

## Sindh CM calls on President F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister (CM) Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr and discussed matters relating to mutual concerns. Chairman Pakistan People's Party and MNA, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and provincial Minister Sindh Sardar Muhammad Bakhs Khan Maher were also present during the meeting.



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# FIA to probe posts from PTI founder's social media accounts

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar on Friday said the Federal Investigation Agency would probe into the handling of the PTI founder's social media accounts which were being used to create chaos and anarchy in the country, and undermining the national security.

"He (the PTI founder) should be ashamed of undermining the national security, inciting people for anarchy and committing the sedition," said the minister while talking to the media. Tarar said the FIA had decided to investigate into the handling of the social media accounts of the jailed PTI founder. It would be ascertained that who is the handler of his social media accounts, and whether such posts were being made on his behalf or it was done on directives of someone else, he added.

He said a botch attempt had been made to conspire against the sitting chief justice and heads of other institutions. Through these posts, he tried to mobilize the people against two major state institutions which is highly condemnable. The minister said

this conspiracy is destined to fail as his accusations against the interior minister and others had nothing to do with the reality.

The PTI founder had all the facilities like a presidential suit in the jail, but yet he still resorted to attack the state institutions, he said, adding nobody would be allowed to do so at any cost. He said the FIA would inquire into this issue and the PTI founder would be investigated in this regard. The minister said the message posted on the social media from the account of the PTI founder was tantamount to sedition, and creating an anarchy in the country. He said the PTI founder, in the post, had once again related himself with Sheikh Mujeeb-ur-Rehman, but he seemed to be elusive about the current situation in Bangladesh where the latter's statues were demolished by the people after realizing the truth about history.

The minister said the examples quoted by the PTI founder in his social media posts were condemnable. "There will be an investigation as to who is running the accounts of the PTI's founder on social media," he noted. The PTI has always targeted journalists, attacked

them, launched smear campaigns against them on social media, said the minister, adding this party had completely resisted and discouraged the difference of opinion during their government's tenure.

He called the PTI as "Tehreek-e-Intishar" which always encouraged its workers to resort to accusations, attack and abuse if anybody disagreed to them in any case whatsoever. The minister recalled the harassment of a female journalist by the PTI during one of its public gatherings in Lahore. Another journalist Sadaf which was hit by a container and got killed during one of the rallies of the PTI founder.

There are multiple instances which reflected their dirty mindset of harassing and assaulting the female journalists, he said, pointing out the most recent badmouthing by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister in a public gathering. "Being the Information Minister, I believe this is very inappropriate and the entire PTI should apologize unconditionally for the slogans raised in the PTI's recent public gathering, as well as the statements made by KP CM Ali Amin Gandapur against the female journalists.

## SBP injects Rs11.77tr into market F.P. Report

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs11,772.55 billion in the market on Friday through reverse repo purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation (OMO).

According to OMO results issued here, the SBP conducted Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) on September 13, 2024 for 7-day and 28-day tenors and accepted 51 bids cumulatively amounting to Rs11,647.55 billion.

The central bank received 22 bids for 7-day tenor cumulatively offering an amount of Rs2,643.6 billion at the rate of return ranging between 17.56 to 17.63 percent while 29 bids amounting to Rs9,003.95 billion were received for the 28-day tenor at the rate of return ranging between 17.56 to 17.65 %.

The central bank accepted all the 22 quotes for the 7-day tenor and 29 bids for 28-day tenor at 17.56% rate of return.

Meanwhile, the central bank also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for 7-day and 28-day tenors and injected Rs125 billion in the market. For the 7-day tenor, the SBP received one bid amounting to Rs125 billion at 17.59% rate of return while no bid was received for 28-day tenor. The central bank accepted the only bid offered for 7-day tenor at 17.59% rate of return.

## Justice Muneeb walks out of JC meeting F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Justice Muneeb Akhtar walked out of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan meeting held to review Judicial Commission of Pakistan Rules 2024 for appointment/elevation of judges to superior judiciary.

The commission was debating and reviewing various clauses of the rules when Justice Akhtar suggested postponement of the meeting. Other members of the commission disagreed with him and the judge walked out of the meeting. The meeting, however, continued after Justice Akhtar's walk out.

Earlier, the meeting started with Chief Justice of Pakistan Qazi Faez Isa in the chair and attended by senior puisne judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Justice Munib Akhtar, Justice Yahya Afridi, retired Justice Manzoor Malik, Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar, Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan and other members of the commission.



ISLAMABAD: A delegation of young parliamentarians called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

## PM chairs review meeting on Monkeypox situation

### F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the current situation and precautionary measures being taken to prevent the spread of

Monkeypox in the country.

The prime minister emphasized the importance of vigilance and preparedness, directing authorities to adopt all necessary measures to prevent the virus from spreading within the country. "All necessary precautionary measures to pre-

vent Monkeypox should be adopted," the prime minister said directing the officials concerned to raise public awareness about preventive steps. He also instructed that scanning at all airports, seaports, and land entry points must be strictly enforced to detect any potential cases.

## KP CM: IT sector has a lot of potential F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In a landmark initiative towards fostering digital economy and empowering the youth by equipping them with cutting-edge digital skills that are essential for thriving in today's technology-driven world, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched five different digital skills initiatives in the province.

The Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Khan Gandapur formally launched the initiatives during a ceremony, held here at Chief Minister's House Peshawar on Friday. Provincial Minister for Higher Education Meena Khan Afridi, Senior Member Board of Revenue Ikramullah, Secretary ST & IT department Syeda Tanzeela Sabahat, Secretary Higher Education Naveed Kamran Afridi, Managing Director Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Technology Board, high ups of IT Department and students attended the ceremony.

The digital skills initiatives launched on this occasion include; Google Career Certifications Program, Durshal Platform: A catalyst for Tech-Based Startups Program, Digital Internships Program, Join IT Program and Innovation Fellows Program.

## The Frontier Post recognized for outstanding digital sales for H&M

### F.P. Report

WASHINGTON DC: In a recent announcement, Mr Karim El Sherif, the Affiliates and Influencers Marketing Manager at M.H. Alshaya, praised Jalil Afridi, the Managing Editor and Director of The Frontier Post Pakistan and CEO of The Frontier Post USA, for his remarkable performance in driving digital sales for H&M. Afridi's innovative strategies and unwavering dedication have positioned The Frontier Post as a leading partner in the brand's online sales campaign.

El Sherif in his email to Afridi stated that "Amazing performance for the brand H&M online. Thank you,

Jalil, for your dedication to the campaign, and proud to announce that you are one of our top performers on this campaign."

This recognition highlights the significant impact The Frontier Post has made in the digital marketing landscape under Jalil Afridi's leadership. By leveraging targeted affiliate marketing tactics, Jalil Afridi and his team have successfully boosted H&M's online presence and sales, demonstrating the power of effective media partnerships.

El Sherif's commendation underscores the importance of Jalil Afridi's role in the campaign's success, noting that The Frontier

Post's performance has set a high standard in digital sales and marketing. As a result, Afridi's efforts have not only contributed to the growth of H&M's online market but have also solidified The Frontier Post's reputation as a key player in the industry.

Jalil Afridi's achievement is a testament to his expertise and the hard work of his team, reflecting a broader commitment to excellence in digital media and affiliate marketing. With this recognition, The Frontier Post continues to lead by example, demonstrating the value of strategic collaboration in driving commercial success for major brands.

## Army to support KP police: COAS

### F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), Chief of Army Staff (COAS), visited troops in Orakzai District who had participated in the recently conducted counter-terrorism actions in Tirah Valley and surroundings.

COAS was given a comprehensive briefing on overall security situation, ongoing Intelligence Based counter-terrorism actions and multi-prong measures being undertaken

to ensure stability in Merged Districts. In his interaction with officers and troops, COAS appreciated their high morale and readiness to give effective response against all types of threat.

COAS reiterated the resolve to comprehensively defeat hostile terrorist nexus and eliminate activities in illegal spectrum. Paying rich tribute to Shuhada and Ghazis of Army, and LEAs, COAS said that the hard earned peace achieved with

nation's great sacrifice would be maintained at all costs. Sacrifice of our martyrs strengthen our resolve to fight with utmost dedication and spirit of sacrifice.

COAS lauded the contributions being made by Police and LEAs in KPK. "Pak Army will continue to provide all out support to KPK Police and other LEAs in enabling them to perform their duties in newly merged districts". COAS emphasised the need of continued capacity building of LEAs.

## The Frontier Post Recognized for Outstanding Digital Sales for H&M



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محکمہ ابتدائی و ثانوی تعلیم  
حکومت خیبر پختونخوا



## تعلیم سب کیلئے

پہلے مرحلے میں 12 لاکھ داخلے

دوسرے مرحلے میں 3 لاکھ داخلوں کا ہدف

کل داخلوں کا ہدف

# 1,500,000



آج ہی اپنے بچوں کا سرکاری سکول میں داخلہ کرائیں









PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi presenting sponsorship cheque amounting two million five hundred and fifty thousand to Asian Boxing champion Shoaib Khan Zahri.

## PHC grants protective bails to Special Assistant Anti-Corruption

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) granted protective bail to Special Assistant for Anti-Corruption Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Brigadier (Retd) Mussadiq Abbasi, Director Anti-Corruption Umar Siddique and others till 26th September while stopped arrest of petitioners in any case and seeking details of the cases registered against them, on Friday.

During the hearing, Alam Khan Adeenzai advocate informed the court that cases had been registered against the petitioners in FIA Islamabad and other places. Justice Shakeel Ahmed inquired about the nature of the cases, asking "Don't you know what cases are there?" Director Anti-Corruption Umar Siddique replied that a FIR had been registered against him, and he had been nominated as a "YouTuber" in the case.

Justice Shakeel Ahmed again inquired, "Who registered the cases?" To which Alam Khan Adeenzai

Adeenzai replied that cases had been registered against the petitioners in Islamabad and Punjab, and therefore, the petitioners should be provided with details so that they could appear in the relevant courts.

Justice Shakeel Ahmed remarked, "We will ask for details and then grant protective bail." Alam Khan Adeenzai advocate requested the court to order that the petitioners should not be arrested, as these were political cases and there was a fear of

their arrest. Justice Shakeel Ahmed remarked, "Today's government will be tomorrow's opposition, so all politicians should show tolerance."

PHC asked Deputy Attorney General that how many cases were registered against the petitioners by the FIA. He requested for provision of two weeks to submit a reply. The court sought details of the cases from the federal government and ordered that the petitioners should not be arrested in any case.

## Business community hails 200bps cut in policy rate

PESHAWAR (APP): Former Senator, Chairman Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Textile Mills Association (KPTMA) and renowned businessman, Salim Saifullah Khan has hailed 200 basis-points cut in the policy rate by the State Bank of Pakistan's (SBP) bringing it down to 17.5%.

In a statement issued here on Friday, he welcomed the decision as a positive step towards supporting the country's struggling industrial sector and stressed for further aggressive measures to boost competitiveness and economic growth.

Acknowledging the SBP's efforts, Mr. Khan urged a more aggressive reduction in the interest rate to immediately bring it down to 12% to provide relief to industries, with the ultimate goal of settling it down over the time at 6% to 7% in line with regional economies.

He said that they appreciate the downward trend in interest rates, but the cost of borrowing remains unsustainably high, especially for industries such as textiles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, which due to high capital cost are struggling to compete both domestically and internationally.

He also highlighted the stability of the Pakistani rupee, which has contributed to easing inflation by reducing the cost of imported goods. "Currency stability has a direct impact on inflation, and with the rupee stabilizing, we are seeing an easing down of the inflation rate.

However, interest rates must be lowered to at least 12% to provide immediate relief to industries.

Salim Saifullah Khan expressed concern over Pakistan's balance of payments, noting that the outflow of US dollars continues to exceed inflows, creating recurring financial challenges.

He stressed that boosting exports is the only sustainable solution to the country's economic woes. He said that the Prime Minister has set an ambitious target of \$60 billion in exports over the next three years, with the textile sector contributing a share of \$33 billion, which is achievable only through export-friendly policies and by significantly reducing the cost of doing business.

## KP waiting for Center's reply on registration of NCP vehicles: Saif

PESHAWAR (APP): Advisor on Information Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Barrister Muhammad Ali Saif on Friday said the province was waiting for a reply from the Federal Government over suggestions to regularize the non-custom-paid (NCP) vehicles.

In a statement issue to media, he said the matter of regularization of NCP vehicles in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was waiting for a decision from the Federal Government adding that as soon as the suggestions forwarded by the KP government were approved, work on regularization of NCP vehicles will start in the province.

Saif further said that there were proofs that NCP vehicles have also been used in terrorism activities, adding that with registration of these vehicles the owner of the vehicle, used in subversive activity, will easily be identified.

The registration of these vehicles, he added, will also generate a hefty revenue for the provincial government. The Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur had approved the suggestions for regularization of NCP vehicles before sending it to the Center for approval. Barrister Saif informed that the KP government had suggested regularization of over 0.2 million NCP vehicles plying on roads in Merged Districts and Malakand Division.

## Pakistan diplomatic and military response to TTP threat from Afghanistan

**Aman Ullah Hussain Awan**

THE relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan has been characterized by complex political, ethnic, and security dynamics. Among the most pressing issues affecting bilateral relations is the presence and activities of the Al Khawarij (TTP), an extremist group that has been responsible for numerous attacks within Pakistan. The Al Khawarij's presence in Afghanistan, especially in areas under the control or influence of the Afghan Taliban, poses a significant security threat to Pakistan. This article explores Pakistan's diplomatic and military responses to this challenge, highlighting the multifaceted approach Islamabad has adopted.

However, the Al Khawarij, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, was formed in 2007 by a coalition of militant groups operating in Pakistan's tribal areas. Over the years, the group has conducted numerous terrorist attacks, targeting civilians, military personnel, and government institutions. Following military operations in Pakistan's tribal areas, many Al Khawarij sought refuge in Afghanistan, particularly in regions where they found sympathetic elements within the Afghan Taliban. The withdrawal of U.S. and NATO forces from Afghanistan in 2021 and the subsequent takeover by the Taliban created a complex security environment. While the Afghan Taliban promised not to allow terrorist groups to use Afghan soil to threaten other countries, the presence of the Al Khawarij and its continued activities raised concerns in Pakistan. The Al Khawarij's ability to launch cross-border attacks from Afghan territory posed a direct threat to Pakistan's security and stability. Pakistan's diplomatic strategy has focused on engaging with the Afghan Taliban and the international community to address the Al Khawarij threat. Islamabad has sought to leverage its influence over the Afghan Taliban to curb Al Khawarij's activities. Pakistani officials have held multiple rounds of talks with the Khaarij leadership, emphasizing the need for the group to honor its commitments under the Doha Agreement, which includes preventing terrorist groups from using Afghan territory as a base for attacks.

Furthermore, Pakistan has engaged with regional and international partners to build a consensus on countering terrorism emanating from Afghanistan. Islamabad has called for a coordinated approach, involving intelligence sharing, border security cooperation, and support for Afghan stability. The aim is to prevent Afghanistan from becoming a safe haven for extremist groups that threaten regional and global security. Pakistan has also worked to highlight the Al Khawarij issue in international forums, including the United Nations. By raising awareness about the group's activities and the challenges posed by its presence in Afghanistan, Pakistan seeks to garner international support for its counterterrorism efforts and put pressure on the Afghan Taliban to take decisive action against the Al Khawarij.

Since the Al Khawarij assumed control of Kabul in August 2021, Pakistan has experienced a notable uptick in incidents of terrorist violence. Over the span of 21 months, from August 2021 to April 2023, there has been a concerning 138 percent rise in the number of fatalities resulting from these attacks. The report underscores that the escalating patterns of terrorism will exacerbate Pakistan's enduring security challenges. These include the ongoing Taliban militancy in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the former tribal areas, the Baloch nationalist insurgency in Balochistan, ethno-nationalist violence in Sindh, along with escalating religious extremism and radicalism. "Persisting over an extended duration, such a climate of insecurity, militancy, and violence can pose significant threats to both political and economic stability," Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Professor of Politics

## Kundi emphasizes agriculture's role provincial in development

PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday highlighted the crucial role of agriculture in the development of the province.

The Governor said this during dinner organized by the All Pakistan Fruit and Vegetable Market Association here, that was attended by President Malik Sohni, MPA Arbab Zarak, and other notable guests.

Governor Kundi said that fruits and vegetables are not only beneficial for health but also play a significant role in the country's economy. He emphasized that Pakistan, being an agricultural country, relies heavily on its agricultural sector, especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where a diverse range of fruits and vegetables are grown. Unfortunately, Kundi remarked, those in charge of the province seem more concerned about their own interests rather than the welfare of the agricultural sector.

He further said that the integration of traditional farming practices with modern techniques could enhance agricultural productivity and stabilize local markets. This diversity is also vital for local culture and food security.

The Governor assured that he would play a key role in addressing the issues raised. Earlier, President Malik Sohni presented several demands, including the need for development work in markets where traders and commission agents are paying taxes without seeing corresponding improvements.

He also demanded the reopening of the Pak-Afghan border at Torkham, which has been closed for a month, causing significant financial losses. Additionally, Sohni called for the relocation of the fruit and vegetable market in Lahore, which is affecting traders from Sindh, Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to a more suitable location.

He also requested that the salaries of market committee staff in Peshawar and Dera Ismail Khan be processed through the Accountant General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, similar to other government employees.

**Governor Kundi hands over sponsorship cheque of Rs2.55mn to Boxer Zahri**

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Faisal Karim Kundi, on Friday handed over a sponsorship cheque of PKR 2.55 million on behalf of Oil and Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) to the boxing champion.

In a prestigious event held at the Governor House Peshawar, young boxer Muhammad Shoaib Khan Zahri from Balochistan received sponsorship for his upcoming fight against an Indian boxer at the World Boxing Championship. The ceremony was attended by General Manager Corporate Social Responsibility of OGDCL, Abdul Razzaq Khattak, universities vice chancellors, notable athletes from the province, and other political and social figures.

In his address, the Governor expressed his heartfelt thanks to OGDCL for their support and extended his best wishes to Shoaib Khan Zahri for a victorious match against the Indian boxer. He expressed hope that Zahri would bring honor to Pakistan and make the nation proud.

The Governor also lamented that many talented athletes come to him daily but are often left to support themselves in competitions at their own pocket.

He announced plans to use the Governor House to highlight the positive image of the province and support talented youth by establishing cricket academies in Peshawar, Abbottabad, and later in Swat and Dera Ismail Khan.

## Toru asks federal government to step down

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Food Zahir Shah Toru, in a video statement, criticized the federal government referring it the product of Form 47. He called for the government to step down, claiming that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Imran Khan would soon be released from jail and reclaim the office of the Prime Minister.

Toru alleged that the fake federal government, due to its poor performance and inability to control inflation, was resorting to desperate measures to divert public attention.

He expressed his dismay over what he termed as the federal government's misuse of institutions, accusing it of abducting PTI's elected members of the National Assembly from parliament.

Toru described these actions as a "black day in the history of democracy."

In response to the remarks made by Rana Sanaullah, Toru lashed out, saying that "Rana Sanaullah should stop his theatrics."

No one can stop the PTI rally in Lahore," Toru reaffirmed PTI's right to hold rallies across the country, stating that "we are Pakistanis, not foreigners, and PTI can hold its rally wherever it chooses."

Toru also shed hard words at KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, accusing him of being fearful of Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur and spreading chaos and disorder in the province.

The minister warned the governor to stay within his constitutional limits and to refrain from making statements against the Chief Minister, threatening that if necessary they could "lock up the Governor's House at any time."

