a possible deal that would infuse billions of dollars into the PGA Tour Enterprises and potentially create a pathway back for LIV defectors.

McIlroy, who is part of the transaction subcommittee that directly negotiates with the Saudis, has expressed frustration at the slow pace of the negotiations. He said last month that he hasn't part of a subcommittee call since June, and he added Wednesday that he wasn't involved in the meetings this week.

"It's certainly peculiar timing," he said. "I don't know much about the talks that are going on. I know there is, but that's not something that I'm a part of. We are all in the game of golf trying to look for a solution to all this and try to move forward. So we'll see. I know as much as you do at this point."



## In brief

### Pirzada takes notice

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has taken serious notice of the illegal use of vehicles and staffers of the Ministry of Housing and Works. He has directed that all former officers still using the ministry's staffers and material resources in violation of the rules be notified in writing and asked to return them immediately. Reaffirming his commitment to zero tolerance for corruption within the ministry, the minister said that any level of corruption found will be rooted out during his tenure. He also instructed the administrative wing to take action in this regard and submit a report within a few days. Earlier, the minister was briefed that several retired senior officers were still utilizing ministry vehicles and staff.

### 198,600 cusecs water released

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Thursday released 198,600 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 204,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1550.00 feet (maximum conservation level) and was 152.00 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 108,600 cusecs and 108,100 cusecs respectively. The water level in River Jhelum at Mangla Dam was 1228.50 feet, which was 180.50 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water was recorded 25,600 cusecs and 20,000 cusecs respectively. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 112,000, 96,300, 143,100 and 99,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 29,600 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 12,500 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Fire erupts in building

ISLAMABAD (APP): A devastating fire erupted in the early hours of Thursday morning at a four-story building located near Bank Road in the bustling Saddar area of Rawalpindi where no casualties were reported so far. According to Rescue officials, the fire incident sent shockwaves through the community and prompted a swift response from emergency services as they battled to contain the blaze and prevent further damage, private channels reported. Firefighters valiantly battled the blaze, using specialized equipment to tame the inferno, while other emergency responders assessed the extent of the damage to the property and ensured the safety of those in the vicinity, rescue officials added.

### RDA seals buildings

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) while conducting an operation against illegal commercial buildings sealed a warehouse, a shop and other buildings in Saidpur Housing Scheme. According to a RDA spokesman, the RDA Enforcement Squad on the directives of the Director General, RDA, Kinza Murtaza, conducted a targeted operation against unauthorized/illegal commercial buildings in Saidpur Housing Scheme. During the operation, the squad sealed a warehouse on Saidpur Road, a shop and other buildings in Mohalla Raja Sultan.

# Join hands with front line workers

— to achieve polio-free Pakistan: Aysha

ISLAMABAD (APP): Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq Thursday reiterated the government's commitment to making Pakistan polio-free and asked citizens to cooperate with polio workers to achieve this goal, particularly in ensuring the safety of polio workers who risk their lives to administer vaccinations.

Talking to private news channel, she urged citizens to shun propaganda against polio drops, which has hindered vaccination efforts in the past.

She stressed that the oral polio-virus vaccine is safe and effective in preventing polio, a debilitating disease that can cause lifelong paralysis.

Thanks to the tireless efforts of polio workers and support from the government and international part-

ners, Pakistan has made significant progress in reducing polio cases, she added.

Despite the progress, challenges remain including insecurity and inaccessibility in certain areas, she mentioned.

To address these challenges, the government has implemented innovative solutions, such as hiring female community-based vaccinators to reach hard-to-reach children and establishing data support centers to track missed children, she added.

The armed forces have also provided support to ensure the safety of polio workers and facilitate vaccination efforts, she highlighted.

Replying to a query, she has emphasized that the lives of polio workers are precious and their role in eradicating polio is crucial.

She acknowledged the risks they take to ensure the safety and health of children often working in challenging environments.

Farooq praised their dedication, saying, "Polio workers are the true heroes of our time, and their contributions will not be forgotten."

She reassured them of the government's commitment to ensuring their safety and security, allowing them to continue their vital work without fear.

"Keeping children safe from polio and driving this virus out of the country is the government's top priority," she said, adding that we are sending polio vaccination teams to citizens' doorsteps, especially in areas where the virus is present. Make sure that you open your doors for these health workers and get your children vaccinated."

## ICT admin gears up for Eid Milad-un-Nabi

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has planned to celebrate the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) with the series to programmes and decorations in a befitting manner in the Federal Capital.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon has chaired a key meeting and discussed plans for the upcoming Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH). They also discussed city security, cleanliness arrangements and public participation in the different rallies and seminars.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) and the members of District Peace Committee.

The officials focused on ensuring the city is well-prepared for the celebrations. Security measures and overall readiness were key points of discussion, with the DC stressing the importance of maintaining order throughout the city.

In line with the events, the DC announced that the city would be illuminated with lights to mark the occasion. He also invited religious scholars from all communities to take part in

the celebrations. According to the DC, this inclusive approach aims to foster unity and peace.

The authorities assured that all arrangements, including cleanliness and security on the procession routes, would be completed before the event. The DC also confirmed that security would be provided at all gatherings across the city to ensure a safe environment for everyone attending.

On the occasion, the DC called for full cooperation from all the department concerned to make the event a success while ensuring the safety of citizens.

## Authorities directed to provide all facilities

RAWALPINDI (APP): Commissioner Rawalpindi Division, Engineer Aamir Khattak has directed the authorities concerned to provide all possible facilities to the passengers at Pirwadhai General Bus Stand.

According to a Commissioner's Office spokesperson, during a visit to the Bus Stand, the Commissioner reviewed the cleanliness and other arrangements.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Finance and Planning, Secretary Regional Transport Authority (RTA), Civil Defense and other officers concerned were present on the occasion.

The spokesperson informed that the Commissioner also talked to the passengers and transporters during the visit.