The KP Food Minister expressed his full confidence in the Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur.

He reiterated his backing for the provincial leadership, emphasizing that there was unity in KP's government.



PESHAWAR: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman addressing the launching ceremony of membership drive.

likely involve a combination of diplomatic engagement, military preparedness, and international collaboration. Islamabad will continue to press the Afghan Taliban to take concrete steps against the Al Khawarij while working with regional and global partners to enhance counterterrorism efforts. The success of these measures will depend on the evolving political and security dynamics in Afghanistan and the broader region.

In a nutshell, Pakistan's response to the Al Khawarij threat from Afghanistan reflects a nuanced and multifaceted strategy, blending diplomacy and military action. While significant challenges remain, Islamabad's efforts demonstrate a commitment to safeguarding national security and contributing to regional stability.

The international community's support and cooperation will be crucial in addressing the complex and persistent threat posed by the Al Khawarij and similar extremist groups. Indeed, Pakistan must urge the Afghan Taliban administration to take action against the militants operating from its territory.

While Pakistan's military has launched Operation Azm-i-Istehkam, emphasizing its critical role in counterterrorism efforts for the nation's survival. This operation is a direct response to the increasing frequency of militant attacks, particularly from groups such as the Al Khawarij and the Hafiz Gul Bahadur faction. The urgency of this campaign was highlighted by a recent attack on a military base in Bannu by the Hafiz Gul Bahadur group, which resulted in the deaths of eight security personnel, underscoring the intensifying threat.

In a nutshell, the government has labelled the outlawed Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as Fitna al Khawarij and proscribed two more outfits, Majeed Brigade (MB) and Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group (HGBG), taking the total number of banned organizations to 81. In light of the involvement of the so-called Al Khawarij (TTP) in activities that are harmful to the Islamic faith and contradict the true teachings and essence of Islam, it has been decided to refer to the group as "Fitna al Khawarij," according to a circular issued by the interior ministry. Furthermore, all honorific religious titles such as 'Mufti' and 'Hafiz' used by individuals associated with this terrorist organization shall be discontinued. Instead, their names will be prefixed with the title "Khaarij" in all official correspondence and documents. This change aims to accurately reflect the organization's true nature and ideology.

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ence in border regions and enhanced intelligence operations to detect and neutralize Al Khawarij elements. The use of drones and aerial surveillance has been crucial in monitoring militant activities in remote areas.

Lieutenant General Ahmad Sharif Chaudhry (DG ISPR) reiterated the government recent designation of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) as "Fitna al-Khawarij," stating, "The Al Khawarij has no connection to Islam." He emphasized the military's focus on the merged districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and vowed to continue the war against terrorism until the last militant is eliminated.

Addressing the nation security, Lt. Gen. Chaudhry highlighted the military's relentless anti-terror operations, revealing, "So far, we have conducted 23,622 intelligence-based operations (IBOs) this year, including 2,045 in the last 15 days alone. These operations resulted in the elimination of 24 terrorists." He further noted that the army and law enforcement agencies (LEAs) conduct over 100 IBOs daily, showcasing their commitment to maintaining security. According to some reports, the attacks were led by Al Khawarij head Noor Mehsud. While there has been a significant rise in cross-border raids in the former tribal regions, incidents of terrorist violence have also escalated in recent months, taking a





## In brief

### Policeman killed by unknown men F.P. Report

LAKKI MARWAT: Unknown gunmen have opened firing on police constable here Friday and killed him on the spot. Police said that constable, Hikmatullah, who was serving at Lakki Marwat's prison came under firing at Samandar Tetarkhel village where he was sitting in a shop. This month, a total of six police men were martyred by unknown outlaws in the district. Police have registered the case and started investigation.

### Joint teams constituted F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the direction of Chief Minister Punjab, the district administration is active to provide safe transport to school students. A meeting of District Transport Authority was held under the Chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh, on Friday. In the meeting, Assistant Commissioner (HR) and Coordination Secretary Regional Transport Authority, Xen Highway, MS District and Tehsil Headquarters Hospital, Traffic Police, Rescue 1122, Heads of Government and Private Schools participated. Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Naeem Sindhu has formed joint teams of administration, police, traffic police and RTA in the tehsil. Regular inspections were conducted by monitoring teams regarding overloading of students' transport vehicles. He said to take actions against those who violate traffic rules. Awareness sessions will be organized to make road safety available in schools. All school principals should ensure the transport vehicle examination certificate and driver's license of the educational institutions. DC while issuing instructions to Secretary RTA to strictly implement all precautionary measures in the transport of educational institutions for the safety of students, said that parents should choose such transport for their children's school/college transport which is safe.

### Two terrorists shot dead

DERA GHAZI KHAN (INP): An exchange of fire occurred between the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and terrorists from Fitna-ul-Khawarij in Dera Ghazi Khan on Friday. According to the channel report, during the heavy gunfight with the CTD team, two terrorists were killed, while two managed to escape. A CTD police spokesperson stated that the operation was intelligence-based and aimed at arresting the terrorists. However, the terrorists opened fire on the CTD team, which led to a firefight. Notably, the two Khawarij terrorists were killed by the crossfire from their own comrades. The CTD recovered hand grenades, two rifles, bullets, and explosive materials from the terrorists' hideout.

### Man held for harassing woman

THATTA (INP): After various raids in different areas, local police arrested a man, Rehmatullah Nahio, for harassing a woman polio worker in Thatta district on Friday. According to details, Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also took serious notice of this incident and directed to use all available resources for security and protection of woman polio workers. He also sought a detailed report from Commissioner Hyderabad regarding security of polio workers.

# Police arrests three alleged terrorists

Shafi Ullah

MINGORA: Police has arrested three terrorists allegedly involved in the



recent attack on Banr police post, which had resulted to the loss of one policeman as well as injuring another one, on Friday.

This was claimed by District Police Officer and added that the perpetrators were successfully tracked

down with the aid of CCTV footage, leading to their eventual arrest. The accused, including Mohammad Haris, a member of

the Tehreek-e-Taliban, were subsequently presented to the media.

DPO revealed that Mohammad Haris' father was a victim of a previous terror attack, and the gang members are all related, with many having fallen victim to terrorist incidents in the past. Authorities have identified five members of the gang, and a dedicated police effort is underway to apprehend the remaining suspects.

Police is committed to bring those responsible for the heinous attack on the Banr police post to justice and ensuring the safety and security of their personnel and the community at large.

# Commissioner visits govt school and hospitals

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The Commissioner Malakand Division Amjad Ali Khan along with deputy commissioner Muhammad Arif Khan visited the government high school Shawa, rural health center Gulabad and Category B tehsil headquarter hospital Chakdara in the Lower Dir district here on Friday.

The officials checked the school library, computer lab and various classes. The commissioner awarded the students cash prizes for showing the best performance in the academic field. The DC was instructed to issue a circular to all the educational institutions that monthly tests would be conducted regularly.

The commissioner said that the Bazm-e Adab program should be organized each month to highlight the potential and hidden abilities of male and female students. He directed the

school administration to repair windows, glasses and floors of the school. He also directed the DC to shift the electric poles in the school to another place. He said the vacant posts would be filled soon.

Later, the Commissioner along with the deputy DHO Dr Wali Khan paid a surprise visit to the rural health center Gulabad and inspected various units. He inquired about the medical facilities and treatment in the hospital from the patients.

The commissioner directed the hospital in-charge to make the X-Ray machine functional or send a proposal for a new X-ray machine to the health department. The commissioner asked the deputy DHO to send a report to the Secretary Health for supply of hematology machine, dental chair and dental medical equipment.

The commissioner also inspected the Category-B hospital Chakdara. He

checked various units of the hospital. He asked the deputy DHO to send a detailed report regarding the budget allocated to the health department. He directed the hospital's MS to install benches and chairs with all the units to ensure timely medical facilities to the public.

The commissioner also visited the e-domicile and revenue section in the office of assistant commissioner Adenazi and inquired about public services from students and citizens. He directed the AC to take immediate action on public complaints. He ordered the record room to be shifted to a separate room. The commissioner Amjad Ali Khan along with DC Arif Khan and AAC Sardar Badshah held a meeting with the Chakdara Bar Association and directed the DC to notify the Sub-Divisional Liaison Committee to dispose of the court cases as soon as possible.

# Qirat, Naatkhawani competitions held

Sahibzada Afridi

KOHAT: In light of the directions of Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the divisional level Qirat and Naatkhawani competitions in line with the Eid Milad-ul-Nabi (SAW) Celebrations concluded at Divisional Headquarter Kohat on Friday.

Member Provincial Assembly Daud Shah Afridi Advocate was the chief guest while the ceremony beside the Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah, Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram, Officers of District Administration and Line Departments was also attended by the renowned Ulemas, Mashaikh, Hufaz, Naat Khawans and students of schools and madrasas in large number.

The 1st prize of Qirat

and Naat-Khawani compensation was Rs.80000/-, 2nd was Rs.60000/- and 3rd was Rs. 40000/-. Daud Shah Afridi MPA, Commissioner Kohat Syed Motasim Billah Shah and Deputy Commissioner Kohat Abdul Akram while addressing the ceremony said that the Imam-ul-Anbiyaa Sayyidina Hazrat Muhammad Mustafa (SAW) came to this world as Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen (SAW) for the entire world and struggles hard for the welfare of humanity adding that even He (SAW) did not hesitate to make any sacrifice.

They said that It is the need of the hour to hold maximum events on the Oswa-e-Hassanah of Hazrat Muhammad ? because this will make His life a part of our lives and our new generation will be

properly exposed to the virtues of the greatest personality of Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

They said that no greater personality had been born than Him (SAW) on earth and will never be born. His (SAW) holy life is a beacon light not only for Muslims but for the entire humanity. The manner in which the Prophet (SAW) spoke to his enemies and worst opponents in difficult situations and conveyed the message of Allah the Almighty in such effective manner has no example.

On this occasion, the Commissioner Kohat announced to start a special class for character building of children at the school level, apart from organizing a Qirat and Naatkhawani competitions for the blinds at the divisional level.

# Govt commits for uplift, prosperity of masses

F.P. Report

HUB: We are using all possible resources to solve the problems of our people and the region and Inshallah very soon we will make HUB a city of lights in the true sense. May Allah fulfill our promises. He gave us strength and made us proud in front of our people.

These views were expressed by Provincial Advisor for Industry and Crafts and Spokesperson President Asif Ali Zardari and Hub District President Mir Ali Hassan Zehri in a statement. He said that work has started on roads, sewerage and drainage line schemes in Gadani at a cost of 100 million rupees. He said that now not individual but collective work is being done in Gadani. By the grace of Allah, Gadani will be made a model city very soon. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that hundreds of development projects of public interest are being worked on rapidly at a cost of billions of rupees. Seeing the happiness on the faces of the people after the problems are solved, it gives comfort to the heart that Allah made us strength and gave us the

opportunity to serve the people.

He further said that the work of laying a new gas pipeline has been started in Allahabad Town HUB, which will solve the long-time problem of low gas pressure in Allahabad Town including Magsi Colony, Bhitabad, Qalandrani Mohalla and surrounding will be solved. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri warned the anti-people elements and said that they should refrain from any mischief against the aspirations of the people. Those who try to obstruct the ongoing development works across the district will be dealt with strictly.

The people have rejected the self-interested elements imposed for the last several decades and the politics of their personal interests have been buried forever. Mir Ali Hassan Zehri said that the schemes of hospitals, laboratories, roads and clean drinking water have completed. While improvement in the health and education sectors is our first priority. People are benefiting from Nadra van, passport office, mobile vans of Benazir Income Support Program and other public projects. He said that

with the mercy of Allah and the support of the people, the development and prosperity of HUB District will continue.

While Mir Mousa Bakhsh Bizenjo, a well-known political and social figure and senior leader of Pakistan Peoples Party and other dignitaries paid tribute to the public services of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri, and said that as Mir Ali Hassan Zehri is working day and night for public interest projects according to the aspirations of the people of HUB district, he is commendable.

The advisor said that the construction of link roads in Tehsil Gadani will relieve the people of Gadani from the traffic problems, for which the people here are deeply grateful to Mir Ali Hassan Zehri for helping the people here. Mir Mousa Bakhsh Bizenjo said that as Mir Ali Hassan Zehri is leading for the development and prosperity of HUB District, we should strengthen his hands. Mir Mousa Bakhsh Bizenjo said that the people of the area pay tribute to the public services of Mir Ali Hassan Zehri and assure their full cooperation.



JEHANGIRA: Adviser to KP CM, Abdul Karim Toredhare inaugurating Korean language classes at Government Technical and Vocational Training Centre for boys.

## Residents block road against load shedding Syed Waliullah Shah

NEWSHERA: The residents blocked the Nowshera-Mardan road in protest against unannounced load shedding of electricity and gas at Khandar. The protest was led by provincial general secretary Goods Transport Haji Sikandar Khan and president Local public transport Iftikhar Khan, on Friday.

According to details, the protesters carrying placards condemning the cruel load shedding of electricity and gas, as well as the exorbitant increase in prices. The speakers including Haji Sikandar Khan and Iftikhar Khan, said that the PESCO authorities had started cruel load shedding in Khandar, which had paralyzed business and domestic life. They added that the exorbitant increase in electricity prices had made it difficult for the poor to pay their bills.

They also said that the situation with Sui gas was similar, with frequent load shedding leaving children without breakfast and forcing them to go to school on empty stomachs. The protesters blocked the Nowshera-Mardan road for several hours, causing long queues of vehicles and difficulties for passengers.

Meanwhile, Assistant Commissioner Nowshera, Ahmad Sher Zaman, arrived at the scene and assured the protesters that he would talk to the relevant authorities to reduce load shedding in Khandar. The protesters dispersed after his assurance.

## KKKU displays merit list F.P. Report

KARAK: Khushal Khan Khattak University (KKKU) Karak are has displayed merit list and the students are requested to see their names in the merit list in their respective department in Fall season 2024.

According to details, student, who get place in merit list of admission in the department, they applied, should come for interviews in the same department with original documents. Director Academic Dr. Fasih informed and added that the purpose of process is to ensure students entry timely and surely.

All the aspirants of admission in Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak will be fully guided, he further said and continued saying that in case of any problem, contact the Directorate of Admissions and any problem faced will be solved on the spot during office hours.

## Police recovers 10 stolen motorcycles F.P. Report

LARKANA: As many as 10 stolen motorcycles were recovered and handed over to their owners while carrying out operations to control crime in Larkana district, on Friday.

According to the details, on the identification of the suspects arrested at various locations, the stolen motorcycle of citizen Asad Qureshi was arrested.

# Hospital doctors boycott OPD duty in Dir

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: The doctors working in the district headquarters hospital Timergara on the call of Young Doctors Association on Friday boycotted duties in OPDs For one hour and staged a protest rally in front of the surgical block for acceptance of their eleven demands including appointment of the principal and chief executive at Timergara Medical College.

All the senior and junior doctors boycotted their duties for one hour from 10 am to 11 am and threatened to extend the duration of boycott from Monday if the demands were not met.

Addressing the protesting doctors, the YDA district President Dr Najeebullah and others demanded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government to immediately appoint a permanent principal and Chief Executive at Timergara Medical College. They said that strict action should be taken against the persons in irregularities in the sehat insaf card according to the recommendations of a probe committee.

The sneakers said the delay in health card tender and the supply of substandard medicines and surgical equipment to the hospital

should be properly investigated. They also demanded activation of the hospital intense care unit. They condemned the un-necessary political intervention in the hospital affairs and demanded its immediate end. The speakers said the hospital security should be enhanced according to the prevailing law and order situation in the region.

They said the missing equipment handed over to the hospital by an INGO, the MSF should be traced and recovered. They said the hospital emergency should be managed like the MSF managed it in the past. They also demanded shifting of administration offices from the doctors' hostel, computerization of OPD, laboratory and X-ray record.

The speakers said that equipment purchased for the hospital worth millions of rupees rusted without use as it still needed installation. The protesters also demanded an immediate inquiry regarding the theft of computers and its software.

**Scholars defence:** Ms. Aysha Bibi, an MPhil scholar in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Malakand (UoM), on Friday successfully defended her MPhil thesis titled \*Analysis of transmission and control of

tuberculosis based on deterministic mathematical model. Her thesis was supervised by Dr. Saeed Ahmad, Assistant Professor of Mathematics. The external examiner was Prof. Dr Asif Jan, Department of Mathematics University of Science and Technology Kohat, who appreciated the hard work of the scholar.

Another scholar Ms. Noshi Gul also defended her MPhil thesis titled \*Stability and optimal control analysis of an SEIQR epidemic model with saturated incidence rate at the UoM. Her thesis was supervised by Dr. Saeed Ahmed, Assistant Professor of Mathematics.

The external examiner was Dr. Ahmed Zeeshan, Professor, Department of Mathematics and statistics, International Islamic University Islamabad, 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, Ms. Noshi Gul wholeheartedly thanked all his teachers, friends, and well-wishers for their support in her significant achievements.

# Rahmat-ul-Lil-Alamin conference concluded

Anees Takar

MARDAN: Provincial Minister for Food and Commissioner Mardan emphasized on the importance of Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) teachings in every aspect of life at the Divisional Rahmatul Lil Alamin Conference and Quran Recitation and Naat Khawani competition held at the Bacha Khan Medical College auditorium.

The event organized by the Divisional Administration Mardan, aimed to promote the Prophet's (PBUH) message of peace, love and harmony. The conference was attended by RPA Amir Farzand Khan, Deputy Commissioner Mian Behzad Adil, Medical College Dean Professor Dr. Muhammad Amjad, Secretary to Commissioner Sara Tawab, DHO Mardan Dr. Javed Iqbal, AC Mardan Kamran Khan, AC Takht Bhai Junaid Khalid and various government officials, students and teachers.

The competition featured participants from Mardan and Swabi districts



with winners receiving cash prizes and certificates. In the Quran recitation category, Dahya Kalbi from Usmania Children Academy Takht Bhair secured first position, Maria Farhad from Sentel Girls Model School Katlang bagged second and Ikrumullah from Madrasa Abdullah bin Masood Swabi took third position.

In the Naat Khawani category, Husna Aziz from High School No. 1 Mardan won first prize, Aysha Amin from High School Gujrat secured second, and Minahil from Government School Thandkoi Swabi took third position.

The event concluded with the distribution of prizes among the winners by Provincial Minister Zahoor Shah Toru,

Commissioner Mardan Javed Marwat, MPA Amir Farzand Khan, Deputy Commissioner Behzad Adil and Medical College Dean Dr. Amjad. The Commissioner Mardan awarded cash prizes of Rs. 80,000, Rs. 60,000 and Rs. 40,000 to the first, second and third position holders respectively.

In his address, Commissioner Mardan Javed Marwat stressed the significance of such events in creating awareness among the younger generation about the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings and various aspects of his life. He emphasized that the Prophet's (PBUH) life serves as a guiding light for humanity and pledged to continue organizing such events in the future.

# Construction work on Pacha bazaar bypass resumed after long delay

F.P. Report

BUNER: The construction on Pacha bazar bypass resumed after long delay and started works on the last major bridge with heavy machinery. It should be noted that the Pir Baba Bypass road is three kilometers and its total cost stand at Rs170 million.

The work on this project was started in the previous government of PTI when Riaz Khan was the advisor of C&W but the government was ended before completion its

tenure.

Due to which the ongoing work on this project was delayed. Now when Riaz Khan re-elected MPA, in view of the importance of this project, he has started work on it again.