The Commissioner instructed the officers to take suggestions from the citizens for further improvements and provide more facilities at the bus stand.

Eng. Aamir Khattak also ordered for immediate reso-

lution of the problems being faced by the Union.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Rameesha Javed giving a briefing informed that the total area of Pirwadhai General Bus Stand is over 210 kanals.

He further informed that during the renovation last year, a separate air-conditioned waiting room for male and female passengers was built at the bus stand. CCTV cameras were installed and the security guards were also deployed to improve security at the bus stand. A grand operation was launched to remove encroachments from the bus stand and its surrounding areas.

The administration was making efforts to provide quality travel facilities to the citizens, the Commissioner said.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance and Planning) should improve the General Bus Stand and make it a model bus stand, the Commissioner directed.

The Commissioner further instructed the authorities to install a Radio Frequency Identification system at the General Bus Stand within one month.

The Commissioner was informed that the system would have a digital record of the fitness certificates of the vehicles, bus numbers, fares, and other facilities of the buses.

Aamir Khattak ordered the officers that the green belt should be beautified, all street lights should be made functional, and cleanliness should also be ensured at the washrooms and other areas.

He said that the quality of food should also be ensured at the bus stand.

A dispensary and a 24-hour complaint cell should also be established at the Pirwadhai bus stand. Separate counters of Rescue-1122, Civil Defence, Health Department, and RTA should be established at the bus stand, the Commissioner directed.

## Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival celebrations started

ISLAMABAD (APP): China Cultural Center in Pakistan in collaboration with Culture Office of the embassy of the People's Republic of China in Pakistan, launched a series of online activities to celebrate the 2024 Mid-Autumn Festival: 'A Moon Moment to Remember' in Pakistan and for people around the world.

The "Mid-Autumn Day in Poetry" video series and other colorful events are

part of this year's Mid-Autumn Festival celebration in Pakistan, which is being organized by China Cultural Center in Pakistan.

Mid-autumn is one of the most celebrated holidays in China – a time for families to get together under the full moon and light up lanterns to symbolically illuminate the path to success for the rest of the year.

Mid-Autumn Festival falls on the fifth day of the

eighth month of the Chinese lunar calendar, when the moon is at its fullest. The festival this year will begin on September 17.

In Chinese culture, the Mid-Autumn festival celebration always symbolizes reunion. Having great feast in round-shape tables and admiring the full moon are the hallmark traditions of this festival because a round shape symbolizes completeness and reunion.



ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to PM Romina Khurshid Alam addressing at inaugural session of high-level event on 'Enhancing the Water Quality Monitoring System to Achieve SDG-6 in Pakistan'.

## Punjab, CDA collaborate to address water shortage

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the Punjab government on Thursday joined hands to tackle Islamabad's water scarcity issue.

A meeting in that regard was held under the Chairmanship of CDA Chief Muhammad Ali Randhawa.

The meeting attended by the Secretary Irrigation Punjab via Zoom, explored ways to utilize excess water from Rawal Dam. The panel discussed supplying 2 million gallons of water per day to Islamabad from Rawal Dam, a request made by CDA to the Punjab government two years ago.

The CDA's Water Management Wing and Punjab Small Dam teams will jointly finalize the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for water supply, with final approval pending the decision on the water supply procedure.

Additionally, the meeting addressed efforts to combat pollution in Rawal Dam, ensuring a sustainable solution to Islamabad's water needs.

## Motorbikes, 3-wheelers sale increased

ISLAMABAD (APP): The sale of motorbikes and three-wheelers in the country has witnessed an increase of 16.87 per cent during the first two months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) as compared to sales of the corresponding months of the last year.

During the months under review, as many as 189,227 motorbikes and three-wheelers were sold against the sale of 161,906 units in July-August (2023-24), according to the Pakistan Automobile Manufacturing Association (PAMA).

The sale of Honda motorcycles surged by 17.25 per cent from 137,083 units to 160,738 units whereas the sale of Suzuki motorcycles also rose by 32.47 per cent from 2,679 units to 3,549 units during the months under review. The sales of United Auto motorcycles witnessed an increase of 12.25 per cent from 14,832 units to 16,649 units.

However, the sale of Yamaha motorbikes went down to 645 units from 1,625 units witnessing a decline of 60.30 per cent while the sale of Road Prince motorbikes also decreased to 2,649 units from 2,698 units.

Meanwhile, the sale of United Auto three-wheelers rose from 125 units to 161 units while the sale of Qingqi three-wheelers also increased by 40.71 per cent from 921 units to 1,296 units.

## Eid Milad-un-Nabi:

# Planning Ministry holds celebrations

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Planning on Thursday organized a gathering in connection with the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW) celebrations.

Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal attended the event as a special guest, along with officers and staff of the ministry, according to press release.

During the gathering, Darood was offered, besides Naats and Qasida Burda Sharif were recited by the ministry's staff. Special prayers were also

offered for peace, prosperity, and security in the country.

Minister Ahsan Iqbal extended greetings to the Muslims across Pakistan and the world on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (SAW), saying that Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) is a blessing for all humanity.

He emphasized the need to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and become a model for society.

Reciting Darood was not

enough but "we should strive to be true followers of the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH)," he added.

The minister lamented that despite being a big nation, the Muslims had become ineffective due to their inaction, and that there was need to revive commitment to knowledge and research.

He concluded by urging everyone to make a pledge to follow the teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in letter and spirit.

## ANF recovers 643 kg drugs in 10 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 10 operations across the country managed to recover 643 kg drugs and arrested 10 accused including a woman, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Thursday.

He informed that 643 kg drugs worth more than Rs 80 million were recovered from the possession of 10 accused including a woman arrested from different areas. 2.4 kg hashish was recovered from the possession of an accused near arrested near an educational institution located in Chaklala Scheme 3, Rawalpindi.

170 grams hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near a universi-

ty in Peshawar.