It worth mentioning, through this bypass pilgrims Darbar Hazrat Pir Baba and visitors and tourists going to Kalil, Qadir Nagar and Gokand tourist spots and locals of Malakpur, Batai, Kalabat will get rid of wasting precious time and petrol by getting stuck in traffic

jams on the narrow road of Pacha Bazaar all the time due to rush.

The shopkeepers of Pacha Bazaar will also feel relieved as the will be able to handle and deal with customers with persistence. Syed Wahid, President of Pacha Bazar Traders Community has expressed his happiness on the resumption of work on Pacha Bazar Pir Baba Bypass and has demanded the government to release ample funds for the early completion of this project so as to complete it as soon as possible.





## Putin says West will be fighting with Russia if it lets Kyiv use missiles

MOSCOW (Reuters): President Vladimir Putin said that the West would be directly fighting with Russia if it allowed Ukraine to strike Russian territory with Western-made long-range missiles, a move he said would alter the nature and scope of the conflict.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has been pleading with Kyiv's allies for months to let Ukraine fire Western missiles including long-range US ATACMS and British Storm Shadows deep into Russian territory to limit Moscow's ability to launch attacks.

In some of his most hawkish comments on the subject yet, Putin said such a move would drag the countries supplying Kyiv with long-range missiles directly into the war since satellite targeting data and the actual programming of the missiles' flight paths would have to be done by NATO military personnel because Kyiv did not have the capabilities itself. "So this is not a question of allowing the Ukrainian regime to strike Russia with these weapons or not. It is a question of deciding whether or not NATO countries are directly involved in a mili-

tary conflict," Putin told Russian state TV.

"If this decision is taken, it will mean nothing less than the direct involvement of NATO countries, the United States and European countries in the war in Ukraine. This will be their direct participation, and this, of course, will significantly change the very essence, the very nature of the conflict." Russia would be forced to take what Putin called "appropriate decisions" based on the new threats.

He did not spell out what those measures could be, but he has spoken in the past of the option of arming the West's enemies with Russian weapons to strike Western targets abroad and in June spoke of deploying conventional missiles within striking distance of the United States and its European allies.

Russia, the world's largest nuclear power, is also in the process of revising its nuclear doctrine - the circumstances in which Moscow would use nuclear weapons - and Putin is being pressed by an influential foreign policy hawk to change it to state Russia's willingness to use nuclear arms against

countries that "support NATO aggression in Ukraine."

Russia is also currently holding major naval exercises with China and considering curbs on major commodity exports. The West casts its discussion around whether it should allow Kyiv to use its long-range weapons to strike Russia as part of an answer to what it says is an escalation of the war by Moscow, which is says has received ballistic missiles from Iran. Tehran said the claims were "ugly propaganda".

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022 with tens of thousands of troops, triggering the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the depths of the Cold War. Putin casts the conflict as part of an existential battle with a declining and decadent West which he says humiliated Russia after the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 by encroaching on what he considers Moscow's sphere of influence, including Ukraine. The West and Ukraine describe the invasion as an imperial-style land grab and have vowed to defeat Russia on the battlefield. Russia controls over 18% of Ukrainian territory.

## Iran summons heads of four European embassies

DUBAI (Reuters): Iran's foreign ministry summoned the heads of the British, French, German and Dutch embassies, the Iranian judiciary's Mizan news agency reported, following accusations of missile transfers to Russia and the imposition of new sanctions.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that Russia had received ballistic missiles from Iran and would likely use them in its war in Ukraine within weeks. The US, Britain, Germany and France also announced new sanctions on Iran, including measures against its national airline Iran Air.

The Kremlin said after Blinken's statement that the assertions were baseless. Iran said the statements on missile transfers to Russia were "false and misleading" and condemned the new sanctions, which also include the cancellation of bilateral air services agreements by the three European states. "Following the continuation of non-constructive statements by some European parties aligned with the United States falsely claiming [Iranian] interference in the Ukraine conflict and imposing sanctions on the Islamic Republic, the embassy heads of Britain, France, the Netherlands and Germany have been summoned in Tehran," Mizan said.

Iran's most senior diplomat in London was summoned by Britain's foreign ministry. Iran's ambassador to the Netherlands was summoned by the Dutch foreign ministry which called for "new, robust EU sanctions" against Tehran.

## US sanctions 16 allies of Venezuela's president

WASHINGTON (AP): The US government responded to Venezuela's disputed July presidential election by imposing sanctions against 16 allies of President Nicolás Maduro, accusing them of obstructing the vote and carrying out human rights abuses. Those targeted by the Treasury Department include the head of the country's high court, leaders of state security forces and prosecutors. The move came days after the departure into exile of Edmundo González Urrutia, the former diplomat who represented the main opposition parties and claimed to have won the July 28 presidential election by a wide margin.

Venezuela's electoral authorities declared Maduro the victor hours after polls closed, but unlike previous presidential elections, they never released detailed vote tallies to back up their claim arguing that the National Electoral Council's website was hacked. To the surprise of supporters and opponents, González and opposition leader María Corina Machado shortly afterward announced not only that their campaign had obtained vote tallies from over two-thirds of the electronic voting machines used in the election but also that they had published them online to show the world that Maduro had lost. Global condemnation over the lack of transparency prompted Maduro to ask Venezuela's high court, stacked with ruling party loyalists, to audit the results. The court reaffirmed his victory.

Experts from the United Nations and the Carter Center, which observed the election at the invitation of Maduro's government, determined the results announced by electoral authorities lacked credibility. The UN experts stopped short of validating the opposition's claim to victory but said the faction's voting records published online appear to exhibit all of the original security features. "Rather than respecting the will of the Venezuelan people as expressed at the ballot box, Maduro and his representatives have falsely claimed victory while repressing and intimidating the democratic opposition in an illegitimate attempt to cling to power by force," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

## Russia can end war now, says UK PM

LONDON (BBC): Russia "started" the conflict in Ukraine and can end it "straight away", Sir Keir Starmer has said after Vladimir Putin suggested Moscow would regard Western missiles being fired into Russia as a serious escalation of the war.

The PM is in Washington for talks with US President Joe Biden on Friday, as allies of Kyiv discuss giving Ukraine permission to fire their missiles at targets inside Russia. Putin told Russian state television that this would "mean nothing other than the direct participation of Nato countries - in the war in Ukraine."

"It is their direct participation. And, of course, this substantially changes the very essence, the nature of the conflict." He added: "If that is the case, we will take corresponding decisions based on the threats that will be created to us." Asked for his response to the remarks on his flight to Washington, the prime minister struck a robust tone repeatedly stating that Russia had started the war.

"Russia started this conflict. Russia illegally invaded Ukraine. Russia can end this conflict straight away," he told reporters, later adding: "To reiterate, it was Russia who started this in the first place. They caused the conflict, they're the ones who are acting unlawfully." The prime minister and Foreign Secretary David Lammy are on a blitz of international diplomacy, as Ukraine's allies discuss how to respond to Iran stepping up its support for Russia. Lammy told the BBC this "clearly changes the debate" as he visited Kyiv alongside the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken.

On Sunday, the day after the prime minister returns from Washington, he will fly to Rome to meet the Italian Prime Minister, Giorgia Meloni. Italy currently holds the rotating presidency of the G7 group of industrialised countries. A week later world leaders will gather in New York for the annual UN General Assembly.



There has long been a hesitancy to allow Ukraine to fire Western missiles into Russia, because of fears it could be seen as provocative and draw the US, European countries and others directly into the conflict. But with winter approaching and Russia getting extra support from Iran, minds appear to be changing. You can read more about the Anglo-French cruise missile, called Storm Shadow, that could be used here. When asked about the prospect of allowing the missiles to be used, the public remarks of senior figures remain guarded.

"There are really important developments likely in the next few weeks and months, both in Ukraine and the Middle East, and therefore a number of tactical decisions ought to be taken," the prime minister told reporters, without disputing the issue is on the agenda." He noted that both Blinken and Lammy had recently visited Ukraine. "They're obviously with us to report into the process on a really important joint trip."

Speaking earlier in the day, Putin said: "This isn't about allowing or banning the Kyiv regime from striking Russian territory. It does that already with drones and by other means. "But when we talk about high-precision, long-range weapons

made in the West this is a completely different matter... The Ukrainian army is not able to strike with modern, high-precision, long-range systems. It can't do this. It is only possible with intelligence data from satellites that Ukraine doesn't have, data that's only from satellites of the European Union, the USA, Nato satellites." "The key point," he added, "is that only servicemen of Nato countries can input flight missions into these missile systems. Ukrainian servicemen cannot do this. Therefore this is not about permitting or not permitting the Ukrainian regime to strike Russia with these weapons."

"This is about whether or not Nato countries take the decision to directly participate in the military conflict." This is the prime minister's second visit to Washington in a little over two months, having travelled here in July for the Nato Summit and a visit to the White House, shortly after winning the general election. Sir Keir said he would not be meeting the vice-president and Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris during the visit. When asked by journalists on the flight to the US, he said: "No, because she will be in other parts of the US as you'd expect, rather than Washington, she'll be as you'd expect in swing states... That's fine."

## China, Russia chide West at annual security forum in Beijing

BEIJING (Reuters): Chinese and Russian defence officials on Friday took swipes at the West at a military diplomacy forum in Beijing, with China pitching to the Global South and Russia saying the United States was shifting military conflicts to the Asia-Pacific.

In a wide-ranging speech to the annual Xiangshan Forum, China's defence minister, Dong Jun, said China would enhance military ties with its neighbours and with developing countries in particular. "Major countries must take the lead in safeguarding global security, abandon a zero-sum mindset and refrain from bullying the small and the weak," Dong said, in a veiled criticism of the United States, which he did not name.

In a "multipolar" world, "no one can afford to be an outsider or onlooker", he added. "Countries, no matter big or small, developed or developing, should have an equal right to participate in international affairs and voice their needs, and uphold their legitimate rights and interests," Dong said.

Dong's remarks come as communications ease between the US and Chinese militaries despite

roiling tensions over the South China Sea, Taiwan and Washington's concerns at Beijing's close relationship with Russia amid its 30-month-old invasion of Ukraine. Dong made his remarks to representatives from 90 countries and international organisations at the tightly choreographed three-day forum, which ends on Saturday.

He said that to solve regional tensions, regional countries should "seek strength through unity and rely on themselves for their own peace". "We should put down arrogance and prejudice, never interfere in other countries' internal affairs, never violate other countries' rights and interests," Dong said. Russian deputy defence minister Alexander Fomin was more explicit, saying in his speech that the United States was trying to contain China and Russia while preparing for war in Asia by creating new security blocs.

"Russia and China support the creation of a just, multipolar world order based on equality and mutual respect," he said. "In order to create conditions to force Russia into negotiations based on Kyiv's formulas, NATO

countries plan to send troops to Ukraine," he added. "This is a dangerous game which can lead to a direct conflict of nuclear powers." NATO has said repeatedly it has no plans to send troops to Ukraine.

Fomin's rhetoric contrasted with Dong's vision of Beijing as a responsible international crisis mediator. China is eager to promote itself as a responsible player in global conflicts, despite being entangled in long-simmering territorial spats in East Asia. This year's forum is themed "Promoting Peace for a Shared Future". Some diplomats and analysts are watching closely for signs of further progress in the military relationship between the US and China on the fringes of the conference.

The US is represented by Michael Chase, deputy assistant secretary of defence for China, Taiwan and Mongolia. Chase will head a US delegation for talks with Chinese military counterparts after the forum - building on defence coordination talks in Hawaii that resumed in January for the first time since September 2021, the Pentagon said. Although some regional states have sent defence ministers to

the forum, Western countries generally send lower-level delegations, preferring the long-standing annual Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore to discuss key security issues.

The forum comes after US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan met Zhang Youxia, the vice-chairman of the China's commanding Central Military Commission, in Beijing last month and US and Chinese theatre-level commanders this week held their first-ever conference call. On the forum sidelines, former senior Pentagon official for China Chad Sbragia said US participation in the event showed Washington was committed to engagement. "It shows, I think, symbolically to China, to the United States and certainly to allies and partners globally that the United States is committed to listening, to participating, to joining in and not being afraid to talk," Sbragia said.

Dong is responsible for China's military diplomacy but is not part of the Central Military Commission, China's core command body. An admiral in China's navy, he was appointed in December after an anti-corruption purge in the army's top ranks.

## Focus on to improve Thailand's economy, says new PM

BANGKOK (AP): Thailand's new Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra vowed in her inaugural speech to Parliament to continue many of her predecessor's plans to solve the country's economic woes.

Paetongtarn, the leader of the ruling Pheu Thai Party and daughter of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, took office last month after a court ousted Srettha Thavisin from his post over an accusation that he had violated an ethics law by appointing a Cabinet member who had served time in prison in connection with a bribery case. Pheu Thai formed a government headed by Srettha after members of the conservative Senate refused to endorse the prime minister nominated by the progressive Move Forward Party, which won the most seats in last year's general election.

Thailand is facing several economic challenges and Paetongtarn said her government will urgently address the issues of high household debt, the rising cost of living and lagging

incomes "to bring the hope of Thai people back as soon as possible." Among the government's more immediate plans are measures to relieve household debt and reduce the rising cost of electricity, petrol and transport, as well as to boost tourism and bring new technologies to the agricultural sector, she said.

Paetongtarn said the government will generate new income by legalizing and taxing the "informal economy" and the "underground economy." Although she provided no details, it was an apparent reference to plans to legalize casinos, which are being promoted as "entertainment complexes" that can attract revenue windfalls. The draft of the law, sponsored by the Finance Ministry, says a casino would be allowed to operate within a complex that also houses other businesses such as a hotel, a convention hall, a mall or a theme park. Access to casinos will be restricted to those younger than 20 years old. They will be open for foreigners, while Thai citizens must pay 5,000 baht

(\$148) for an entrance fee, according to the draft.

She said the government will protect small businesses from unfair competition from foreign operators, especially on online platforms. Industry groups in Thailand have expressed increasing concern about an influx of cheap products from China that they say have hurt sales by domestic producers. Paetongtarn said she will carry out Srettha's 10,000-baht (\$296) digital cash handout program, although details in her speech were sparse. Officials from her administration have said the "Digital Wallet" program, initially promised during last year's election campaign to give cash handouts to all Thais aged 16 and older, will now prioritize vulnerable low-income groups. They are set to be paid a lump sum this month or by October, while others who are eligible may be paid in installments starting later this year.

In a shift from Srettha, who had vowed to make cannabis illegal again, Paetongtarn said her admin-

istration will support medical cannabis as a way to boost the economy, with regulations added to mitigate its social impact. Cannabis was decriminalized in Thailand in 2022, intended only for medicinal use, but in practice the market is virtually unregulated and there was a proliferation of retail shops catering to recreational users. Fears of drug abuse, especially among young people, as well as concerns about health, prompted a public backlash, and during last year's election campaign Paetongtarn's Pheu Thai, along with other parties, pledged to restore measures to ban the drug. However, the government in July suddenly signaled it was backtracking from that pledge.

Paetongtarn said her government in the longer term will also address climate change, improve the quality of education and the universal healthcare system, and tackle political instability by drafting a more democratic constitution and reforming the bureaucratic system and the military.

## Xi to visit Russia next month for BRICS summit

MOSCOW (AP): Chinese leader Xi Jinping will visit Russia next month for a summit of the BRICS bloc of developing economies, China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi confirmed, a move that comes as Moscow and Beijing seek to counter the West's global influence.

Xi's visit to Russia will be his second since the Kremlin sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. China claims to take a neutral position in the conflict, but it has backed the Kremlin's contentions that Russia's action was provoked by the West, and it continues to supply key components needed by Moscow for weapons production. Wang Yi met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in St. Petersburg and the two hailed ties between the two countries. The Chinese foreign minister said that Xi "happily accepted" Putin's invite to attend the BRICS summit in the Russian city of Kazan in October.

Putin, in turn,

announced that the two will also sit down for a bilateral meeting in Kazan and discuss various aspects of the Russia-China relations, which "are developing quite successfully" and "in all directions."

Xi last visited Russia in March 2023 and Putin reciprocated with his own trip to China in Oct. that year. The two leaders have since also met in Beijing in May, where Putin took the first foreign trip of his fifth presidential term, and in Kazakhstan in July.

After launching what the Kremlin insists on calling a "special military operation" in Ukraine, Russia has become increasingly dependent economically on China as Western sanctions cut its access to much of the international trading system. China's increased trade with Russia, totaling \$240 billion last year, has helped the country mitigate some of the worst blows from the sanctions. Moscow has diverted the

bulk of its energy exports to China and relied on Chinese companies to import high-tech components for Russian military industries to circumvent Western sanctions.

The two countries have also deepened their military ties in the last two years. The BRICS alliance was founded in 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China, with South Africa joining in 2010. It has recently undergone an expansion and now includes Iran, Egypt, Ethiopia and the United Arab Emirates. Saudi Arabia has said it's considering joining, and Azerbaijan and Malaysia have formally applied. BRICS has a stated aim to amplify the voice of major emerging economies to counterbalance the Western-led global order. Its founding members have called for a fairer world order and the reform of international institutions like the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

## Mexico will amend its constitution this weekend

MEXICO CITY (AP): Mexico is poised to amend its constitution this weekend to require all judges to be elected as part of a judicial overhaul championed by the outgoing president but slammed by critics as a blow to the country's rule of law. The amendment passed Mexico's Congress, it already had been ratified by the required majority of the country's 32 state legislatures. President Andrés Manuel López Obrador said he would sign and publish the constitutional change on Sunday.

Legal experts and international observers have said the move could endanger Mexico's democracy by stacking courts with judges loyal to the ruling Morena party, which has a strong grip on both

Congress and the presidency after big electoral wins in June. López Obrador says the overhaul would crack down on corruption in a system that most Mexicans agree is broken. But critics believe the move will deal a blow to checks and balances and make it easier for cartels and criminals to influence the courts.

The overhaul has fueled weeks of strikes and protests by judicial employees, law students and many other Mexicans. It crossed its biggest hurdle by passing Mexico's Senate. Angry protesters stormed the chambers in a last ditch effort to block the proposal, but senators moved to another location and passed the measure in the early morning after hours of verbal

sparring.

At least 18 legislatures already had ratified the overhaul. López Obrador said he would time his signing of the measure for Sunday's celebration of Mexico's Independence Day. The event will allow the populist leader to solidify the judicial transformation as his legacy, just weeks before he leaves office on Sept. 30.

"With now 18 approving it, well, now it's legal," López Obrador said during a morning news briefing. "It's an incredibly important reform, reaffirming that in Mexico there is authentic democracy. The people electing their representatives, electing their public servants in all three branches, that is democracy," he said.

## Gazans burn plastic waste to produce fuel

GAZA (Reuters): With Israel blocking the entry of almost all fuel into Gaza to prevent its use by Hamas militants, some Palestinians in the north of the shattered territory have turned to using plastic waste to make their own.

"We walk for long distances to collect plastic and bring it from collapsed buildings and towers. Sometimes I'm afraid of reconnaissance (by Israeli military) and I'm afraid of rubble falling on me while I'm walking," Mostafa Mseleh, 16, said, holding

items he'd picked up during his 13-hour daily rounds.

His relative, Mahmoud Mseleh, sorts out the items with other workers, cuts it into smaller parts and then burns them in a makeshift oven set up between the remains of buildings. "I had the idea, and thank God, we managed with the help of God to turn plastic into gasoline and fuel," the 35-year-old displaced Gazan said. "We turned to this work due to the acute shortage of petroleum products."

Other Palestinians, like 53-year-old driver Farid

Gomaa, head of Beit Lahia in the northern part of the strip to get some of the fuel produced by burning plastic, braving clashes between Hamas militants and Israeli forces and widespread Israeli airstrikes. "We come here amid the danger and get a long commute to get a litre of fuel, which is cheaper than in other places," he said. The process of burning plastic is mired in challenges, and burns are a risk as well as bombardment, but after 11 months of war, the Gazans undertaking it are stoical.



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# Harris clearly beat Trump

**S**HORT of sticking two pencils up his nose and muttering the word "wibble", Trump's appearance on the debate stage on Tuesday night was never going to prove, decisively, to those on the fence, that he is unfit for high office. Unlike Biden's disastrous turn two and a half months ago, chaos is part of Trump's appeal - and if his thoughts are garbled, it signifies nothing beyond business as usual. And yet, even for Trump, aspects of his debate performance in Pennsylvania came so close to the edge on Tuesday that the next day what seemed most astonishing wasn't that Harris had performed so well but that so many apparently sentient human beings were still shilling for her unhinged opponent.

Heading into the encounter, one had the strangest sense both of the height of the stakes and also of the sheer entertainment value of the encounter. I found myself wondering about Harris's nerves - how a person handles them in such a unique situation. In the debate's opening moments, the vice-president did indeed seem nervous. But she settled, and about 15 minutes in, it started to happen: while Harris's keenly controlled anger rose to a point, Trump, mouth bunching, eyes disappearing into his head, unravelled.

A reference by Harris to her endorsement from Trump's alma mater, the Wharton School, and some senior Republicans including - confusing for liberals! - Dick Cheney triggered a volley of "she's from Trump. She, she, she, he said - always a sign he is losing it against a female antagonist. "She copied Biden's plan and it's like four sentences, like Run Spot Run!" And off he went on his downward spiral.

The next day, consumers of American rightwing media were partially apprised of Trump's performance, but it was pretzeled around a lot of excuse-making. Even this very mild acknowledgement of Trump's weakness, however, was a departure from the full-throated support of the Murdoch press in 2016. In the pro-Trump New York Post, the paper admitted that Trump had been "rattled" but bleated about unfairness from the debate moderators on ABC News. (They pulled Trump up on his lies about immigrants eating American pets and Democrats legalising infanticide - there were times, on Tuesday night, when the task of debating Trump looked a lot like trying to debate a copy of the National Enquirer.)

Over on Fox News, there was a lot of glum post-debate punditry. Brit Hume said sadly of Harris: "She came out in pretty good shape." The most Sean Hannity could manage was that the "real loser" was ABC. Jesse Watters said: "This was rough," pronounced that most people watching wouldn't think "any of these people won", and observed: "All the memorable lines were from Donald Trump." Which, of course, technically was true. (Apart from the pet-eating thing, my two favourite Trump lines were "Venezuela on steroids" and "I told Abdul: don't do it any more!" - an absolute corker from Trump on the subject of how he stuck it to the Taliban.) Then Trump himself popped up on the network to accuse the debate of being "rigged" - a sure sign, whatever the competition, that he had in fact lost.

On X, eugenics fan and world's richest man Elon Musk admitted Trump had had a bad night and that Harris had "exceeded most people's expectations". This was grudging but had the advantage over the reaction of other Trump supporters of actually acknowledging reality. He followed up with: "We will never reach Mars if Kamala Harris wins" - a fact that, assuming Musk himself plans to undertake the journey, would be one drawback to a Harris win indeed.

In the rightwing British press, meanwhile, there were various milquetoast attempts to mitigate Trump's failure, including the Daily Telegraph's post-debate assertion that it was "difficult to crown Harris the victor when she said so little about her own platform". Was it, though? Was it really that difficult to pick a winner between the woman who, if she loses in November, we can be fairly certain won't refuse to accept the decision versus the guy shouting "Execute the baby!" and citing Viktor Orbán as a character witness? And yet the conclusion in the Daily Mail was: "Pathetic, both of them."

Given the evidence before us, these moments of cognitive dissonance are becoming increasingly hard to process. Because the truth, of course, is that Trump looked like a lunatic on Tuesday night. As he got angrier, his shoulders slumped, his body twisted and certain familiar phrases started to pop up in his speech. "I'm not, she is!"; repeated use of the word "horrible". Of Biden he said, referring to Harris: "He hates her; he can't stand her." For my money, however, his craziest moment wasn't any of this, or even the pets thing, but when he wandered off on a diversion about the horrors of solar energy, then said: "You ever see a solar plant? By the way I'm a big fan of solar." During some of these rants, Harris, despite the tremendous pressure of the moment, actually succeeded in looking bored.

Much has been made of how calm she was, and of how her smirk - what the New York Post disapprovingly called her "dismissive laugh" - goaded Trump to greater depths of incoherence. But I think the best parts of the debate were when Harris, too, grew angry. As a candidate, she has had the problem of being tricky to read and has been accused of being too scripted. But in the abortion section of the debate, one felt she jumped beyond the rehearsed remarks, and you could feel the engine of her conviction roaring to life.

She was angry - seething, in fact - when she delivered the line about a miscarrying woman "bleeding out in a car in the parking lot" because an emergency doctor might be too frightened to treat her. I got that same flash of genuine outrage when, in relation to Russia's expansionist ambitions, she said to Trump: "You adore strongmen instead of caring about democracy." She was, one felt, a beat away from taunting him with: "You want to kiss Putin on the lips, you do." And then her language changed register, moving into a realm generally more favoured by Republicans than Democrats. "That is immoral," Harris said of Trump making decisions about women's bodies. It was a striking moment, this use of a word that might apply equally to all the high-information Americans and their allies in Britain continuing to excuse Trump this far into the game.

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# Why Trump ditched a debate rematch - for now

Stephen Collinson

**T**HE great showman just turned his back on tens of millions of viewers. At least for now. Donald Trump's refusal to take part in another presidential debate with Democratic nominee Kamala Harris marks a significant moment in the 2024 campaign - and hints at vulnerability for a political career built on the foundation of his television fame and mastery of stagecraft.

The ex-president said he doesn't need a rematch because he won Tuesday night's debate, despite overwhelming reviews saying he bombed against a vice president who outdid a former reality star. "Because we've done two debates and because they were successful, there will be no third debate. It's too late anyway, the voting's already begun," Trump said during a wild campaign speech in Arizona on Thursday, also referring to his first debate against Joe Biden, on CNN in June, that led to the president being pushed out of the race by his own party.

But there's an alternative possible explanation: that Trump - who normally can't resist a chance to dominate the small screen - doesn't relish a repeat of a showdown in which he was unprepared and unfocused and squandered his best chance to take down his opponent in a cliffhanger election. The former president might be right to mitigate the risk; after all, polls show he's in a dead heat with Harris in a race in which the fundamentals on top voter priorities like the economy and immigration may favor him.

After Tuesday's onstage meeting, Harris had said that she and her opponent owed it to voters to debate again. Trump's move opened the way for her team to gloat that he is scared to debate her and to boost a performance in which she mocked and rebuked an ill-tempered ex-president with a swagger and a smile. Harris' senior campaign adviser, David Plouffe, blasted Trump on X as "chicken man."

The Republican nominee often changes his mind. But his announcement on there not being another debate seemed more adamant than many of his previous statements and spin. His event in Arizona - apparently meant to focus on economic policy, judging by a backdrop that read "No taxes on tips" and "Make Housing Affordable" - revealed Trump to be still fuming over Tuesday night. He devoted a long period at the start of his speech to a play-by-play of the debate, bitterly complaining about Harris' answers and claiming that he was set up by ABC News. His litany of com-

plaints, however, flew in the face of his claim he won. "People said that I was angry at the debate, angry, and yes, I am angry because he (Biden) allowed 21 million illegal aliens invading our communities," Trump said, using unverified figures on undocumented migration.

Trump's turn against a second debate with Harris came as both candidates headed out on the most intense burst of tit-for-tat campaigning in days. But Trump was also embroiled in yet another controversy over the extreme company he often keeps, after traveling to a 9/11 commemoration with far-right polemicist Laura Loomer, who has touted conspiracy theories about the 2001 attacks. Even Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Georgia congresswoman whose conspiratorial mindset has endeared her to the "Make America Great Again" movement, rebuked Loomer for an "appalling and extremely racist" social media post that denigrated Harris' Indian American heritage.

The furor over whether there'll be another debate and Loomer's proximity to Trump are examples of the heated controversies that flare in the endgames of campaigns, which can often appear irrelevant to the final result. But with a tight race now stripped down to a daily grind for possibly as few as several hundred thousand voters in a few states, such firestorms reveal a great deal about the candidates and their campaigns. Trump's extreme defensiveness and Harris' exuberance on the stump in North Carolina on Thursday paint a picture of how each campaign thinks its candidate did at the debate.

As she did after her euphoric convention in Chicago, the Democratic nominee pleaded with her supporters not to get complacent. "Understand that we are the underdog," the vice president told a huge crowd in Charlotte. It's still too early for a critical mass of polling that could trace the true impact of the debate on the race eight weeks before Election Day. And the result of debates is often not a good predictor of an election result.

But the candidates' itineraries Thursday showed that each side understands how close the election could be. Democrats haven't won North Carolina since 2008, but the state could help pave an alternative road to the White House if Harris can't win critical Pennsylvania. Trump's journey to Arizona stressed that a state that once seemed to be turning red when Biden was still running is now competitive

again with Harris as a nominee who has expanded the electoral map for Democrats.

Both candidates need to win over moderate, suburban, swing voters in the battleground states. And they are taking vastly different approaches to doing so. Harris on Thursday vowed to unite the country and courted traditional Republicans who are disaffected with Trump. She touted her endorsements from former GOP Vice President Dick Cheney and his daughter, former Wyoming Rep. Liz Cheney, and added, "Democrats, Republicans and independents are supporting our campaign."

If Harris is trying to woo the suburbs, Trump is trying to scare them. He ruminated on a series of dark scenarios around the idea that America was being invaded by foreigners, escaped prisoners and criminals who were overwhelming small towns with "Harris migrant crime." He repeated the conservative-spread false claims that Haitian migrants in Springfield, Ohio, are stealing and eating pets. While he occasionally reverted to what appeared to be a prepared text that highlighted Americans' economic struggles - he announced that he would propose ending taxes on overtime, for example - Trump displayed the exact same lack of focus that hampered him in his debate performance. And he again appeared keener to unroll his outlandish rhetoric and dark jokes than hitting the issues that could win him the election.

At times, Trump careened into bizarre diversions. For instance, and not for the first time, he seemed fixated by the size of a large man in the auditorium. He asked, "Wasn't 'The Apprentice' a great show, though?" and wistfully reminisced about the final night of his election campaign in 2016. He also relayed conversations with former first lady Melania Trump in which he called her "Darling" and she critiqued his jokes, his hair and his habit of mocking the way Biden walked down a flight of stairs.

It's becoming increasingly obvious that Trump is underperforming his own campaign. His hard-hitting ads and his vice-presidential nominee, JD Vance, are making sharper economic arguments than he is. Still, Trump still leads Harris in most polls when voters are asked who they trust most to manage the economy and immigration. So while his rhetoric seems egregious to many liberals, his message clearly resonates among millions of Americans. The

economic argument, buried deep in his tirade, about the performance of the Biden-Harris administration hinted at the reasons why the former president may still win the election. His behavior for most of his Arizona speech showed why he may not.

The ex-president's continued ill-discipline on Thursday suggests one reason why his campaign may not want their candidate to climb back on a debate stage - after 60 million people watched his first meeting with Harris. But Bryan Lanza, a senior Trump campaign advisor, insisted that this was a tactical decision. "It's not a function of being scared, it's a function of what are our priorities towards the end of the election," he said on CNN's "The Situation Room." Lanza added: "We have better opportunities through one-on-one interviews - through our rallies, through going into these states and having this impact - than going into a debate that is going to stack the deck against President Trump."

But Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker, a Democrat, said Harris had intimidated the former president. "Donald Trump was weak, he honestly came across as a little desperate," Pritzker told Wolf Blitzer. "Kamala Harris came across as strong and presidential. If he had another debate with her and it happened again, that would be it for his campaign - he would be done."

Pritzker was spinning the best case for Harris. But she might not perform as well in a second debate. And in 2016, Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton was judged the winner of each of her debates with Trump - but it was he who took the oath of office the following January.

Not everyone who knows Trump thinks that his decision is final. Alyssa Farah Griffin, a CNN commentator who used to serve as Trump's White House communications director, foresaw a scenario in which the ex-president might have a change of heart if he is trailing closer to Election Day.

"I would predict that he may change his tune on this," Griffin said on "The Situation Room." "If Kamala Harris sees a bump in the polls from her performance in the debate where most folks think she won, I could see a world where in a couple of weeks Donald Trump says, 'I challenge her to a debate,'" Griffin said. "I could see him thinking, if things get a little bit tighter in the final eight-week stretch, he might need a big moment to remain competitive against her."

CNN

# Two tribes are at war for Tory leadership

Aditya Chakraborty

**R**EAMS of commentary will be written about the battle for the Tory leadership, because newspaper pundits confuse blowing hard on cold ashes with real manual labour. But if reading it all seems too much like hard work, then this column is for you. Today's piece won't be about "What the Conservatives must do to become fit for government", since I don't want them back in government, ever.

No, the purpose of our inquiry is to suss out what kind of opponent the party's next leader will be: the fights they'll pick, the parliamentary votes they'll force and the hurdles they'll heave into the path of better politics. And I believe the best way to do that is with a game involving two words. As you glance across the contenders, ask yourself this: are they a moron or a bastard?

I am not in the business of throwing insults, but using two technical terms with specific definitions that draw upon three decades of rightwing history. "Moron" you may remember from the autumn of 2022, when Liz Truss became prime minister and announced the biggest tax cuts in half a century, promising more to come - much more. It was what markets wanted, apparently - until markets plunged into turmoil and demanded the UK pay penalty rates to borrow, inevitably dubbed the "moron premium".

Moronism is shorthand for a particularly toxic strain of rightwing supply-side economics. It dominates the fringe of any Tory conference, where hobgoblins fresh out of university talk mostly about Laffer curves, planning deregulation and Pinochet's Chile, but it has grown ever more virulent within the parliamentary party over the past decade. And "bastard"? For that our source is John Major. Normally as mild as soap, as prime minister he was caught on tape admitting that the Eurosceptics within his own cabinet had overrun him. The anti-Brussels headbangers were simply too dangerous to sack. "We don't want another three more of the bastards out there." That was 30 years ago. By the early 2010s, the Tory bastards had Brexit in their sights, while a decade later they chunter about immigrants, transgender rights and woke police officers, and can start at least three culture wars over breakfast.

Four candidates are left in the Tory leadership race, but ideologically they fall on one of two sides: those for whom libertarian economics comes first, and those who speak golf-club identity politics. There was a time when Tories could blend the two, as Margaret Thatcher and Enoch Powell did, but the globalised economy makes that impossible today. For one branch of modern Conservatism, "socialism" is the main enemy (a cunning codeword for the welfare state and workers' rights); for the other, it is open borders. Each will nab the other's language, of course, but ultimately their positions are incompatible. Anti-statism or the nation state, free capital markets or closed labour markets, globalisation or anti-globalism: in the end, as the young people say, you've got to pick a lane. In all of Westminster

there is only one example of a front-rank politician who successfully manages to be both a complete moron and an utter bastard, and his name is Nigel Farage. His ability to sport the dual faces of contemporary rightwing politics is part of his siren appeal to the Tory base. It means the greatest unifying candidate in Conservative politics leads a rival party. But the public schoolboy turned tribune of the working class is rarely held to account on his policies. The rightwing press do not ask him to explain how he can triple the tax cuts dreamed up by Truss and scrap NHS waiting lists. The BBC treats him as a panel-show pony rather than a politician. But no one heading the most successful political party in democratic history will be treated with such chuckling indulgence. Whether they want to or not, each Tory candidate has to pick a side.

Robert Jenrick: This is the guy who had himself filmed at 4am watching Albanians get rounded up and flown to Tirana. The video mainly showed him nodding his jowls at each deportation, presumably thinking he looked like Churchill. Yeah, Churchill the dog. Obviously a bastard.

Tom Tugendhat: He gets labels like "liberal" and "centrist", perhaps because he's the nearest thing the Tories have to George Smiley, wearing heavy glasses and looking rueful about the trajectory of his career. In reality, he's happy to leave the European convention on human rights and wants more cash for the army and the police. He's also the MP who, after Putin invaded Ukraine, demanded the UK "expel Russian citizens - all of them".

James Cleverly: The anti-bastard, he's the only contender who recognises that rightwing voters didn't just flood towards Farage: they also opted for Ed Davey and Keir Starmer. This leaves the former Brexit supporter urging "deregulation" and quoting Thatcher, that "the problem with socialism is that eventually you run out of other people's money". Well, the problem with Thatcherism is that eventually you run out of other people's assets to flog, which is partly why Britain is now in so deep a hole.

Kemi Badenoch: Talks like a bastard but walks like a moron. When her mentions have gone a bit quiet, she links Rachel Reeves to Chairman Mao or claims it was no big deal for Britain's economy that it ran the largest empire in history (perhaps it was all for charity). While the Conservatives have always traded as the party of business and property, the game we've just played shows how ideologically fractured the business lobby is today.

Even as the CBI hymns Labour's green energy plans, the hedge fund billionaire Paul Marshall buys the Spectator. Just as Donald Trump can still count on Silicon Valley, so the British right is propped up by the shadow bankers and loophole merchants. But that's me falling back into high-fibre columnism. We might as well enjoy a free show. The final bout for who leads His Majesty's Opposition will be a moron pitted against a bastard. My money is on the last two being Kemi v Robert. What you might call Bad Enoch v Sad Enoch.

The Guardian

# Think of Trump as Robin Hood in reverse

Kimberly A. Clausing

**I**F Trump is elected president, he will have pulled off quite the con - Robin Hood in reverse. His economic policies call for transferring trillions in resources from the poor and middle class to the rich, only minimally dressed up in populism and grievance. Trump consistently blames immigrants and foreigners for taking American jobs and hollowing out heartland factory towns. But his stance blaming "outsiders" for all that ails America, and at the same time proposing draconian trade and immigration policies, will harm more than help US workers.

Trump's 2024 tariff proposals - tariffs are taxes paid on imported goods - would take his first-term policies into disastrous Smoot-Hawley territory, and they would disproportionately burden low-income and middle-class Americans. People in those groups must spend all or most of their income to

get by, whereas richer Americans can afford to save a share of theirs. Tariffs raise prices of imports and the domestic goods that compete with them, and those that spend most or all of their income are immediately affected.

Economic research has left no doubt that US tariffs burden Americans rather than foreigners. They also tend to depress trade and production; any job creation benefits are generally more than offset by harms. For example, research indicates that Trump's tariffs of 2018-19 cost households about \$800 per year, and studies found job losses due to foreign retaliation but no discernible effect on employment in the newly protected sectors. In the case of steel tariffs, exceedingly modest job creation was dwarfed by job loss many times higher in US industries that use steel as an input.

Similarly, the draconian immigration policies that Trump imagines - his prom-

ised "largest deportation operation in the history of our country" - would be deeply harmful to the economic prosperity of the United States, not to mention immoral, tearing apart families and lives. Rather than businesses simply turning to "Americans" to fill in for the deportees, research shows that many of those jobs (and businesses) disappear - 88,000 for every 1 million deportees. It's unsurprising that economic luminaries conclude that Trump's trade and immigration proposals would create enormous "stagflationary" headwinds, risking simultaneous increases in recessionary and inflationary pressures. Why would he pursue such harmful, risky policies?