In third operation, 97 grams hashish was recovered from the possession of a drug dealer netted in a slum area near a school in Faisalabad.

200 intoxicated tablets were recovered from two suspects arrested in two operations near a College and a university in satellite town Quetta.

The arrested accused confessed supplying drugs to students of educational institutions.

The spokesman further informed that in another operation, 24 kg opium and 2.4 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Motorway Toll Plaza Islamabad and an accused was arrested.

2.4 kg hashish was

recovered from an accused going on a motorcycle on Rawat Road, Rawalpindi.

244.8 kg opium and 357.6 kg hashish were recovered from a vehicle intercepted near Samundri Interchange Faisalabad and 2 accused were arrested.

In 9th operation, 66 grams heroin was recovered from a parcel booked for Maldives at a courier office located on Faisal Road, Karachi.

In 10th operation, 8 kg hashish was recovered from an accused arrested near Qasim Chowk in Hyderabad.

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

## HEC announces scholarships for students

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has announced undergraduate scholarships for the students of Gilgit-Baltistan to study in top Pakistani Universities/Institutions.

According to the official sources from HEC, the students who intend to pursue undergraduate studies (four/five years BS programs) from HEC-recognized public sector universities/degree awarding institutions (DAIs) can apply for these scholarships.

The scholarships are being offered for the academic year 2024-25 in all areas of study/disciplines under the project titled, "Undergraduate Scholarship Program for the Students of Gilgit-Baltistan in Top Pakistani Universities/Institutions (Batch-IV).

The applications can be submitted by September 30,

2024, at the latest. Eligible candidates can apply on the HEC portal. Applications in hard form will not be accepted. Candidates are required to apply on <https://portal.hec.gov.pk> Application processing fee is required to be submitted to the HEC account.

HEC GB Undergraduate Scholarship covers tuition fees, hostel fees, and other charges -a maximum of Rs. 240,000 per year. A stipend of Rs.15,000 per month, books and a travelling allowance of Rs. 30,000 per annum.

A per eligibility criteria, applicants must have a domicile/local certificate of Gilgit-Baltistan. Applicants must have completed Secondary School Certificate and Higher Secondary School Certificate and/or equivalent. However, priority will be given to those students who have

passed/completed their SSC/HSSC or equivalent from Gilgit-Baltistan.

The applicants already availing of any other scholarship are not eligible to apply. The applicants can apply to any public sector university/institution in Pakistan.

However, any expenditure over and above the cost given in PC-1 will be borne by the student himself/herself. The maximum age limit is 22 years as of the closing date of application submission.

The candidates will have to meet HEC and university criteria for admission to BS programs.

It is important to mention here that the candidates will be shortlisted based on their score on the Aptitude Test (to be conducted by Education Testing Council (HEC) and their academic credentials.

## Iconic Tarbela Dam turns 50: WAPDA

ISLAMABAD (APP): Year 2024 marks a momentous occasion for development of water and hydropower resources in Pakistan, as the iconic Tarbela Dam turns 50 this year.

After completion of the civil works of Tarbela Dam by WAPDA in third quarter of 1974, filling of water in the reservoir commenced 50 years ago, said a statement issued on Thursday.

Tarbela Dam stands as a symbol of national pride over the last five decades. Tarbela is the capstone of

the Indus Basin Plan to ensure the continued and improved supply of water to millions of acres of irrigated land in Pakistan, mitigate floods and generate green, clean and most affordable hydro electricity to move wheel of the national economy.

Tarbela Dam Project has been playing an instrumental role for economic development and social uplift in Pakistan during the last 50 years. The contribution Tarbela Dam Project has made towards progress in

the country can be judged from the fact that it has released 406 million acre feet (MAF) of stored water from the reservoir for agriculture and contributed 590,361 million units of low-cost and environment friendly hydel electricity to the National Grid.

It is important to note that the economic and financial benefits of one MAF of water in Pakistan are estimated at US\$ 1,000 million (US\$ 1 billion). Therefore, total benefits accrued from Tarbela Dam

during the last 50 years stand at US\$ 406 billion.

Tarbela Dam, the largest earth and rock-fill dam in the world at the time of its completion, is located across River Indus 64 Km north-west of Islamabad. The construction work on Tarbela Dam commenced in 1968, while all the civil works completed in 1974. Development of powerhouses commenced in phases starting from 1974 onwards.

Tarbela Dam Project consists of a 9,000 feet

(2,743 meters) long and 470 feet (143 meters) high embankment across the entire width of the river. It has two spillways with cumulative discharge capacity of 1,500,000 cusecs (42,476 cumecs).

Two auxiliary embankment dams close the low level ridges in the left bank valley. A group of 4 tunnels, each 0.8 Km long through the right abutment, were constructed for irrigation releases and power generation.

Tarbela reservoir which

spans over an area of 259 square Km, had initially a live storage of 9.68 MAF. However, it has reduced to 5.77 MAF due to natural phenomenon of sedimentation during the last 50 years.

A power station on the right bank near the toe of main dam houses 17 power units at Tunnels 1, 2, 3 and 4. Tarbela is the biggest electricity generation facility in Pakistan with installed capacity of 4888 MW – 51.6 % of the total hydel capacity of WAPDA. The

installed capacity at Tarbela will further increase to 6418 MW after completion of the under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project.

Cost of Tarbela Dam Project including power units 1 to 14 amounts to US \$ 2,630 million. Cost of Tarbela 4th Extension Hydropower Project with power units 15 to 17 stands at US\$ 1,075 million, while that of under-construction Tarbela 5th Extension, with power units 18 to 20, is estimated at US \$ 807 million.

**UK donates £6 million**

KABUL (Khaama Press): The OCHA has announced that the United Kingdom has contributed £6 million to the Afghanistan Humanitarian Fund. The organization noted that since its establishment in 2014, the UK has contributed a total of £304 million to the fund. Furthermore, in 2023 and 2024, the UK distributed approximately 43,000 educational materials across Afghanistan and provided training and stipends to 2,000 teachers, half of whom were women.