Blaming "others" for economic stresses is a smoke-and-mirrors distraction from the rest of his agenda, which is deeply unpopular with most Americans: cutting

taxes for the well-off and corporations. Although Trump claims to want broad tax relief, when you do the math related to extending his first-term tax breaks, alongside his tariff proposals, most Americans would be worse off.

Except those at the top. Beyond extending his first-term tax cuts, Trump has vowed to cut the corporate tax rate again, to 15%, disproportionately benefiting shareholders or capital owners. (Taxes on labor income, payroll taxes and tariffs fall more heavily on workers.)

Likewise, his speculative plan to exempt Social Security from taxation, while seemingly generous to all retirees, would mostly benefit well-off retirees while deeply increasing fiscal pressures on the program, risking cuts to benefits in the years ahead. What about Trump's proposal to exempt tips from taxation, which the Harris

campaign has mimicked? Although it could benefit poorer workers, without serious guardrails it could also open large new channels of tax avoidance. Both campaigns are probably more concerned with winning votes among service workers in the swing state of Nevada than with the principles of good tax policy.

A final danger with the Trump fiscal agenda is that it will blow deeper holes in budget deficits and debt, already problematically high. Trump's tax agenda could easily cost \$5 trillion or \$6 trillion over the coming decade, and despite his wishful thinking about replacing income taxes with tariffs, the math, again, doesn't add up. And Trump has never shown much interest in reining in spending; his administration added far more to the national debt than Biden's has.

A potential Harris administration should not learn the wrong lessons from Trump. It's true that President Biden

left many of Trump's China tariffs in place, even as they failed to achieve changes in Chinese trade practices. And the Biden-Harris administration levied new tariffs on \$18 billion in Chinese products. Still, these new tariffs target far less than 1% percent of the trade that the proposed Trump tariffs would tax, and they focus on protecting key strategic domestic industries. The Biden-Harris administration explicitly rejected the kind of broad tariffs that Trump suggests. Harris correctly calls them a "Trump sales tax".

America's "kitchen table" economic issues can't be solved by blaming foreigners and immigrants. Scapegoats are an easy answer for complex problems that instead require strengthening US fundamentals, thoughtful engagement with our trading partners and building a fairer tax system. Make no mistake, Trump's proposals are snake oil, pure and simple.

The Los Angeles Times



# These people have seen Harris in Situation Room

David Ignatius

**WOULD Kamala Harris make a good president and commander in chief? The vice president certainly strengthened her case with a deft performance in Tuesday night's debate. To use a combat metaphor, she appeared to encircle and at times overwhelm her adversaries.**

Harris was forceful in discussing America's role in the world and her commitment to a strong, secure nation. She stole some of former president Donald Trump's lines, calling him a "disgrace," a weak leader and a man manipulated by the flattery of dictators. But skillful performance as a debater isn't the same thing as executive leadership. Baiting an opponent on television isn't preparation for making decisions in the Situation Room. So it's important to examine how Harris would perform on national security issues in office if she won the presidency.

To get a better sense of her potential strengths and weaknesses, I interviewed more than a half-dozen current or former officials who have observed her in the Situation Room or other sensitive national security meetings.

They all expressed versions of the same basic theme: Harris behaves like the prosecutor she was for much of her career. She's skeptical, probing, sometimes querulous. She can be impatient and demanding. But she asks good questions. And if she's convinced of the need, she's not afraid to act. "She's more hard-line than most people think," said one retired four-star general who has briefed her many times. One top member of her staff put it this way: "She's always the same person, pushing for information, making sure people aren't bulls---ing her." Having watched her often in discussions about using military force, he concluded: "Her approach is to measure twice, cut once. But she's not afraid to take the shot."

Based on these and other conversations, I can offer a narrative of the "hidden Harris" as she was involved in key national security decisions during the Biden administration. My sources requested anonymity, but each detail in this account comes from someone who was with Harris when the events happened. Harris got off to what her aides agree was a bumpy start with her intelligence briefer. During the administration's first year, the briefer was presenting a classified personality profile of a female foreign leader Harris would be meeting. The briefer was a woman, but Harris thought some of the language she was using was gen-

der-biased. Rather than just voicing her discomfort, Harris requested an intelligence community internal review.

The result, never previously reported, was an internal assessment by the intelligence community of whether analysts had routinely used gender-biased language in intelligence reports. The review examined several years of analytical reports, comparing how often certain words had been used about women and men. Harris was so concerned that she asked intelligence agencies to train their analysts to avoid any such bias in the future. She also requested more reporting from the intelligence community on gender issues and sexual violence around the world.

Though she is said to have been pleased by the agency's responsiveness to her concerns, after that first year she dropped the personal, one-to-one briefing. A spokesman for Director of National Intelligence Avril Haines declined to comment on the gender-bias review. The ODNI oversees the President's Daily Brief and other reports to top officials, but many of them are prepared by analysts at the CIA.

The Biden team's first big national security crisis was Afghanistan in mid-2021, and Harris played an interesting role. Philip H. Gordon, her national security adviser, agreed with the Pentagon that President Joe Biden's plan to pull all US troops from Kabul would be unwise. Biden strongly disagreed. Harris pressed the Pentagon briefers about what would happen if 2,500 US troops remained, as the military wanted. Would the Taliban resume attacks on Americans - and would more US troops be needed to protect the residual force? Pentagon officials conceded that additional forces might indeed be necessary.

Harris backed Biden's decision to pull all the troops out - which led to a collapse of the Afghan government and a chaotic, bloody withdrawal.

On that issue, and all other major ones, she was careful to always support Biden when he'd made his choice - as vice presidents nearly always do. The border problem vexed Harris during her first year, and it remains a campaign issue now. Biden asked her to take charge of stemming immigration from the so-called Northern Triangle of Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador. In a June 2021 speech in Guatemala, she delivered a sensible message: Stay home. But that was unpopular with progressive Democrats, and the White House left Harris holding the bag.

Though Republicans have tried to tag her as "border czar," it's more accurate to say that she was captive of the administration's sluggish and reactive policy. Democrats were allergic to anything that looked like Trump's harsh border enforcement measures. When Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra was reluctant to shoulder responsibility for overcrowded facilities, leaving blame to rest with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Harris stood with Mayorkas, telling him after a key White House meeting, "I saw exactly what went on in there."

The Ukraine war has been the administration's biggest foreign policy challenge. Harris was fully involved in the run-up. When Gen. Mark A. Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, warned the administration in October 2021 that the Russians were preparing to invade, one participant in the briefing remembers Harris pressing him for details: "How fast can the Russians move? What kind of units do they have? What are their capabilities?" On the eve of the invasion, Harris personally delivered to President Volodymyr Zelensky the decisive intelligence that the Russians were coming. The meeting took place at the Munich Security Conference, days before the Russian invasion on Feb. 22.

Zelensky was still dubious about the invasion and questioned Harris's troop numbers. "You're wrong," Harris told him bluntly. "They're going in." She pressed Zelensky on whether he had a plan to defend Kyiv and to leave the city if necessary. The Russians did indeed come across the border. Zelensky bravely stayed and fought. He reportedly tweaked the administration later for having talked about possible evacuation, saying: "I need ammunition, not a ride."

Through the Ukraine war, Harris has shared Biden's twin objectives of supporting Ukraine's armed resistance and avoiding a US war with Russia - goals that have sometimes been in conflict. This debate now focuses on whether the United States should remove its limits on Ukrainian use of long-range ATACMS missiles, to allow them to strike targets deep inside Russia.

Harris, characteristically, has made a lawyerly assessment of pros and cons. She and her advisers have queried whether, given the limited number of ATACMS available, they might be more useful striking Russian targets in occupied Crimea - especially given intelligence reports

that Russia has pulled its aircraft that target Ukraine back to bases beyond the missiles' 300-kilometer range. Another concern for the Harris team is whether the Russians might retaliate by giving long-range missiles to adversaries, such as the Houthis in Yemen, further threatening Red Sea shipping and perhaps Israel. Harris hasn't been convinced that helping Ukraine strike deep inside Russia would be a good trade-off for the United States. But Biden is said to be exploring a possible relaxation of rules, and Harris undoubtedly will support his decision. Colleagues say she has taken a similarly measured approach to other issues of escalation risk.

A key moment was October 2022, when Russia signaled it might use tactical nuclear weapons to prevent a collapse of its forces after they had fled Kharkiv and Kherson. Harris joined a discussion of "what if" questions: Might the Russians demonstrate using a tactical nuke, over the ocean, say, or fire one in Ukraine? How big a bomb? How many casualties would result? How would the United States respond? In the end, the Russians conveyed to senior US officials that they didn't intend to use tactical nukes.

On the Middle East, Harris has privately voiced the same mix of goals she described in Tuesday's debate. She's committed to defending Israel's security but thinks too many Palestinian civilians have died and that the war must end now with a cease-fire and hostage release. That's Biden's position, too - balancing complex and possibly irreconcilable goals.

Through nearly four years, Harris has had a seat at the table on the most sensitive national security issues. Her careful approach has mirrored Biden's. Hawks might argue that she has been too cautious, on supplying weapons to Ukraine, for example. Progressives might argue that she has been too ready to support use of military force, by Ukraine or Israel.

Harris as commander in chief would continue the traditional bipartisan foreign policy consensus. That should reassure allies who want a forward-leaning America, and it might worry those who think we're overextended. Lawyers have played a decisive role in national security policy - from Dean Acheson to Jake Sullivan. Harris would sustain that long line of lawyerly balancers and trimmers who weigh risks and benefits before they take action. She might turn a page in our domestic life, but not so much in foreign policy.

The Washington Post

# How Russia perfected art of blocking independent candidates from elections

**EVEN against the backdrop of war, blatant electoral fraud and the exclusion of independent candidates, I welcomed the fact that Russians have continued to take part in elections. Under harshly repressive conditions, elections remain perhaps the only legal and relatively safe way for Russian civil society to make its voice heard. Protesting the war is impossible and criminally punishable, and the authorities have classified almost all civil society activities, such as environmental protests and rallies, as "extremist."**

During the election campaign, one can publicly address a large audience, criticize officials and even promote a peaceful agenda, as the Yabloko party does. This is what Yekaterina Duntsova and Boris Nadezhdin did ahead of the March presidential election. While Duntsova was blocked at an early stage, Nadezhdin was allowed to collect signatures for his candidacy. He gave anti-war democratic Russians a chance to stand together, queuing up to leave signatures in support of his campaign. On election day, after he was barred from running, these people lined up at polling stations in the "Noon Against Putin" demonstration.

After the presidential election, it was crucial to keep the enthusiasm in Russian civil society from waning. The pro-democratic opposition forces that rallied around Duntsova and Nadezhdin geared up to participate in this September's parliamentary elections. Over 4,000 elections of various levels involving tens of thousands of mandates are being held across Russia this weekend. This year's election sets a new record for the number of candidates not registered.

Yabloko, considered the oldest surviving democratic party in Russia, managed to register 73 candidates in 31 regions under the slogan "For Peace and Freedom!" - the most anti-war statement one can make these days. But this is a minuscule number when compared to the number of candidates from United Russia and the "systemic opposition" parties LDPR, CPRF, A Just Russia, New People, Communists of Russia and the Pensioners' Party.

Furthermore, Yabloko's results this year were worse than in previous elections. The party failed to get on the ballot in any major elections. Four Yabloko representatives (including one independent candidate) attempted to register as candidates in some of the 21 gubernatorial elections. None were allowed onto the ballot.

A significant number of Yabloko candidates, both single-mandate and party-list candidates, were registered in the Novgorod and Pskov regions, where the party has traditionally had a strong presence. However, I cannot believe they will be elected to city and district councils, for reasons ranging from electoral fraud to their low popularity among voters. Last year, only one Yabloko candidate was elected and became a deputy in the Veliky Novgorod city council.

In Moscow, the City Duma elections will be held to appoint municipal deputies in districts such as the newly formed municipal districts of so-called New Moscow and the old Kurkino district. As the Moscow City Duma governs the nation's capital, I did not expect any surprises there. Democratic candidates would not be allowed to take part in the elections, whether they are self-nominated or from Yabloko, Nadezhdin's Civic Initiative or Duntsova's Rassvet parties. After the opposition achieved some success in the 2017 municipal elections, the Kremlin and the Moscow Mayor's Office decided to cleanse the capital's political field of opposition deputies.

In 2019, thanks to fraudulent handwriting examinations, allies of Alexei Navalny including Lyubov Sobol, Ivan Zhdanov and Ilya Yashin as well as Alexander Solovoyov of Open Russia were blocked from standing. Many signatures collected by these candidates were subsequently declared invalid. Disqualification due to invalidated signatures happened again this time around, with all 23 candidates from the Yabloko party failing to register for the Moscow City

Yelena Kotyonochkina

Duma race. By comparison, 23 out of the 25 candidates nominated by the unpopular Communists of Russia party were registered.

Meanwhile, a significant number of pro-democratic candidates were registered for the early municipal elections in Moscow's Kurkino district: six from Yabloko and one nominated by the candidate headquarters that worked on the anti-war Nadezhdin's presidential campaign. In 2022, Moscow's municipal councils were also cleansed of the opposition. Independent candidates, including deputies of the previous democratic convocation, were removed from the elections for posting so-called "extremist symbols" like the logo for Smart Voting - a voting strategy invented by Alexei Navalny, whose headquarters were banned as an "extremist" organization.

These candidates were charged with the misdemeanor crime of displaying "extremist" symbols. Anyone convicted of this offense is barred from running for office. It got to the point that unknown individuals sabotaged Yabloko candidate Andrei Morev (the then-head of Moscow's Yakimanka municipal district) by gluing a Smart Voting sticker to his car. Morev was held liable and removed from the elections. Ultimately, one in five of the 179 Yabloko candidates in the Moscow municipal elections were disqualified.

The requirement to collect a huge number of signatures in two or three weeks is not a barrier for unpopular politicians, but it is for democratic candidates whom the regime does not want and is afraid to see in power. In contrast, United Russia candidates have administrative resources to collect their signatures without filters or tight deadlines. Lyudmila Vasilyeva, an 83-year-old Leningrad Siege survivor from St. Petersburg, is among those who encountered these challenges. It was physically impossible for Vasilyeva, who openly called for an end to the war against Ukraine, to collect the 73,000 signatures needed to become a gubernatorial candidate in just two weeks. Even if she had managed to collect them, it is obvious that she would not have passed the so-called "municipal filter" designed to prevent non-Kremlin-approved candidates from running to govern a federal city like St. Petersburg.

In many districts of St. Petersburg, it is physically impossible to get support from democratic municipal deputies who were elected in 2019. Many of them were stripped of their mandates after they publicly opposed the war and called for Putin's resignation and later emigrated, fearing criminal prosecution. St. Petersburg will also hold elections for municipal deputies this weekend. In preparation, Duntsova's Rassvet party and the European Petersburg democratic movement - among other political initiatives - joined forces to help independent candidates. But here, too, only a few of these candidates were registered.

St. Petersburg has its own unique machinations for excluding candidates from elections. To submit registration documents to the election commission, you need to queue up at 8 a.m., by which point there is already a queue of 20 people. These people are standing in line not as genuine candidates, but are there simply to obstruct the real candidates from submitting their documentation on time. Another method of disqualification recently appeared. In June, President Putin signed off on amendments to the election law that deprive Russians of the right to be elected - and incumbent politicians of their powers - if they are labeled "foreign agents." This is a tool to exclude both prominent opposition candidates and just competitors from the electoral process. The Justice Ministry is quick to name people as foreign agents. It no longer needs to prove that an individual has received funds from a foreign entity, as the law initially stipulated. Now, it is enough to say they fell under foreign "influence." There have already been several cases of people being labeled "foreign agents" just before they were supposed to be registered as candidates.

Many wondered why creating a mechanism to bar independent candidates from

the elections by naming them "foreign agents" was needed in the first place. Isn't it enough to simply invalidate their signatures from voters? The point is that merely refusing to register a candidate by invalidating their signatures does not have any legal consequences for them. Moreover, candidates will try to challenge handwriting examinations in court by bringing in voters who signed for their nomination as witnesses. This is what Ilya Yashin did after the election commission invalidated his signatures in 2019, after which voters protested outside the commissions' offices and wrote statements that they had indeed left signatures for him.

Being recognized as a foreign agent, by comparison, means a ban on professions such as teaching, quarterly financial reports, and even criminal penalties for failing to comply with the requirements for foreign agents. Fear of such consequences discourages people from running for office. As a result, the number of people willing to run for election has sharply decreased, primarily among those with pro-democracy views. Thus, only a few candidates supported by the Zemsky Congress, a nationwide movement of municipal deputies, were registered as candidates. While some failed to collect enough signatures or were refused registration, the majority simply feared becoming foreign agents.

Why does the regime need such sophisticated tools to keep its opponents out of the elections? After all, the machine of total electoral fraud has been adopted across Russia by now, including Remote Electronic Voting over several days, the destruction of the electoral observer community, changing laws to complicate election observation and traditional fraud tactics like inflating turnout and pro-government votes. Besides, Moscow offers even newer methods of fraud: it's no longer enough to request a paper ballot at the polling station to submit a protest vote by invalidating your ballot. You now have to submit an application to your local election commission in advance to get this paper ballot on voting day. Otherwise, you'll have to vote at an electronic terminal at the polling station, where your vote will go into the citywide Remote Electronic Voting database, where it gets lost in the mass of falsified data, and nothing will prevent your vote from being changed.

There are a few answers for this. The regime simply needs the ballots to be free of independent candidates - especially democratic and anti-war ones. In the Kremlin's eyes, the ballot should demonstrate the unity of the people with their government, so that voters dissatisfied with the regime, finding no opposition candidates on the ballot, feel powerless and alone and don't even bother to go out and vote. Just imagine if the candidates registered for the ballot started campaigning and rallying people around the slogan "For Peace and Freedom!" like Yabloko does. Or if Gleb Babich - who was nominated by the left-wing movement for the Moscow City Duma - were to promote his "Three words: Peace, equality, future!" campaign slogan? A totalitarian regime cannot allow this.

By nature, opposition candidates raise issues of socio-economic tension, which grows increasingly acute with each passing day of the war. This includes the sharp rise in consumer inflation, which has reached 71%, according to the sociological service Ramir; the cancellation of preferential mortgages; the decline in the quality and availability of goods; and the rise in utility tariffs amid declining quality of services. If government opponents were able to run for election, the public would want to vote for them, demanding paper ballots to submit their protest votes. This would allow the independent candidates to send observers to the polling stations. And after the elections, they would try to defend the votes cast for them in court and at rallies. No. Putin's dictatorship cannot allow this kind of scenario. In terms of retaining power, the regime has chosen the right strategy: to exclude people from the electoral process entirely. I am forced to admit that ahead of the 2024 Single Voting Day, the regime has honed this technology to perfection.

The Moscow Times

# Europe's far-right parties are anti-worker -evidence clearly proves it

Cas Mudde & Gabriela Greilinger

**IN the US and Europe, the far right is often portrayed as the defender of the working class, the representative of "forgotten" people or the post-industrial "left-behinds". The working classes, so the argument goes, have flocked to the far right because "the left" has betrayed them. Moreover, far-right parties, it is claimed, have moved to the left on socioeconomic issues such as employment rights, replacing social democratic parties as the "new working-class parties".**

Despite the popularity of this narrative, including among social democratic elites in Europe, workers have not flocked to far-right parties, but rather to the mainstream right and the Greens. And now, our new study shows that while far-right parties might talk leftwing, they still back rightwing anti-worker policies.

We analysed the voting patterns of far-right groups on a range of socioeconomic issues. We specifically looked at the two far-right groups in the outgoing European parliament (2019-2024): the now disbanded Identity and Democracy (ID) group including Marine Le Pen's National Rally, and the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), which is dominated by the Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni's party, Brothers of

Italy. We also looked at Viktor Orbán's Fidesz party in Hungary, which is at the helm of the new Patriots for Europe (PfE), formed as the unofficial successor to ID after the European elections this summer.

Our analysis looked at the votes of all far-right parties on eight issues related to workers' rights, including paying workers an adequate minimum wage, ensuring transparency over pay, providing quality traineeships and setting a global minimum tax for multinational companies.

The analysis, for the European Trade Union Institute, shows that, contrary to what the far right has us believe - and what is increasingly received wisdom - its voting patterns on proposed EU directives do not indicate a pro-worker stance on socioeconomic issues, let alone a leftwing one. Quite the contrary: on virtually all eight issues we examined, the far - right's voting behaviour suggests a stance that is indifferent, if not outright hostile, to workers' rights. One striking example is the clear rejection of pay transparency and an opposition to an EU directive on adequate minimum wages, mainly among members of the ID group.

Importantly, we also find substantial differences in voting pat-

terns across the far-right parties, in stark contrast to the voting behaviour of other political groups in the European parliament. While most political groups vote almost unanimously on socioeconomic issues, the two far-right groups (particularly the ECR) are often quite divided.

For example, on proposals for an EU-wide minimum rate of corporation tax, which 92% of MEPs supported, those in ID and ECR were largely divided on the issue. While three ID parties voted against the directive, including Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), three voted in favour and two abstained. In the ECR, half of its 10 far-right parties voted against, four abstained and only one voted in favour.

The poor voting discipline within the groups indicates that socioeconomic matters are not a core issue for the far right. Interestingly, the overall voting behaviour of Fidesz in Hungary fitted neither group, and was overall slightly less unfavourable to the idea of setting a minimum tax for global companies across the EU than other far-right parties.

Interestingly, southern European far-right parties, such as the Italian Lega (ID), Meloni's Brothers of Italy and the Greek Solution

(ECR), voted most positively on workers' rights. The Sweden Democrats, Estonian Conservative People's party and the Danish People's party voted most negatively - no doubt a pushback against strong workers' rights that already exist in their countries.

Even though our research shows that the ECR emphasises socioeconomic issues more than ID members, the amount of difference in far-right parties' voting patterns, as well as their poor voting discipline, confirms that workers' rights remain secondary. This is in sharp contrast to asylum and migration, which is still the core issue of the far right, where we found unanimous support for fortress Europe across both groups.

In short, although the far right may purport to stand up for workers' rights by talking in increasingly leftwing ways, they still mostly vote to undermine those rights. Our research not only shows that the portrayal of the far right as pro-worker is generalising at best, and factually wrong at worst; it is also a reminder that we should not just look at what the far right says, but also more importantly at what it does. And on close inspection there is little doubt: the far right is anti-worker, making it rightwing not only on asylum and migration, but also when it comes to socioeconomic issues, too.

**ANY day now the White House is expected to lift restrictions on Ukraine using US-supplied long-range missiles on Russian soil. Britain is expected to follow suit - not a moment too soon. And yet again, is it a question of Western support being too little too late to help Ukraine successfully turn the tide against Vladimir Putin's invasion?**

For more than a month now, Ukraine has kept an impressive foothold in the Russian region of Kursk. Kyiv claims to control approximately 1,000 sq km of Russian territory. Moscow has been forced to evacuate around 150,000 civilians. According to the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky, up to 60,000 Russian troops have been redeployed from the Ukrainian front lines to fight in Kursk.

Kyiv has also landed several impressive blows on Russia over the past month with some of the largest, most widespread drone

attacks since the beginning of the conflict. But there are fears that Ukraine might be losing momentum in its fight. Unconfirmed reports by Russian war bloggers began to emerge on Wednesday that Moscow has launched a "large scale" counter-attack in Kursk. Neither the Russian nor Ukrainian ministry of defence has so far confirmed these reports.

While certainly effective, Kyiv's incursion has failed to sufficiently stretch Russia's resources and weaken their advance inside Ukraine. Putin's forces are continuing to edge forward around the city of Pokrovsk in Donbas, increasing the likelihood the Ukrainian army will soon have to retreat yet further. As time goes on, it is hard not to view Ukraine's stalling progress as being, in large part, down to the similarly stalling support from its Western allies. Zelensky has been petitioning the US, UK and Europe for permission to use Western-

made long-range missiles to strike military targets on Russian soil for months. Over the past two and a half years, we have seen this pattern play out repeatedly over whether to even supply the long-range missiles in the first place, and before that tanks, F-16 jets and numerous financial aid packages.

Months of agonising by the US, Britain and European allies, such as Germany, force Ukraine to fight on at a disadvantage, only for the aid to finally be provided as the fighting shifts and Kyiv's needs change in response.

There are several reasons why Western support for Ukraine is so halting. The first is that Kyiv's allies are terrified that each fresh aid package or weapons supply might trigger a Russian escalation in the war that prompts Putin to push the nuclear button or drags other countries more directly into the conflict. Public support for Ukraine has also waned in multiple

countries thanks to this fear, which has in turn made it more difficult for politicians to convincingly make the case for sending more funding and weaponry to help Zelensky's forces.

With European estimates that Kyiv would need "hundreds of billions of dollars" in Western aid to drive Russian forces off its territory, Zelensky's allies have reportedly been urging him to reconsider what kind of victory in the war would satisfy Ukraine. This can't go on. Kyiv's Kursk invasion is the clearest proof yet that Putin's repeated threats to use nuclear weapons against any onslaughts on Russian soil are nothing but hot air. Over a month into Ukraine's incursion and meaningful retaliation by the Kremlin has failed to materialise. The West can afford to, and indeed must, be bigger and bolder in its support for Kyiv. Only this way can the war in Ukraine be brought to a swift and just end, and peace in Europe restored.

The Telegraph





## To enhance supply chain finance via CashNow Habib Metropolitan Bank, Pak Suzuki join hands



### F.P. Report

KARACHI: HABIBMETRO recently announced a strategic alliance with Pak Suzuki to revolutionise supply chain finance. This partnership will enable PSMCL's suppliers to access early payments from HABIBMETRO on approved invoices via 'CashNow', a cutting-edge fintech platform.

CashNow will handle the technological aspects of this invoice discounting scheme, providing suppliers with rapid access to working capital. "HABIBMETRO is dedicated to foster growth

with a particular emphasis on supporting SMEs. With the Digital Supply Chain Financing initiative, we aim to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience by offering seamless processing and improved turn-around-time. Our partnership with Pak Suzuki Motors underscores our commitment to delivering innovative financial solutions to our customers," said Khurram Shahzad Khan, President & CEO of HABIBMETRO.

"We are delighted to announce this scheme to improve the financial stability of our esteemed

suppliers," said Hiroshi Kawamura, MD of PSMCL. "We are honoured that PSMCL and HABIBMETRO have entrusted CashNow with this pivotal Supply Chain Finance initiative," remarked Saeed Iqbal, Director/Co-Founder of CashNow.

This collaboration is a significant step towards advancing financial and operational excellence in supply chain management. Through this initiative, new standards in supply chain finance are being set, driving innovation and supporting the economic growth of the industry.

## 146,722 travelers examined for Mpox at Karachi airport

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: In August, a total of 146,722 travelers were examined at Jinnah International for Mpox.

The steps taken to prevent monkeypox (Mpox) have been strengthened at the nation's airports. The number of staff from Border Health Services at Jinnah International Airport has been boosted.

Now, there will always be two doctors available, up from one before. Also, the team of medical assistants has grown from five to ten.

In August, a total of 146,722 travelers were examined at Jinnah International, and since the start of the surveillance, only one traveler with symptoms was sent to hospital on August 31 for further checks.

After each international flight, the immigration and international lounge areas are disinfected two to three times a day. Two extra cabins have been set up for the examination and quarantine of travelers who might be infected.

Moreover, information standees have also been put up in the international arrival walkway at Jinnah International Airport. The management of the airport is also supporting the BHS team in conducting enhanced awareness sessions at the Resource Center of Jinnah International.

## IMSEC 2024 inaugurated

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition and Conference (IMSEC) 2024 has officially inaugurated in Karachi by Mr. Arsenio Antonio Dominguez Velasco, Secretary-General of the International Maritime Organization (IMO). The event was graced by Syed Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister of Sindh, alongside key figures such as Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Additional Secretary Maritime Affairs Mr. Umar Zafar Sheikh and Chairman KPT Syedain Raza Zaidi.

During his welcome address, Chief Minister highlighted Karachi's strategic significance as the "gateway to Pakistan" and expressed optimism for strengthening ties with the IMO. He emphasized the crucial role of ports of Karachi in facilitating maritime trade and reaffirmed the government's commitment to environmental stewardship and adherence to international maritime regulations.

Chairman KPT Syedain Raza Zaidi highlighted the evolution of Karachi Port into Pakistan's premier maritime gateway since its establishment in 1886. He emphasized the port's strategic importance in regional trade, facilitating 60% of the nation's trade, and its commitment to modernizing operations to meet international standards. Chairman KPT proudly noted the recent docking of the MSC ANNA, the largest ship ever to arrive in Pakistan, as a testament to the port's capabilities. He reaffirmed dedication to sustainability and innovation in the maritime sector, urging collaboration for a prosperous future.

Secretary-General Velasco praised Pakistan's commitment to maritime sustainability and acknowledged the Ministry of Maritime Affairs' initiatives to explore new avenues for cooperation. He encouraged Pakistan to actively engage in global maritime efforts, stressing the significance of protecting transboundary species, minimizing ship pollution, and addressing plastic waste. Velasco advocated for the adoption of green maritime corridors and the use of alternative fuels, such as methanol.

Recognizing the challenges faced by Pakistan's maritime industry, including a shortage of qualified seafarers, Velasco noted the vast opportunities for growth, given that 90% of global trade is conducted via sea routes.

## Nathalie Roos to step down as CEO of LIPTON Teas and Infusions

### F.P. Report

AMSTERDAM: Nathalie Roos has chosen to step down as Chief Executive Officer of LIPTON Teas and Infusions for personal reasons, in agreement with the Board, after two successful years running the world's leading tea business.

Nathalie became CEO in July 2022 and has since overseen the creation of LIPTON Teas and Infusions as a world-leading consumer beverage group. She and her team have relaunched many of the company's key brands with considerable success,

and earlier this year she oversaw the establishment of a new global responsible sourcing partnership with the world's largest tea exporter, Browns Investments, in an agreement which included the transfer of the Lipton tea estates in East Africa.

Pierre Laubies, LIPTON Teas and Infusions' Chair of the Board, will be Executive Chair while the Board identifies Nathalie's successor.

Pierre Laubies said: "On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Nathalie for her achievements as CEO of LIPTON Teas and Infusions. She has

set the business on an exciting journey that we continue to follow, and I wish her all the best."

Nathalie Roos said: "I have found my time at LIPTON Teas and Infusions enormously rewarding. I believe we have created a special company with tremendous potential, and I look forward to watching its future success."

LIPTON Teas and Infusions is the world's largest tea business, with world-class brands that are household names such as Lipton, Pukka, TAZO, T2 and PG Tips. With production sites in 4 continents and a presence in more than

100 countries, LIPTON Teas and Infusions' products are enjoyed by hundreds of millions of consumers around the world each day. As an independent company since July 2022, LIPTON Teas and Infusions is united in one purpose: creating value for all with every sip, from plant to cup.



## SNGPL holds corporate briefing session

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) held its Corporate Briefing Session, in Lahore. The event was well attended by analysts, investors, and shareholders, both in person and via Zoom. Mr. Amer Tufail, Managing Director of SNGPL, welcomed the participants and highlighted the Company's celebration of its 60th anniversary. He provided an overview of SNGPL's performance and its strategic outlook for the future.

The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Mr. Kamran Akram presented key achievements for the fiscal year 2022-23, noting a remarkable reduction in Unaccounted-for Gas (UFG), which dropped to 5.15% from the previous year's 5.58%. This achievement places SNGPL on par with leading global gas utilities. The Company reported an after-tax profit of Rs. 10,564 million, translating into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs. 16.66. Revenue for the year exceeded Rs. 1.0 trillion. Additionally, SNGPL expanded its operations to Gilgit, supplying Synthetic Natural Gas



(SNG) through the installation of an LPG-Air Mix plant.

During the session, participants were also informed of the Company's ongoing efforts to further reduce UFG at a micro level through the installation of metering facilities at the Town Border Stations (TBS) level, along with other digitization initiatives aimed at improving operational efficiency.

Addressing SNGPL's significant role in the country's energy landscape, the management underscored that the

Company fulfills 25% of Pakistan's energy demand. The participants were briefed on the successful integration of 30 MMCFD of gas from Wali well discovery in the challenging terrain of Lakki Marwat. Moreover, the Company is on track to add an additional 100 MMCFD of gas to the system from further discoveries in the region.

In addition to its contributions to the nation's energy needs, SNGPL also reaffirmed its commitment to corporate social responsibility, supporting various initiatives to assist underprivileged citizens.

Senior members of the Company's management present at the event included Mr. Faisal Iqbal, Deputy Managing Director (Services); Mr. Saqib Arbab, Deputy Managing Director (Operations); Mr. Kamran Akram, Chief Financial Officer; and Mr. Imtiaz Mehmood, Company Secretary.

The briefing concluded with a Q&A session, where the Managing Director and senior management addressed queries from the attendees, fostering an engaging and positive dialogue.

## Secy General Int'l Maritime Organization sees huge potential in Pakistan

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Secretary General of International maritime Organization Mr. Arsenio Dominguez arrived on his two day visit to Karachi to attend the International Maritime Sustainability Exhibition and Conference (IMSEC). After the inauguration session of the conference on 13th Sep 2024, he paid visit to the different departments of Ministry of Maritime Affairs.

The SG IMO visited the Oil Pipeline Terminal 2 and South Asia Pakistan Terminals Limited (SAPT) of KPT where he was briefed about the port operations and digitization process of the port. Mr. Arsenio then visited the KPT administered Hospital facility and reached Port House KPT where he planted mangroves saplings. The SG was accompanied by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Chairman KPT and Other officials.

Speaking at the venue, Mr. Arsenio Dominguez said that considering vast coastal line, deep sea, strategic trade location, magnanimous ports, Pakistan has huge potential in maritime sector. He said



that Pakistan can contribute to the world sea faring industry in multiple ways. Not only that, it can serve as a gateway for many other nations.

Speaking about Pakistan's compliance to the global maritime protocols specifically IMO regulations, he expressed satisfaction over Pakistan's compliance to the IMO regulations. In addition to this, Pakistan has one of the biggest ship breaking industry, the Secretary General IMO showed satisfaction over Pakistan's compliance to the Hong Kong convention about Ship breaking.

After planting Mangrove sapling at KPT Port House, Mr. Arsenio appreciated

Pakistan's efforts to contribute in the efforts against global warming and its investment in preserving one of the biggest mangrove forests in the world. He urged all other nations and nations to follow the trend and preserve our ecosystem. He thanked Pakistan for warm welcome and for hospitality and expressed that he looks forward for further visits to the Pakistan.

Speaking to the Media, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh said that Pakistan is slowly coming out of the financial woes as our exports are growing, remittances are increasing, interest rate being turned down. Government under PM

Shahbaz Sharif is doing all efforts to revive the economy but its not one handed job as we all have to strive collectively, he added.

Speaking about Gavadar Port, he said that to boost trade activities and create job opportunities in Balochistan cabinet has made a decision to import 50% of the Government via Gavadar Port.

Talking about Pakistan's contribution to the efforts in the climate change, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed said that Pakistan contribute less to the emission of greenhouse gases yet it one of those nations which are badly effected due to it. Plantation of trees shows Pakistan's commitment against fighting the climate change.

## LAS and Bond Advertising to launch Azwa Sab ki initiative

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: Legal Aid Society (LAS), a legal advocacy organization serving marginalized and underprivileged communities to reduce challenges in accessing justice and Bond Advertising, a leading communications agency specializing in social impact communication have joined hands to launch an awareness-raising initiative Awaz Sub Ki.

Awaz Sub Ki-"The Voice of All"-is aimed towards promoting religious tolerance & interfaith harmony and protect the rights of Pakistan's religious minority communities (RMC's). The campaign

will raise awareness on minority rights while providing knowledge and resources to help communities advocate for the same.

Haya Zahid, CEO of the Legal Aid Society, highlighted the collaborative effort's impact on access to justice: "Awaz Sub Ki" is about defending the dignity and rights of all people, regardless of their religious beliefs. By working together, we can create a Pakistan where religious tolerance and diversity are celebrated, and where no one is discriminated against based on their faith."

Seema Jaffer, CEO of Bond Advertising, emphasized the significance of the

initiative: "This partnership underscores the power of communication to drive social change. By amplifying the voices of those who are often silenced, we hope to create a more just and inclusive Pakistan where every individual, regardless of their background, can access their fundamental rights."

The Awaz Sub Ki campaign will roll out a series of targeted communications, including multimedia content, films, and awareness initiatives designed to reduce the vulnerability of RMCs through improved knowledge, greater autonomy and the formation of a protective environment.



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### COURT NOTICES KOHAT

In The Court of Ms Mashal Latif CJ-IV Kohat, Suit no.179/1 Date of hearing:16-09-2024, Titled:- Muhammad Saleem Vs Mawaz Khan. Notice against:-Rafiuallah Son of Tariq R/o Khatib Abad Nasrat Khel District Kohat. presently R/o (now in Abroad Dubai UAE) (Defendant) Whereas the above plaintiff has instituted a civil suit against you Defendant in which date of hearing 16-09-2024 is fixed for your appearance. Since your intimation/service is not possible through ordinary means/mode therefore you Defendant is intimated through this publication to appear before this court by person or by pleader on date fixed 16-09-2024. otherwise court shall be proceeded in accordance with law. order Issued on 05-09-2024 (Court of CJ-IV Kohat)

### SWAT

In the court of Kiran Noor civil Judge IV Illaqa Qazi district Swat. Case# 73/1 institution Year 6/06/2024. Next Hearing date 16/09/2024. Gohar Ali VS Fazal Rabi Notice to:- 4/3) Muhammad Hayat s/o Muhammad yar r/o Islam poor tehsil Babozai District Swat. Mobile. 0305 5251616. (Presently Abroad). In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is therefore proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:30 am dated 16/09/2024. ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this court.

### SWABI

In the Court of Qurat-ul-Ain Rashid, Senior Civil Judge/ Judge Family Court Swabi, Neelum VS Razi Khan, Suit Number: 183/FC, Institution Date : 28- 06-2021/ 25-06-2024. Hearing Date : 24- 09-2024, Subject: Dower. Notice to: Razi Khan son Noor Zaman R/o Muhammad Khel, Gandaf, Distt, Swabi, Presently Gadoon Distt, Swabi, Presently abroad Whatsapp Number 0343-0966299 Defendant. The service through ordinary means is difficult, so you are informed to attend the Court on 24-09-2024 personally, through counsel or attorney to avoid ex-parte proceeding.

### BUNER

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge I/Alaqa Qazi Bunerat Daggar. Suit No. 87/1. Institution 23/3/2023. Date of hearing: 23/9/2024. Mst. Masena VS Anwar Shah. Notice to No.18/1.Arif s/o Umer Said. 44/1.Mohmad Ishaq. 44/2. Mohmad Ibrahim. 44/3.Mohmad Shoaib sons. Mst. Bibi Ramena d/o Mst Ashrafia. 30/1. Nor Ghamash son. 30/2. Shazia d/o Said Ghamash. 33/1.Sakhidat Shah. 33/2. Etibar Shah sons. 33/3. Mahusain. 33/4. Rehana daughters. 33/5.Bakht Malda widow Sultan Shah. 45.Rashed Khan.47.Mst Bakht Ramena. 51.Iqbala. 52.Pakha daughters of Mst. Ashrafia(late)d/o Rehmat Shah resident of Elai tehsel Daggar district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.00 am dated 23/9/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.