**260 Afghan families deported**

KABUL (Khaama Press): 269 families were repatriated to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan, as reported by the Taliban-run Bakhtar News Agency. The families crossed into Afghanistan through various border points. The families entered Afghanistan via the Nangarhar, Kandahar, Nimroz, and Herat provinces. Specifically, 18 families returned through the Torkham crossing, 39 through the Spin Boldak border, 89 through Pul-e-Abrisham, and 123 through Islam Qala.

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

## OIC urges action on education restrictions for girls in Afghanistan

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Advisory Council on Women of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has strongly criticized the current government's severe restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan, labeling the denial of education for Afghan girls as a serious challenge for Islamic countries.

Amina Al-Hajri, Director General of the OIC's Department of Cultural Affairs, based in Jeddah, stated that women in Islamic countries are profoundly affected by devastating wars and natural disasters. She emphasized that the prohibition on education for Afghan girls remains a concerning issue.

Al-Hajri also highlighted the harsh conditions fac-

ed by women in Palestine, who endure the heavy burdens of ongoing conflict.

The OIC has previously expressed deep concern over the status of Afghan women and has called for the removal of all restrictions imposed by the Taliban. The organization recently proposed to the Taliban government that it would support Afghan girls' education if the group cooperated.

The OIC criticizes the current government's ban on girls' education, which has excluded Afghan girls above the sixth grade from schooling and subsequently barred female students from attending both public and private universities and educational institutions.

These restrictions have led to millions of girls

being deprived of education. The United Nations and the international community have repeatedly called for the lifting of these bans on women's rights to education and work in Afghanistan over the past three years, but the Taliban regime has so far ignored these appeals.

The ongoing restrictions on education and employment for Afghan women and girls represent a significant humanitarian and developmental crisis.

The international community's calls for change underscore the need for urgent action to address these issues and ensure that Afghan women and girls can access their fundamental rights and opportunities for growth and development.

## Citizens urged not to worry about recognition



KABUL (TOLOnews): Noorullah Noori, the acting Minister of Borders, Ethnicities, and Tribes, at a ceremony in Kabul, urged the citizens of the country not to worry about the Islamic Emirate's lack of recognition by the international community.

Noorullah Noori emphasized that the Islamic Emirate has maintained its political and economic relations with the countries of the world, and whether or not it is recognized is of no significance.

The acting Minister of Borders, Ethnicities, and Tribes said: "We have sent ambassadors, and soon we will send ambassadors to

other countries as well. Currently, our embassies are open in 38 countries. If an embassy is open and we have economic relations, lack of recognition has no meaning."

Without naming anyone, Noorullah Noori also urged the citizens of the country not to listen to baseless remarks and propaganda by some individuals against the caretaker government. He added that the Islamic Emirate, in accordance with Islamic Sharia, seeks relations with countries.

The acting Minister of Borders, Ethnicities, and Tribes further said in the ceremony: "Do not listen to the propaganda of those

who have fled Afghanistan or are unable to come back due to shame, even though the door is open to them, and understand the truth."

The Deputy Minister of Borders, Ethnicities, and Tribes, who was also present at the ceremony, criticized the negative propaganda against the Islamic Emirate by some individuals.

Mohammad Ali Jan Ahmad, The Deputy Minister for Jirgas and the Coordination of Tribal Affairs said: "There is a propaganda campaign that has been initiated, and among us, there are weak individuals who listen to it without examination and repeat it in some gatherings."

Despite the fact that the Islamic Emirate has currently kept its embassies and political representations open in 38 countries and has established diplomatic and economic relations with some countries, the issue of the international recognition of the caretaker government remains one of the key issues in Afghanistan's relations with the international community, and the fate of its recognition is still uncertain.

## Needy families receive cash assistance



PANJSHIR (BNA): The World Food Programme (WFP) has provided cash assistance to 320 needy families in the Dara district of Panjshir. Mullah Abdul Ahmad Akbari, the district governor of Dara, stated that this financial aid was

distributed with the cooperation of local authorities to support families in need.

Each of the 320 families received a cash amount of 3,200 Afghanis. This initiative is part of the ongoing efforts to alleviate poverty and provide essential sup-

port to vulnerable communities in the region.

The distribution process took place in the presence of the district governor, local representatives, and WFP officials, ensuring transparency and fairness in the allocation of funds.

## OCHA appeals for \$600m aid

KABUL (Ariana News): The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) says that \$603.5 million in funding is urgently needed to address vulnerable areas in Afghanistan this winter.

The UN agency said that the funding is needed for aid between October and December 2024.

OCHA also said that \$104 million is needed for "initial pre-positioning requirements" in the first three months of 2025.

The agency added that 171 districts are high priority, 227 districts are medium priority and three districts are low priority.

OCHA said that the dangers of winter are high and the level of vulnerability is high, and that people are not provided with enough services. The agency also said it faces a \$2.3 billion shortfall in humanitarian funding for Afghanistan in 2024.

OCHA had requested \$3.06 billion in funding this year to help the people of Afghanistan, but says it has received only 25 percent of that funding so far.

The organization announced that 23.7 million people in Afghanistan need humanitarian aid this year, but they prioritized 17 million people.

## Carpet weaving center opened

BALKH (TOLOnews): A carpet weaving center in Nahr-e-Shahi district of Balkh province has been established by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees at a cost of \$350,000.

The Deputy Minister for Refugees and Repatriation, at the opening ceremony of this center, said that two hundred returnees from neighboring countries will be employed.

Abdul Rahman Rashid, the deputy minister of Refugees and Repatriation, said: "Carpet weavers here will both weave carpets and learn a profession. We have set up similar centers for refugees in other places so they can learn a skill and earn a lawful livelihood."

Asadullah Wafa, head of the Refugees and Repatriation Department in Balkh, said: "This center, which was inaugurated today, can provide work for approximately one hundred men and one hundred women and girls." Residents of the Qlin Bafan village in Nahr-e-Shahi district of Balkh province, while expressing happiness about the establishment of this center, are calling for marketing to sell their handicrafts.

Ghausuddin, a resident of the Qalin Bafan village in Nahr-e-Shahi district of Balkh, said: "People used to weave carpets in their homes, but their carpets were not offered in the market. Now, through this center, people can present their carpets to foreign markets."

Abdul Ghiyas, another resident of this village, said: "We are very happy that this center has been established because I was unemployed, and now I have a job. I urge the organizations to provide even more support." Afghan carpets are renowned worldwide, and thousands of meters of carpets woven in Afghanistan are exported to various countries every year, providing hundreds of families with their livelihood.

## Afghanistan's soil to not be used against any country



KABUL (TOLOnews): Mohammad Nabi Omari, the deputy minister of Interior, at the 2024 Global Public Security Cooperation Conference in China, dismissed the presence of al-Qaeda and ISIS in Afghanistan as unrealistic and said that Afghanistan's soil will not be used against any country.

Omari emphasized at the meeting of interior ministers from 122 countries in China that there is currently nationwide security in Afghanistan.

The Deputy Minister of Interior added: "Afghanistan has been liberated

from the occupation of American forces; there is no foreign or domestic war, Afghanistan is under a united authority, security is ensured in all 34 provinces, and people continue their daily activities in a safe environment."

Omari also mentioned that the Islamic Emirate does not interfere in the internal affairs of any country and does not allow other countries to interfere in Afghanistan's internal affairs. He said that the Islamic Emirate seeks good and positive relations with regional and global countries.

The Deputy Minister of Interior further said: "We want good and positive relations with all neighbors, regional countries, and all countries of the world in general. We do not interfere in the internal affairs of any country, nor do we allow anyone to interfere in Afghanistan's affairs. Afghanistan's soil will not be used against anyone."

At the same time, some experts emphasize that the Islamic Emirate must seriously address countries' concerns about the presence of terrorist groups in the country.

Jawed Momand, a politi-

cal affairs expert, said: "Some countries support certain groups to achieve their interests. Efforts must be made in Afghanistan to prevent those who instigate proxy wars, whether they are countries or any groups, from being active here, because it is dangerous, and Afghanistan has had this experience."

This comes as the world, particularly some neighboring countries, has always expressed concern about the use of Afghanistan's soil against them, allegations that have always been denied by the Islamic Emirate.

## Ministry of Education establishes 21,000 Islamic education centers

KABUL (TOLOnews): Officials from the Ministry of Education, during a program outlining their one-year achievements, said that more than 21,200 Islamic education centers have been established across the country over the past year.

They added that during this period, over 617,000 textbooks were distributed to Islamic education centers throughout the country.

According to the officials, more than 1.4 million new students were enrolled during this period, and over 16.18 million textbooks for grades one to twelve were printed and distributed to various provinces.

Kiramatullah Akundzada, the Deputy Minister of Education for Islamic Affairs, said during the program: "A total of 21,257 Islamic education

centers have been established nationwide, including 19,669 madrasas, 1,277 Holy Quran memorization centers (Darul Hifaz), 115 higher education institutes (Darul Uloom), and 39 orphanages (Darul Ayatam)."

The Ministry also highlighted other achievements over the past year, such as providing literacy services to more than 160,000 people, revising the curriculum for grades one to six, hiring 50,000 teachers and support staff for Islamic education centers, conducting capacity-building programs for over 248,000 ministry employees and teachers, printing more than 294,000 literacy books, and administering competency exams to 33,900 religious scholars.

According to the officials, in the past year, a



debt of 1.5 billion Afghan, as well as guarantees and securities of the ministry, were verified and reported to the Ministry of Finance.

The total number of students in public and private schools has exceeded 10.91 million.

Kiramatullah Akundzada added: "The total number of students in pub-

lic and private schools has reached 10,914,038."

More than three years have passed since the closure of girls' schools above the sixth grade. However, in this program, the Ministry of Education officials said that the reopening of girls' schools remains unresolved and is still pending further orders.

## New 22-Bed Hospital Opens in Aryob Zazi, Paktia

PAKTIA (TOLOnews): A 22-bed hospital has been built in the Sargul area of Aryob Zazi district of Paktia province at a cost of \$1 million by a citizen of the country.

This hospital primarily operates in the field of obstetrics and gynecology and provides free healthcare services to the local community.

Sulaiman Saleh, the head of the hospital, told TOLOnews: "Around one

million dollars have been spent on this hospital, and this [aid] process will continue as much as we can."

Noor Jalal Jalali, the acting Minister of Public Health, pledged efforts to standardize healthcare services in the country during the inauguration ceremony of this hospital. Jalali admitted that healthcare services in the country have been substandard and that many areas still lack access to healthcare services.

The acting Minister of Public Health added: "There are about 400 districts across the country, but there are hospitals in only 93 districts. We have many 'white areas' where there are no clinics or hospitals."

Residents of Aryob Zazi district are delighted with the opening of this hospital and urge the authorities to address the shortage of female doctors, medicine,

and other challenges in the region.

Sammad Zazi, a tribal elder, said: "Due to the lack of professional doctors, equipment, and poor roads, many patients lose their lives."

This hospital has been built on the slopes of the Koh-e-Safed in the Aryob Zazi district, an area where residents have complained about the poor condition of the road leading to this region.

## IE's narcotics policy devastated livelihoods in rural areas: ICG

KABUL (Ariana News): The International Crisis Group (ICG) has said the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan's (IEA) anti-drug policies provide an opportunity to stabilize the country's economy although it has "devastated livelihoods in rural areas".