In the Court of Javera Sartaj Khan Additional District Judge II/Azafi Zila Qazi Buner at Daggar. Appeal. No.24/13. Institution 22/2/2024. Date of hearing: 15/10/2024. Soomral VS Etibar Gul etic. Notice to no. 6.Gul Nawab s/o Jalandar resident of Ghazikhanay tehsel Gadezal district Buner. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendant can not be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendant will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8.00 am dated 15/10/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex- parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.





In brief

Tareen wins gold medal

ISLAMABAD (PPI): Pakistani athlete Zainuddin Tareen won gold medal in the 4th Asia IKD Karate Championship in the under-18 age category. He brought pride to Pakistan by defeating Tajikistan in the quarter-finals, Iraq in the semi-finals, and Iran in the final. The championship, held in Isfahan, Iran, concluded today. A total of 11 Asian countries participated, including Pakistan, Iraq, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Nepal, Oman, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Kuwait, Indonesia, and the host country, Iran. Around 80 international, Asian, and national referees were involved. Pakistan's national karate team, led by IKD Pakistan President Jalaluddin Tareen, competed in the event.

Nadal withdraws from Laver Cup

BERLIN (Agencies): Rafael Nadal withdrew from the Laver Cup in Berlin, leaving it unclear when the Spanish great will play again. The Laver Cup — the tournament where Roger Federer retired in 2022 after teaming up with Nadal in doubles — would have been Nadal's first event since the Paris Olympics and potentially one of his last ever. "I'm really disappointed to share that I won't be able to compete at the Laver Cup in Berlin next week," the 38-year-old Nadal said. "This is a team competition and to really support Team Europe, I need to do what's best for them and at this moment there are other players who can help the team deliver the win." The 22-time Grand Slam champion didn't address his current fitness after a spate of injuries in recent years, or when he might play again. Nadal withdrew last month from the U.S. Open, meaning he missed three of the four Grand Slam tournaments in 2024. He last played in reaching the men's doubles quarterfinals at the Olympics, where he also lost in the second round of singles to Novak Djokovic. The Laver Cup, to be held from Sept. 20-22, is an indoor hard-court men's competition pitting Team Europe against Team World in a format reminiscent of golf's Ryder Cup. No replacement for Nadal was immediately announced.

Mbappe, Vinicius unaffected by criticism

MADRID (AFP): Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti said strikers Kylian Mbappe and Vinicius Junior were not letting critics weigh them down after an underwhelming start to the season. New arrival Mbappe netted a brace in his last outing for the club following three La Liga games without a goal, while Vinicius has one strike in the opening four matches. "They don't seem affected to me, they are training well, happy. Kylian is progressing each day," Ancelotti told a news conference Friday. "Many forget they started pre-season in the middle of August... they didn't have a pre-season, they have improved their fitness with games. They seem very well to me, and happy." French superstar Mbappe joined Madrid at the end of his Paris Saint-Germain contract this summer and Ancelotti is still working out how to get the best from the forward, who like Vinicius, prefers to drift in from the left. Thus far Mbappe has started in the middle with Vinicius in his preferred position, but the Brazilian has lacked spark.



FAISALABAD: Babar Azam cracks one away on the back foot, Stallions vs Lions, Champions One-day Cup.

Leclerc overcomes crash to top Azerbaijan GP practice

BAKU (Agencies): Charles Leclerc recovered from a crash early in the day to top the times for Ferrari ahead of Red Bull's Sergio Perez in Friday's second free practice on a day of incidents and accidents at the Azerbaijan Grand Prix. Leclerc, who has taken pole three times before on the tricky Baku street circuit, had gone off early in opening practice, hitting the barriers at Turn 15 and his car incurring damage to the front right section. He was unhurt and the Ferrari mechanics fixed the damage although he needed to pit early in the second practice to fit a new power steering system. This produced the odd sight of the Ferrari team forming a wall of bodies — like a team defending a football free-kick — to block the vision of Leclerc's car as it was repaired. He returned to clock a best lap in one

minute and 43.484 seconds to outpace Perez, a two-time winner in Baku, by 0.006 seconds with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton third for Mercedes, 0.066 off the pace. Carlos Sainz was fourth in the second Ferrari ahead of McLaren's Oscar Piastri and three-time champion and series leader Max Verstappen, who was quickest in opening practice, in the second Red Bull. His title rival Lando Norris struggled for a clear lap and was only 17th in the second McLaren, his best lap undone when he came upon Pierre Gasly's Alpine and had to abort. "I'm sorry," said Gasly. "I had a problem with the battery." Lance Stroll was seventh for Aston Martin ahead of Haas's Nico Hulkenberg and George Russell in the second Mercedes, who had an inter-session engine change. Behind them in

tenth came young Briton Ollie Bearman in the second Haas. The 19-year-old, who finished seventh on his F1 debut for Ferrari in Saudi Arabia as a replacement for Sainz, is racing in Baku in place of the suspended Kevin Magnussen whose seat he will take full-time next season. After an overcast opening session, second practice began in warm conditions which continued to cause problems for the drivers. Leclerc reported steering problems, following an escape road excursion, and Sainz skimmed the barriers while Verstappen slid to a halt at Turn Five to avoid hitting a wall, later complaining about visibility problems with the setting sun. Russell was detained at Mercedes as the team changed his engine. When he rejoined the session he was soon recalled to the pits due to an unidentified issue.



Guardiola 'happy' Man City hearing finally set to start

MANCHESTER (AFP): Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said he is pleased that the club's long-awaited hearing into 115 charges brought by the Premier League is set to start on Monday. City face 80 breaches of financial rules between 2009 and 2018, plus a further 35 of failing to cooperate with a Premier League investigation. The English champions stand accused of failing to provide accurate financial information between 2009 and 2018, including revenue from sponsors and salary details of managers and players. City have vehemently denied any wrongdoing and Guardiola has backed his superiors when pressed about the charges in the past. "Start soon, and hopefully finish soon," Guardiola said of the hearing at his pre-match press conference on Friday ahead of Brentford's trip to the Etihad. "I am looking forward to the decision. "I'm happy it's starting on Monday. I know there will be more rumours, new specialists about the sentences. "We're going to see. I know what people are looking forward to, what they expect. I know what I read for many, many years. Everybody is inno-

cent until guilt is proven. So we'll see."

If found guilty on some or all of the charges, City face a severe points deduction and possibly even expulsion from the Premier League.

The hearing is set to last at least two months, with a decision not expected until 2025.



The Premier League brought the charges in February 2023 but there has been a lengthy wait for the case to proceed before an independent commission. In the meantime, City have lifted two more Premier League titles and the club's first ever Champions League last year. Since a 2008 takeover from Sheikh Mansour, a member of the United Arab Emirates royal family, City have been transformed into the dominant

force in English football.

They have won eight of the last 13 Premier League titles, including a record four consecutive league crowns in the past four seasons.

City have also won all three of their opening league games to the new season despite missing a number of key players who made it to the final of Euro 2024.

Spanish midfielder Rodri and England trio Phil Foden, Kyle Walker and John Stones are yet to make a single start since being handed more time off to recover from Guardiola.

Foden and Rodri have also had to recover from illness and injury respectively but are now back in training and in contention to face Brentford.

However, Erling Haaland may not be able to build on his seven goals in three games due to the bereavement of a close family friend.

The Norwegian striker paid tribute to Ivar Eggja, a friend of his father and former City captain Alf-Inge Haaland, on social media after he died aged 59 this week. "It was a tough moment for him and his family," added Guardiola.

"We will see tomorrow if he is mentally and physically able to play."

SA women arrive in Lahore for three IT20 series

LAHORE (APP): The South Africa Women cricket team led by captain Laura Wolvaardt landed at the Allama Iqbal International Airport on Friday morning to play three IT20s against Pakistan women.

The South African women are due to play three IT20 matches at the Multan Cricket Stadium, Multan between 16 and 20 September, 2024.

The three IT20 series was part of the preparations for the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2024 in the UAE between October 3 -20, 2024. The series will help SA women cricketers to acclimatize with the conditions in UAE.

The team will take part in training sessions on September 14 and 15, 2024.

Before the training session on September 15, team captains Laura Wolvaardt (South Africa) and Fatima Sana (Pakistan) will hold a pre-series media conference and display the trophy after the media interaction.

The SA women cricketers will for Multan by a chartered flight.

New Zealand women's football coach quits

WELLINGTON (AFP/APP): New Zealand women's head coach Jitka Klimkova has quit, the national football body said Friday, having skipped the Paris Olympics after an undisclosed "employment-related matter".

The 50-year-old former Czech Republic international took a leave of absence four weeks before the Games in the wake of an independent investigation which cleared her of any wrongdoing.

Under her assistant Michael Mayne, New Zealand lost all three of their games at the Olympics.

"This experience was a challenge and made me stronger," Klimkova, who had been in charge since 2021 and was contracted until 2027, said in a statement.

"I believe now is the right time to step away and let another coach carry on."

Klimkova will remain working for New Zealand Football for the next six months, supporting the high-performance department and national team.

Mayne will continue as interim head coach.

Klimkova was the first woman to coach the New Zealand women's team on a full-time basis.

The highlight of her stewardship was when the co-hosts earned their first-ever win at a Women's World Cup by stunning former champions Norway in 2023, but they bowed out in the group stages.

The Football Ferns won 11 of 39 games under Klimkova, with 21 defeats and seven draws.

"She will forever be remembered as the coach who led us to our first ever Women's World Cup win, a historic, game-changing moment for football in New Zealand," said chief executive Andrew Pragnell.

Moin questions Pakistan's treatment of Azam Khan

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Former Pakistan captain Moin Khan has said his son Azam's confidence has taken a beating because of the inability of the Pakistan selectors and team management to give him a consistent run in the side.

Moin took the example of the T20 World Cup earlier this year in the West Indies and the USA, Azam's most recent appearance for Pakistan. Azam played only the opening match of Pakistan's campaign, the Super-Over defeat to USA. He played as wicketkeeper-batter, and scored a first-ball duck. He was dropped thereafter, with Mohammad Rizwan, who played as a specialist batter against USA, taking back the keeper's gloves.

"I watched the entire World Cup and the matches leading up to it, and it seemed like Azam was the number one choice for wicketkeeping and batting," Moin told Cricket Pakistan. "Then suddenly, after just one match, the entire strategy was changed."

Pakistan exited the tournament at the first group stage itself, winning two games and losing to USA and India.

"Azam wasn't given a chance to keep wickets after one match and was dropped after getting out on the very first ball [against USA]," Moin said. "Any player can get out on the first ball, but here the tradition of developing players that used to exist is no longer there. Whether it's the captain or the management, if they make such quick changes to players, how can we produce good players?"

Azam has faced scrutiny right through his career for his fitness, and while Moin agreed with some of the criticism, he said his son was now working hard on that area. "I'm not saying that all the blame lies with the team management and the captain; Azam has his own shortcomings too," Moin said. "He needs to make himself physically and mentally stronger, and follow the fitness routines of other sportsmen."

"For the past month or so, I've noticed he's been working hard to improve his fitness with his trainer Shehzar Mohammad, even taking him along to the Caribbean [Premier] League. I hope Azam has learned a lot from this experience."

'Removing Shaheen from the captaincy was unjust'

Moin expressed strong support for Shaheen Shah Afridi to be Pakistan's white-ball captain. Shaheen had taken over as T20I captain - and was seen as a frontrunner for the ODI captaincy too - in the wake of Babar Azam's resignation following the ODI World Cup in India last year. Shaheen's tenure lasted just one series, however, with Babar reinstated in March.

"Shaheen Afridi has the ability to lead the team and is highly liked by the players. He is an excellent choice for captaincy in T20s," Moin said. "In white-ball cricket, I don't see anyone else suitable for the role. Removing him from the captaincy was unjust."

Moin also advocated for one captain for all formats, and felt that constant leadership changes only stood to affect team performance.

"Players may not listen to their captain if there are constant changes," he said. "If the cricket board provides full support to the captain and assures them of a long-term responsibility, the team's performance will improve."

Ronaldo celebrates 1 Billion followers across social media

RIYADH (Agencies): Cristiano Ronaldo celebrated reaching another milestone in his career on Friday, this time off the pitch, as the Al-Nassr star said he now has a billion followers across social media channels.

The Portuguese striker took to social media to thank his fans who made it possible.

"We've made history — 1 BILLION followers! This is more than just a number - it's a testament to our shared passion, drive, and love for the game and beyond," he wrote.

The Al-Nassr captain said he has always appreciated those who supported him during his rise to stardom. "From the streets of Madeira to the biggest stages in the world, I've always played for my family and for you, and now 1 billion of us stand together."

He shared a collage of photos depicting his career with clubs such as

Manchester United, Juventus, Real Madrid, and his current side Al-Nassr. But the biggest image is that of the legend wearing the iconic ruby red jersey of Portugal, who he led to a European championship win in 2016. The artwork also includes his family and selfies with fans over the years.

"You've been with me every step of the way, through all the highs and the lows," Ronaldo wrote. "This journey is our journey, and together, we've shown that there are no limits to what we can achieve."

The player has 639 million followers on Instagram, 170 million on Facebook, and 113 million on X, formally known as Twitter, and 60 million on the video platform YouTube. He also has another 9 million on the Chinese network Weibo and has a presence on Kuaishou.

In August, the star shattered the YouTube record for the fastest-

growing channel, achieving a milestone just hours after its launch.

"Thank you for believing in me, for your support, and for being part of my life. The best is yet to come, and we'll keep pushing, winning, and making history together," he wrote.

In another remarkable milestone, Ronaldo became the first player in football history to score 900 goals, for club and country combined. The player achieved the feat a week ago with a tap-in against Croatia playing in the Nations League.

The footballing legend moved to Saudi Arabia in 2022 and has made even more fans in the Kingdom after his transfer to the Riyadh-based Al-Nassr, who have embraced him as one of their own.

He broke the record for the number of goals scored in a season by a player in Saudi Arabia's top league, netting 35 in the 2023/2024 contest.

US women seize early 3-1 lead over Europe at Solheim Cup



GAINESVILLE (AFP): Top-ranked Nelly Korda and second-ranked Lilia Vu each won foursomes matches and sparked the United States to a 3-1 lead over Europe after Friday's morning session at the Solheim Cup.

The Americans, who swept last year's first foursomes session, dominated the back nine at Robert Trent Jones Golf Club to grab the lead entering four afternoon four-ball matches.

Holders Europe seek an unprecedented fourth consecutive trophy while the US women, who last won in 2017, try to end the drought and avoid losing twice in a row on home soil for the first time.

Korda and fellow American Allisen Corpuz won their last three holes to defeat Germany's Esther Henseleit, the Paris Olympic runner-up, and England's Charley Hull 3&2. Korda and Corpuz, who won both foursomes matches together at Spain, became the first US duo to win three foursomes matches in a row.

"We just vibe really well," Korda said. "When one of us didn't hit it well we really relied on each

other and we kept calm out there. "I've got such a great partner, she comes up clutch every single time."

Ninth-ranked Rose Zhang and US rookie Lauren Coughlin never trailed in beating France's 10th-ranked Celine Boutier and Swiss rookie Albane Valenzuela 3&2. "We made some clutch putts coming in so that really helped the momentum," Zhang said.

Also winning 3&2 were Vu and US rookie Sarah Schmelzel over Spain's Carlota Ciganda and Swede Linn Grant. "We just got out great," Vu said after they won three of the first four holes and never trailed. Europe's lone foursomes triumph saw Sweden's Maja Stark and Dane Emily Pedersen win 2-up over Ally Ewing and Jennifer Kupcho.

"We played great and we felt like we were playing the better golf," Pedersen said. "We made a few mistakes." The Americans lead the all-time rivalry 10-7 with one drawn but Europeans have lifted the hardware three times in a row in dramatic fashion, including as defending champions in last year's 14-

14 draw in Spain. "Silent assassins" Zhang dubbed Korda and Corpuz "silent assassins" as they took command on the back nine.

Impressive Korda wedge shots set up birdies to win the seventh and eighth holes for a 2-up USA lead but Hull sank a 12-foot birdie putt to win the 10th and a four-footer to birdie the par-3 11th and level the match. Henseleit and Corpuz both splashed their approaches into water on 14 but Corpuz sank a par putt to win the hole, Hull missed a short par putt to drop 15 and Corpuz made a four-foot birdie putt at 16 to seal victory.

"It's exciting to go out there and put up that first point," Corpuz said. In match two, Valenzuela missed a 10-foot birdie putt to drop the 12th hole, Coughlin birdied 13 to for a 2-up USA lead and the Americans won 14 with a par to go 3-up before Zhang's eight-foot par putt to tie 16 sealed a victory.

Stark and Pedersen won four of the first five holes to go 4-up before Ewing and Kupcho battled back. Ewing made a five-foot birdie putt at 14 and a tap-in par at 15 to trim the US lead to one but couldn't level matters.

Thousands of spectators missed the start due to bus issues, the LPGA saying in a statement they "deeply apologize to all fans affected" and promising "significant changes to our transportation system" this weekend with foursomes and four-ball matches on Saturday and 12 final singles matches on Sunday.





## In brief

### IRSA releases 215,400 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (APP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 215,400 cusecs water from various rim stations with inflow of 190,700 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, water level in River Indus at Tarbela Dam was 1549.13 feet and was 151.13 feet higher than its dead level of 1,398 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam was recorded as 105,300 cusecs and 130,000 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 each 20,000 cusecs. The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu and Sukkur was recorded as 127,600, 104,200, 134,800 and 82,600 cusecs respectively. Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 26,700 cusecs of water released at Nowshera and 11,700 cusecs released from River Chenab at Marala.

### Three arrested for acid attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have on Friday successfully arrested three suspects, including a woman, in connection with an acid attack on a young woman within the jurisdiction of Shalimar Police Station. According to a police spokesperson, the incident occurred on September 4 in the F-10 area, where the three accused threw acid on the victim and subsequently went into hiding. He said Inspector General (IG) police, Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, responded promptly by forming a special police team. The team employed advanced technological and investigative methods to trace and apprehend the suspects, he added. He said the arrested individuals are identified as Shamayla, Sajid Mehmood, and Sardar Wali. Following the attack on the victim, Alesha, the suspects were fled but have now been captured, he added. The preliminary investigation indicates that Shamayla orchestrated the attack with the assistance of her accomplices, driven by a personal grudge, he said.

### Tree plantation drive inaugurated

RAWALPINDI (APP): Rawalpindi Cantonment Board (RCB) has started a tree plantation drive 'Plant for Pakistan' in the Cantt areas. The inaugural plantation drive was held in Cantt Public School, Seham in which Member RCB, Chaudhry Abdul Shakoor planted saplings. CEO RCB, Syed Ali Irfan Rizvi was also present on the occasion. The students of the school planted saplings and became part of the plantation campaign on this occasion. Ch. Abdul Shakur thanked the school management and RCB for organizing the ceremony and initiating planatati6drive. He said that everyone should plant more trees to make Pakistan greener. He said that the goal of elimination of environmental pollution in the country would be achieved soon. Appreciating RCB's efforts in enhancing greenery, he said that RCB was a big part of making Rawalpindi green. He further highlighted that planting trees is our religious and national duty. "Environmental pollution has increased significantly because of the decrease in trees and forests", he said.