ICG, an international think-tank, said in a report published Thursday, titled 'Trouble In Afghanistan's Opium Fields: The Taliban War On Drugs', that the Islamic Emirate's ban has been "one of the most successful poppy elimination efforts in modern history."

Late last year, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime said opium cultivation fell

throughout the country to just 10,800 hectares in 2023 from 233,000 hectares the previous year, slashing supply by 95 percent following the Islamic Emirate's ban on all cultivation of opium poppy in April 2022.

However, the report warns that as long as rural Afghans lack alternative livelihood opportunities, the likelihood of large-scale displacement and rising emigration will remain high.

The international think tank, known for policymaking advisories, said: "Making the narcotics policy (of the interim administration) sustainable and

equitable will require a multilateral effort between Afghanistan and the outside world."

In the meantime, the Taliban (IEA) should adopt more lenient measures as it implements its eradication campaign to enable the poorest farmers and those most impacted by the ban to gradually transition away from the poppy as a cash crop," ICG stated.

"The anti-drug initiative is in many foreign actors' interest, creating opportunities for donors to support Afghanistan's economic stabilization" - ICG

However, legal crops will not offer sufficient employment, so the focus

should be on job creation in non-farm industries, the group suggested.

The International Crisis Group (ICG) also stated that the ban's future is uncertain; although the Islamic Emirate is adamant about implementing it, "it could collapse under the weight of economic hardship."

"Foreign donors, who have much to gain from reduced drug production in Afghanistan, should harness the Taliban's (IEA) zeal for counter-narcotics and encourage licit economic growth. In the meantime, the Taliban should consider the welfare of the poorest farmers and imple-

ment a phased approach to the ban."

By UN estimates, the halt to opium farming has affected the livelihoods of almost seven million people and while underworld kingpins and big landowners have thrived under the ban, reaping the benefits of skyrocketing prices by selling stockpiles, many farmers have suffered.

Farmers have lost an estimated \$1.3 billion annually, or eight percent of GDP in 2023.

Farm work remains the biggest source of employment for Afghan women and the ban has hit them especially hard and the economic shock has been com-

pounded by the Islamic Emirate's limited capacity to offer farmers and rural workers alternatives.

"Many switched to cultivating wheat or cotton, but struggle to make ends meet. Development of licit agriculture would require more irrigation, cold storage facilities and better roads. The Taliban does not have the budget to develop such infrastructure."

"Meanwhile, the opium price has soared, tempting farmers to flout the ban," ICG said.

"While the Taliban's measures have shaken the drug sector to its very foundations, the future of the ban remains in doubt.

"Some experts predict that its economic impact will force the Taliban to backtrack on a signature policy. Of course, it is also possible that the Taliban leadership will remain stubborn and steadfast," ICG stated.

The group stated that support could focus on rural development, agricultural support, water conservation and investments in agro-processing.

"But the reality is that a drug-free agricultural sector will not provide enough jobs, so the country needs a development plan focusing more broadly on non-farm employment, including for women."

ICG stated that a full transition away from the dependence on narcotics as a cash crop will take time. Instead, the Islamic Emirate "should show a bit of leniency."

"Adopting more lenient practices such as turning a blind eye to small garden plots of poppy and cannabis would give the poorest farmers a better chance of survival in the coming years. Farmers selling tiny amounts of opium for prices hundreds of times higher than what is paid for other crops would give them a lifeline without jeopardizing the ban's overall objectives," the report stated.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador-designate of Sweden, Ms Alexandra Berg Von Linde, presenting her diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Pakistan committed to conserving marine ecosystem: President

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has reiterated Pakistan's commitment to conserving its marine ecosystems and coastal areas by addressing challenges such as sea pollution and climate change. He said that maritime pollution was a major concern for Pakistan as it was negatively affecting aquatic life, causing a decline in the growth of the country's fisheries sector.

The President expressed these views while talking to the visiting Secretary General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Mr Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, who called on him, at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday. Minister for Maritime Affairs, Mr Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh, Chairperson Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Senator Sherry Rehman, and senior government officials attended the meeting.

Welcoming the Secretary-General, the President said that focusing on the blue economy was a cornerstone of Pakistan's development strategy as Pakistan was keen on modernizing its fisheries and ship breaking sectors under the Special Investment Facilitation Council. He added that Pakistan was taking effective steps to tackle the effects of climate change. He said that Pakistan wanted to improve its marine ecosystem and

would welcome IMO's assistance and expertise in this regard. In order to mitigate the impacts of climate change, he highlighted that Pakistan had planted mangroves over a million acres in Sindh and also sold carbon credits in the international market. He informed that plans were afoot to plant mangroves on another 2 million acres of land.

The President also highlighted Pakistan's strong commitment to adhering to IMO regulations and standards for maritime safety, security and environmental protection. He said that Pakistan was looking forward to exploring potential areas for future collaboration with IMO, including technical cooperation and expertise-sharing to improve Pakistan's maritime sector.

The Secretary-General said that Pakistan had great maritime potential, adding that IMO would continue to support Pakistan in advancing collaborations and promoting a sustainable and efficient maritime industry. The President congratulated the Secretary-General on his election as the 10th Secretary General of IMO and expressed confidence in his leadership to advance the organization's mission for a fair and effective regulatory framework for the global shipping industry.

**Envoys of Sweden and Belgium present credentials to President:** The envoys of Sweden and Belgium

presented their diplomatic credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari, during a credential ceremony, held at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Thursday.

The President received credentials from the Ambassador-designate of Sweden, Ms Alexandra Berg Von Linde, and the Ambassador-designate of Belgium, Mr Charles-Idesbald Van Der Gracht De Rommerswael, who also held separate meetings with the President. Welcoming the envoys, the President felicitated them on their appointment and expressed the hope that they would play their role in further improving mutually beneficial cooperation with Pakistan.

Talking to the Ambassador-designate of Belgium, the President highlighted that Pakistan greatly valued its relations with Belgium. He said that Belgium was an important trading partner and Pakistan wanted to further enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation with Belgium. During the meeting with the Ambassador-designate of Sweden, the President said that Pakistan and Sweden enjoyed friendly and cooperative relations based on mutual respect and understanding. He underlined the need to further strengthen the bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of the two countries. Earlier, the envoys were presented guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of Pakistan Armed Forces upon their arrival at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## PHC seeks response against curtaining LG members' powers

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has reissued a notice to Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa seeking response within 14 days, regarding withdrawal of financial and administrative powers from mayors and tehsil chairmen and handing them over to Secretary Local Council Board otherwise the court will decide the case on available record, on Thursday.

During the hearing, Chief Justice Peshawar High Court Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that it seems government do not want to give powers to local representatives, and they are intentionally not submitting reply. He asked how the government can weaken local elected representatives, and directed relevant respondents to submit response. If a response is not received by the next hearing, the court will make decision based on the available record.

PHC's divisional bench compris-

ing of Chief Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim and Justice Waqar Ahmed heard the case. The petitioner, Mayor Peshawar Haji Zubair Ali, was represented by Farooq Afridi advocate.

The counsel informed the court that under Article 32 of the Constitution, local government institutions should be encouraged to enable elected representatives to serve the people at the grassroots level. Similarly, every province should have a local government system with financial and administrative powers.

However, on 12th July 2024, Secretary Local Governments issued a notification, transferring financial and administrative powers related to development projects at the local council level to the Secretary Local Council Board. The petitioner's lawyer argued that this action has not only affected the effectiveness of the councils but also violated Article 14-A of the Constitution, which guarantees the existence of local govern-

ments.

The lawyer stated that the Secretary of Local Governments has given all administrative and financial powers to the Secretary Local Council Board, whereas the Local Government Act 2013 and 2019 only allow the transfer of powers through amendments made by provincial assembly.

The actual function of Local Council Board is to deal with appointments, promotions, transfers, and pension-related matters but now they have also been given financial powers, which is illegal and unconstitutional, the counsel argued.

The court was informed that despite the court order, the provincial government has not yet submitted a response, however, the Chief Justice remarked that they seem alike intentionally not submitting a response. The court adjourned the hearing, directing the relevant authorities to submit a response within 14 days.

## Mock drills held at Bacha Khan Airport

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Airport Authority (PAA) conducted an emergency evacuation and firefighting drill at the Bacha Khan International Airport in Peshawar. The drill was held at Terminal One, Level 1, 2, and 3, and involved the participation of various stakeholders, including PCAA, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), Airport Security Force (ASF), and different airlines, on Thursday.

The mock exercises began with a fire alarm, followed by the evacuation of occupants from the terminal building to a designated assembly area. The PCAA's Domestic Fire Tender (DFT) and Fire Station Striker responded to the simulated emergency, along with Rescue 1122 fire vehicle and ambulance.

The drill aimed to test the airport's emergency response plan, and all levels of the terminal building were evacuated within the stipulated three-minute time frame. A comprehensive search and rescue operation conducted by PCAA and Rescue 1122 teams in all areas.

The drill concluded with a headcount and briefing at the assembly area. Senior officials, including the Deputy Airport Manager, Chief Financial and Risk Officer, and PIA Station Manager, were present during the exercise. Representatives from PCAA, PIA, ASF, and various airlines also participated in the drill.

## Imran disapproves CM remarks

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Imran Khan has defended Ali Amin Gandapur, stating that Gandapur's controversial remarks were made in the heat of the moment.

During an interaction with journalists on Thursday, Khan expressed his disapproval of Gandapur's comments about the media, acknowledging that Gandapur should not have made such statements. Khan emphasized that Gandapur's comments were overly zealous and not reflective of his usual stance.

Khan reiterated his support for the media, describing their reporting under pressure as a form of jihad. He criticized those calling for Gandapur's apology, labeling them as cowards unfit for the party, and suggested they should leave if they cannot support Gandapur.

Two days ago, Khan had publicly backed Gandapur, asserting that anyone demanding an apology from him was unworthy of being in the party and should resign. Speaking informally to journalists in Adiala Jail, Khan reaffirmed Gandapur's representation of national sentiments and criticized the dissenting voices within the party.

## Cut in petrol, diesel prices proposed

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Following a marked drop in the prices of crude oil in the international market, a suggestion has been made to pass on the relief emanating from it to the consumers here in Pakistan by slashing the petroleum products (POL) prices.

Sources said that the price of London Brent Oil had come down from \$78.80 per barrel to \$71 per barrel since September 10; hence registering a 10 per cent decrease. While on the other hand, the US crude oil, they informed, the price of which was \$73.55 per barrel dropped to \$67.70 per barrel since September 1; thus registering an eight per cent reduction.

There was a suggestion to cut down the price of each liter of petrol by Rs11.71, sources said, adding if approved, one liter of petrol which was now available at Rs259.10 would be available at Rs247.39.

Likewise, Rs11.91 per liter cut has been suggested in the price of the High-Speed Diesel; if approved, it would cost Rs250.84 per liter rather than Rs262.75 per liter; the rate at which it is currently available.

# KP CM assures businessmen for resolution of issues

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur held an interactive session with the business community of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa here at Chief Minister's House on Thursday. The session aimed to discuss the challenges faced by the business community, gather their inputs and suggestions for solutions, and consult on ways to develop the province's industrial sector on sustainable basis.

Provincial cabinet members Abdul Karim Tordher, Muzammil Aslam, and Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif, as well as senior officials from Industry department along with its subsidiaries, representatives from Sarhad Chamber of Commerce, and other business organizations/associations across the province attended the session.

The Chief Minister in his address to the session, emphasized the importance of mutual trust and cooperation in moving the province forward. He acknowledged the role of the business community in adverse conditions and praised their resilience and bravery, adding that this province had been faced with serious law and order challenges, which had severely affected all the sectors including the business community.

The Chief Minister reiterated the provincial government's commitment to solving the business community's problems and announced that separate meetings would also be held with associations from different sectors to continue these discussions. He termed the unemployment as a major challenge and emphasized the crucial role of the private sector in addressing this challenge.

The Chief Minister said that his government is working on various initiatives and projects aimed at promoting small businesses, enabling skilled youth to start their own business, and developing the province's productive sectors on modern line. "Three different schemes for providing soft and interest free loans have been designed to execute these initiatives", he added.

The Chief Minister maintained that special attention is being given to developing

the province's productive sectors, with the vision of making Khyber Pakhtunkhwa self-sufficient in industrial production.

Touching upon the financial situation of the province, the Chief Minister said that efforts are underway to secure the province's legitimate rights and hoped that business community would also extend their support to the provincial government in this struggle.

Touching upon the issue of electricity, the Chief Minister shared that steps are underway to resolve this problem on a permanent basis, adding that as major development to this effect, the province has established its own grid and transmission company. Similarly, efforts are also being made on laying province's own transmission line, with the aim to provide cheap electricity to local industries. He assured the industrialists that the provincial government would provide all possible support and create the environment they need to thrive. "Through mutual cooperation, we will be able to materialize our collective vision with regard to establishing a prosperous society", he remarked and said that everyone must play their part in steering the country and the province out of current challenges.

Regarding trade with Afghanistan, the Chief Minister insisted that it must be legalized, stating that closing trade is not the solution. He said that most of the problems faced by the business community are linked to the federal government. The entire nation is suffering from the consequences of flawed policies by the incumbent rulers at centre, he remarked.

The Chief Minister made it clear that the provincial government had reduced and waived several provincial taxes, and whatever taxes are being collected, would be spent on the development of the industrial sector. He also announced that unutilized plots in different industrial zones would have their leases canceled and reallocated to industrialists who will utilize them. "The same would be done in mining sector, as both the sectors have a lot of potential, and the provincial government is committed to fully utilize it in the best interest of the province and its people", he added.

## Killer of cop eliminated by Bannu police within hours

F.P. Report

BANNU: Bannu police on Thursday claimed to have killed a terrorist involved in an earlier today's attack on a polio team that left a policeman dead.

Police said the escaping terrorist was engaged in an encounter in Domail area and eliminated during the crossfire. The martyred policeman was assigned to guard a polio vaccination team when he was shot dead by the terrorist near a migrant camp in Bannu.

This incident marks the second attack in recent days targeting polio workers and security personnel, following an earlier attack in

Bajaur district that resulted in the deaths of a polio worker and a policeman. The reports said in response to these attacks, police have refused to participate in polio vaccination duties. The slain cop, identified as Nur Alam from the Kamchashmi area of Domail, was stationed with a polio team when the attack occurred.

In the wake of the attack, police officers, along with local citizens and traders, staged a protest at Abdusattar Shah Bukhari Chowk. Police officials, including the District Police Officer (DPO), Superintendent of Police (SP), and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), arrived to negotiate with the protesters. The demonstrators demanded immediate justice and threatened to continue their protest until their demands were met.

The police officials requested the protesters to end their demonstration, promising that the culprits would be apprehended within an hour. Earlier this week, at least two police officers were injured in an attack on a police vehicle escorting a polio team in South Waziristan. The incident occurred in Wana and resulted in injuries to three individuals, including the two officers.



ISLAMABAD: Secretary General International Maritime Organization, Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco called on Chief of Naval Staff, Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters.

## Ukraine says Russia hit grain vessel near Romania

KYIV (Reuters): Ukraine accused Russia on Thursday of using strategic bombers to strike a civilian grain vessel in a missile attack in Black Sea waters near NATO member Romania, escalating tensions between Moscow and the military alliance. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the vessel carrying Ukrainian grain to Egypt had been hit overnight by a Russian missile just after it left Ukrainian territorial waters. There were no casualties, he said.

There was no immediate comment from Russia. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha said the strike was "a brazen attack on freedom of navigation and global food security".

Ukraine's navy said Russian Tupolev Tu-22 bombers had fired a number of cruise missiles at 11:02 p.m. local time (2002 GMT) on Wednesday. It was the first time a missile has struck a civilian vessel transporting grains at sea since the start of Moscow's invasion in February 2022. Some vessels have been damaged dur-

ing Russian attacks on Ukrainian ports where they were moored.

The incident comes as Zelenskyy has been trying to court the Global South, including countries such as Egypt - the destination of the grain according to Ukraine - and convince them to join the West in supporting Ukraine in the war. The strike comes as NATO allies are considering allowing Ukraine to make deeper strikes into Russia, a step Moscow has warned will elicit a response. The West has accused Iran of a major escalation by supplying ballistic missiles to Russia.

British maritime security company Ambrey said in a note that a Saint Kitts and Nevis-flagged bulk carrier had been struck by a Russian-launched missile after leaving the Ukrainian port of Chornomorsk in Ukraine's Odessa region. The vessel sustained damage to its port side, including a cargo hold and a crane, it said.

The Navy identified the vessel as the Aya bulk carrier.

Ship tracking data showed the vessel's last reported position was off the Romanian port of Constanta. The vessel's Athens-based manager, VRS Maritime Services, could not be immediately reached for comment. Traders said the incident had contributed to stronger wheat prices by adding to concern over tightening supply in the Black Sea export zone. U.S. futures rose as much as 2% to hit a two-month peak.

Zelenskyy posted images showing the twisted metal of a damaged crane and other damage. An industry source told Reuters the strike had taken place not far from the mouth of the Danube river. Dmytro Pletenchuk, spokesman for Ukraine's navy, told Reuters the vessel was in Romania's maritime economic zone.

A country's maritime economic zone is an area that extends beyond its territorial waters. Romania's Naval Authority said the vessel had not been in its territorial waters and that its assistance had not been requested in any way.