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq meets with a European delegation led by Ambassador Frans van Daele, Special Envoy for Freedom of Religion and Belief at the Parliament House.

## Pakistan fully commits to 'Shanghai spirit' for trust-building: Gillani

ISLAMABAD (APP): Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that Pakistan fully adheres to the "Shanghai spirit", and stands committed to building mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality, respect for diversity of civilizations and pursuit of common development.

He was addressing the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Business and Investment Conference as a chief guest on Friday, a news release said.

He said that immense potential exists for trade, investment, and joint ventures in areas such as energy, infrastructure, agriculture, and technology and we seek to strengthen regional cooperation within the SCO by fostering economic ties with our partner nations. "Our strategic location, coupled with our rich natural resources and skilled workforce, makes us an attractive destination for foreign investment, Chairman Senate observed", he said.

He observed that China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which provides vital access to international markets for our landlocked SCO partners, Pakistan is focusing on

several other avenues to promote regional development.

The Special Economic Zones, he said, offer lucrative opportunities for investment and industrial growth, creating new pathways for innovation and employment across the region. He called for prioritizing collaboration in sectors such as agriculture technology, renewable energy and digital infrastructure, to expedite sustainable economic growth.

He said that promoting people-to-people exchanges and business-to-business cooperation can build lasting partnerships that benefit both the economies and the people. Chairman Senate urged the Business community to explore new markets and promote economic integration through tariff reductions, simplified customs procedures, and increased market access.

He urged the member countries to encourage innovation and entrepreneurship through joint research initiatives, technology transfers and start-up collaborations to create new jobs, boost productivity, and ensure that our countries

remain competitive in the global market. He remarked that challenges can only be tackled through collective action and shared vision. Chairman Senate Observed that the Parliament of Pakistan, particularly the Senate, has remained committed to supporting all efforts that strengthen cooperation under the SCO framework. "Our shared goals of economic growth, peace, and stability will benefit from the active involvement of parliamentary institutions," he said while addressing the participants.

He called for working together—government, businesses, and parliament—hand in hand, to create a region that is more prosperous, connected, and innovative. He also commended the FPCCI for organizing this important event. "The SCO is not just a platform for dialogue, but a powerful engine for growth and cooperation. With over 40% of the world's population. The SCO is one of the largest regional organizations in the world and its influence continues to grow as our member countries strengthen their trade and economic ties", he concluded.

## 'Legal reforms' vital for country's progress: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Advisor to the Prime Minister on Legal Affairs Barrister Aqeel Malik Friday emphasized that 'legal reform' is a constitutional right of the government which is essential for driving positive change and progress where opposition should support this endeavor instead of making it a political issue.

In an exclusive talk with Private news, the Advisor to the Prime Minister on Legal Affairs pointed out that the government's legal reform agenda is designed to promote national betterment and improve the lives of citizens. He encouraged all stake holders to work together to support this initiative and create a more

just and equitable society.

Barrister Aqeel Malik has called upon the opposition to play a constructive role in the legal reform process. He suggested that instead of politicizing the issue, the opposition should offer suggestions and ideas to improve the reform agenda. Malik emphasized that the government is willing to use the parliamentary platform to bring about reforms.

He encouraged the opposition to utilize this platform to propose amendments and improvements to the reform bills, rather than resorting to politicking.

Malik urged all stake holders to prioritize the national interest and work towards a common goal of

strengthening the country's

legal framework. Responding to a query, Barrister Aqeel Malik has clarified that the government's attention to legal reforms is not misguided or motivated by personal agendas. Advisor to the Prime Minister on Legal Affairs has expressed optimism that the ongoing legal reforms will bring about positive changes in the country. He is confident that these reforms will have a far-reaching impact, leading to significant improvements in the legal framework. He assured that the government's focus is solely on improving the legal framework for the betterment of the country.

## RWMC conducts anti-smog/dengue activities

RAWALPINDI (APP): The communication teams of Rawalpindi Waste Management Company (RWMC) carried out its cleanliness, anti-dengue and anti-smog awareness campaign in the areas of Khayban-e-Sirsyed and Dhoke Dalal here on Friday.

According to the RWMC spokesman, the teams distributed leaflets to the Jamia Masajids of the areas and educated them about the importance of cleanliness and the prevention of dengue and Smog.

The teams asked the Masjid Imams / Khateeb of the areas to play their part in educating the people about the importance of cleanliness in the light of Islamic teachings in the sermons of Friday prayer.

The objective of the activity was to reach out to a maximum number of people to educate the general public about the precautionary measures to avoid dengue and smog.

He added that on the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a grand cleaning operation had been started in Rawalpindi to prevent the looming threat of smog this year under the title "Smog Safe Punjab."

He said that washing and mechanical sweeping of major roads of the city was being carried out daily to provide a smog-free environment to the residents of the city.

In a message, RWMC has appealed to the people to not burn waste and chemicals in the open as they were the major cause of smog, adding burning garbage was a legal offence as smoke and dust contributed to smog which was harmful to the environment and human health.

He urged the residents to ensure the spraying of water to prevent dust and to use masks and glasses, adding the promotion of tree plantation was vital for avoiding smog and checking environmental pollution.

## Pakistan committed to strengthen ties with European Union: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Friday said that Pakistan highly valued its relationship with the European Union and was committed to strengthening that bond into a robust strategic partnership.

"Pakistan is a multi-cultural, multi-religious and multi-national country, where citizens enjoy fundamental rights as guaranteed by the Constitution," he said during a meeting with the EU delegation, led by Frans van Daele, Special Envoy of the European Union, at the Parliament House.

Dr Reena Kavinka, EU's

Ambassador to Pakistan was also present in the meeting. The speaker further highlighted that the Parliament had consistently undertaken initiatives to safeguard the rights and welfare of all Pakistanis.

Ayaz Sadiq acknowledged the significant role that minorities play in Pakistan's national development and prosperity.

He reiterated that the Parliament was committed to promoting religious harmony and had ensured full representation of minority communities in the legislative body.

"The international com-

munity should recognize the severe human rights violations occurring in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and Gaza," he said, urging the global community to take action to halt the ongoing atrocities in the regions.

EU's Special Envoy Frans van Daele acknowledged Pakistan's importance on the global stage and expressed the European Union's desire to further strengthen ties with the country. "The European Union is keen to enhance both bilateral and multilateral cooperation with Pakistan," he added.

## Naqvi praises CTD for foiling terrorist plot in DG Khan

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the Punjab Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) for its swift and effective action in foiling a terrorist plot in Dera Ghazi Khan.

He praised the CTD for conducting a highly successful intelligence-based operation that led to the elimination of two terrorists linked to the extremist group Fitna Al Khawarij.

In a statement, Minister Naqvi emphasized the professionalism and dedication of the CTD team, congratulating them for their timely intervention, which prevented a major terror attack. "Through their intelli-

gence-driven efforts, the brave personnel of the Punjab CTD thwarted a devastating plot, sending two terrorists to their demise. This operation once again underscores their unwavering commitment to safeguarding our nation," he remarked.

Minister Naqvi highlighted that the Punjab CTD has consistently played a critical role in disrupting the malicious plans of terrorist groups like Fitna Al Khawarij.

"Their proactive and professional approach continues to protect our citizens from harm. We take immense pride in the bravery and expertise demon-

strated by the CTD forces," he added. He further reiterated that the Punjab CTD stands as the vanguard in the nation's fight against terrorism.

"This force is not only our first line of defence but also one of our most valuable assets in the ongoing battle to ensure peace and security," Naqvi stated, acknowledging the critical role the department plays in maintaining national stability.

The operation in Dera Ghazi Khan marks another significant success for Punjab CTD in its ongoing campaign against terrorism, reinforcing its reputation as a key player in the country's counter-terrorism efforts.

## Ayesha vows to eradicate polio, urges parental cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Prime Minister's Focal Person on Polio Eradication Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq Friday launched an unrelenting war on polio, vowing to leave no stone unturned in the quest to vanquish this debilitating disease from Pakistan's soil once and for all.

In an exclusive talk with a Private news channel, she reaffirmed the government's unwavering commitment to eradicating polio from the country as aggressive steps were being taken to achieve this goal, including intensified vaccination campaigns, enhanced surveillance and strengthened coordination with provincial authorities.

Senator Farooq also reiterated the crucial role of public cooperation in this endeavour, appealing to citizens to join hands with the government in its efforts to wipe out this debilitating disease.

"By working together, Pakistan can overcome the challenges posed by polio

and ensure a healthier future for its children," she stressed.

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq emphasized the urgent need to re-educate people about the critical importance of polio vaccination. She stressed that hiding children from polio drops is a significant obstacle to eradication efforts.

"To address Polio, this year's first nationwide polio campaign will continue until September 17th. Two additional national emergency drives will be conducted before the end of December," she announced.

"Intensive efforts will focus on re-educating parents and caregivers about the safety and efficacy of polio vaccines. This will involve addressing misconceptions and concerns that lead to vaccination hesitancy. Influencers, community leaders, and religious scholars will be engaged to promote vaccination," she added.

Responding a query, she

said, "By re-educating the public and maintaining vigilance, Pakistan can boost vaccination coverage and herd immunity. This will prevent new polio cases and stop transmission, protecting the country's progress toward polio eradication. Ultimately, this will move Pakistan closer to a polio-free future, where no child will suffer from this debilitating disease."

Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq made a heartfelt appeal to parents across Pakistan, urging them not to hesitate when it came to administering polio drops to their children.

She reassured them that polio drops were completely safe and secure, and that vaccination was the only effective way to protect their children from the debilitating effects of polio. "The vaccine has been extensively tested and proven to be harmless, and that it is the best way to ensure a healthy and secure future for their children," She emphasized.

## Bill targets Black Magicians to combat witchcraft nationwide

ISLAMABAD (APP): Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri of the Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) on Friday emphasized the need for implementation and awareness of the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill", a legislation aimed at preventing witchcraft and related activities in the country.

Talking to a Private news channel, she explained that the bill, which has been passed by the parliament, stipulates that black magic practitioners shall face a 7-year imprisonment term and a fine of Rs. 1 million.

Zehri stressed that the implementation of this law is crucial to protect vulnerable individuals, particularly women, who are often targeted by black magic practitioners. She called for

a nationwide awareness campaign to educate people about the dangers of black magic and the legal consequences of practicing it.

Zehri also called for strict enforcement of the law, saying that black magic practitioners should be brought to justice and punished according to the law.

She emphasized that the implementation of the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill" is essential to create a safe and secure environment for all citizens, particularly in rural areas where black magic is prevalent.

By pushing for the implementation of this law, Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri aims to protect the rights of vulnerable individuals and promote a society free from superstition

and fear. Replying to a question, Zehri revealed that the "Targeting Black Magicians Bill" was initially passed in 2017, but due to certain limitations, it was presented again to incorporate suggestions from all stakeholders.

She assured that after thorough deliberation and consultation, the bill will be finally implemented and black magic practitioners will face strict penalties.

With the implementation of this bill, black magic practitioners will face severe consequences, including a 7-year imprisonment term and a fine of Rs. 1 million, she highlighted.

Senator Zehri hopes to empower the public to recognize and resist the tactics of black magic practitioners.

## ANF seizes 602 kg drugs; arrests two accused

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting an intelligence-based operation managed to recover 602 kg drugs and arrested two drug smugglers, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Friday.

He informed that ANF busted an inter-provincial drug trafficking gang and arrested two accused.

ANF intercepted a car on Sumandri Motorway Interchange, Faisalabad and rounded up two drug smugglers. During the investigation, the accused revealed presence of the drugs in the house located in Azam Garden Hafizabad. On pointation of the accused, the ANF team raided the house and recovered over 357 kg hashish and over 244 kg opium. The accused used to smuggle drugs from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab and supply in different areas.

The spokesman said that all-out efforts were being made to address the challenges of drug trafficking through all available means and make the country drug-free and secure the future of the youth.

A case has been registered against the accused under the Anti-Narcotics Act and further investigation is underway to arrest other members of the group.

## Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) preparations in full swing

RAWALPINDI (APP): Like other parts of the country, preparations to celebrate Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) are in full swing in Rawalpindi Division as Milad-un-Nabi would be celebrated with religious fervor and reverence on September 17 (Tuesday).

Roads, streets, and buildings in the division are being decorated by the faithful with colorful lights and bunting. Several programs are being chalked out to celebrate the birth of the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) with great reverence and devotion.

Different Naat committees in the city are organizing Naat competitions to celebrate 12 Rabi-ul-Awal. Rawalpindi city is beautifully being decorated and all the arrange-

ments are being finalized to celebrate the birth of Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) in a befitting manner and with religious fervour.

As a tradition, Milad-un-Nabi processions would be held in all areas of Rawalpindi city. Strict security arrangements would be made to ensure the security of the processions of Eid Milad-un-Nabi.

The Punjab government has directed all the district and tehsil administration officers to take strict security measures in this regard.

In this connection the main procession of Milad-Un-Nabi would start in the morning from Bunni Chowk Rawalpindi and after passing from Circular Road, Waris Khan, Murree Road, Committee Chowk, Iqbal Road, Fowara

Chowk, Raja Bazaar, would end at central Jamia Mosque. Like every year, the government and religious organizations have planned several activities to celebrate the annual event.

The district administration is finalizing a plan for the security of the faithful on Eid Milad-un-Nabi. The entry of tractor-trolleys, trucks, and other heavy vehicles would be prohibited at the route of the main procession. Ulema and people belonging to different sects of life have also been urged to play their role in maintaining law and order to foil the nefarious designs of the miscreants. The city district government would set up a control room for the surveillance of the processions and reviewing security arrangements.



### Turkmenistan delivers 930 tons of food

KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's National Disaster Management Authority said on Thursday it had received more than 930 tons of food and non-food aid from Turkmenistan. The aid consignment included 198 tons of wheat, 15 tons of non-alcoholic beverages, 2,000 cans of baby food, 5,000 kilograms of sweets and biscuits, 195 tons of chemical fertilizers, 174 tons of diesel oil, 168 tons of petrol oil and 183 tons of cement, ANDMA said in a statement.

## The Frontier Post

Rabi ul Awal 09 1446 — Saturday, September 14, 2024

### Over 200 mining contracts signed in past three years

KABUL (TOLONews): The Ministry of Mines and Petroleum says it has signed mining extraction contracts with over 200 small and large companies in the past three years. According to Homayoun Afghan, the ministry's spokesperson, these contracts have created employment opportunities for over 150,000 people in the sector. Homayoun Afghan said, "We have about 30 active contracts for various minerals in the provinces of the country."

# Taliban condemns attack on civilians in Ghor



GHOR (Ariana News): Taliban on Friday condemned Thursday's armed attack on civilians in the Ghor province in central Afghanistan.

In a statement, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said the attack claimed the lives

In a statement, Taliban spokesman Zabihullah

Mujahid said the attack claimed the lives of 14 people and left six others wounded.

"The attack was carried out by the enemies of humanity in a brutal manner," the Taliban said in their statement.

ISIS later claimed

responsibility for the attack, issuing a statement last night in which they alleged that 15 people were killed and six others wounded.

Local sources had earlier reported that unknown armed individuals targeted residents of the Khomi area in Ghor's neighboring Daikundi province, killing 14 and injuring four.

## Free English and computer classes launched

BAMYAN (TOLONews): The Bamyan Department of Education reports that in cooperation with a local organization, it has provided free English language and computer courses for more than 1,000 male and female students.

The head of this department said that efforts are also underway to provide free education opportunities for other children.

Enayatullah, Sahar, head of the Bamyan Department of Education, said: "For students facing economic difficulties, we have also tried to negotiate with private schools to allow them to study either at a discount or for free."

Some of these children have called on the Bamyan Department of Education to continue such educational programs.

Samira, a student, said: "I am very happy that this program has started in our school. We would be pleased if other similar programs were also launched."

Ehsan, another student, said, "I am very happy to learn computers and English here, and it is also free, so I come here every day."

Alina, another student, said: "This program benefits us in learning English, and since the economic situation is not good, we can learn English for free next to our school." Currently, more than 150,000 students in Bamyan are engaged in education; however, some of these students cannot afford the fees at private educational centers due to poor economic conditions and poverty.

## Water filtration plant inaugurated

KABUL (Xinhua): Afghan authorities have opened a water supply network and water filtration plant in the capital Kabul, the country's Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said in a statement on Thursday.

Financially supported by United Nations Children's Emergency Fund and implemented by the ministry, these projects cost more than 518,000 U.S. dollars, said the statement, adding that these projects would provide potable water to 1,290 families in Kabul's Sarobi district.

Before the inauguration, Mullah Mohammad Younus Akhundzada, acting minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development said, in the future, no one will have to go far from home to fetch drinking water, and they will have access to clean water through taps installed in their houses.

Similarly, the construction of 10 water supply projects has been completed and put into operation in eastern Paktia province to benefit 2,000 families in rural districts, the ministry reported on Tuesday.

Afghanistan has been suffering drought for years, and most provinces have been facing extreme drinking water shortages.

# Haqqani: We should use knowledge instead of force in calling people to truth

KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani has stressed that an investigation should be conducted before any decision and that knowledge should be used instead of force in calling people to the path of truth.

Haqqani made the remarks at a capacity-building seminar for officials in eastern Kunar province.

"Positions and responsibilities are temporary, but people's trust is a great thing to be kept safe," he said. "Transparency and purity in governing and serving are our foundations, and we must protect ourselves from seeking fame, materialism and seeking position, and keep spirituality high so that Allah's help is not lost."

Highlighting the importance of unity, Haqqani said: "The enemies are afraid of our



unity, so we must avoid suspicion. Always make decisions after investigation and invite people to the truth with intellectual and mental knowledge instead of force."

He also stressed on preventing the misuse of public

resources. "Avoid extravagance, take care of state resources and vehicles and refrain from irresponsible use of public resources," he said.

Meanwhile, Acting Minister of Propagation of Virtue and Prevention of

Vice, Mohammad Khalid Hanafi, said that the Islamic Emirate is a special Islamic system in which the dignity of scholars, students, and religious people is protected. He also emphasized on maintaining unity and treating people well.

# Abdullah condemns Daesh-claimed deaths in Daikundi



KABUL (Pajhwok): Dr. Abdullah Abdullah has condemned the killing of 14 innocent people in central Daikundi province by four armed motorcycleists in a cruel manner.

The former head of High Council



for National Reconciliation in the previous government said: "With great sadness, I received the news that armed men shot and killed 14 of our innocent citizens on the Daikandi-Ghor highway in a very

brutal manner. May Allah grant patience to the bereaved families."

Local sources said four armed motorcycleist shot dead 14 people and injured four others in Palosang area of Daikundi near Ghor province yesterday afternoon.

A resident of the area told Pajhwok on the condition of anonymity: "Yesterday, 18 people who wanted to welcome devotees returning from the pilgrimage in Karbala, Iraq, to Daikundi and Ghor provinces. They were stopped under the pretext of taking pictures and videos, two gunmen were taking their pictures, when the two others opened fire at them."

Government officials are yet to say anything about the incident, but the Ministry of Interior has confirmed it to a private television and did not say anything about the deaths. Daesh group has claimed responsibility for the incident by releasing a video.

# Construction of largest terminal in Herat kicks off

HERAT (Ariana News): The Ministry of Transport and Aviation says the construction of the country's largest terminal has begun in Herat province. The terminal worth more than \$20 million is being built by the private sector and the government.

In the opening ceremony of this terminal, the local officials of Herat called on traders and investors to invest in the country for economic growth and job opportunities.

This terminal will be built in a large set with all the required parts. It will be built on 1,000 acres of land

near Khwaja Abdullah Ansari International Airport, employing 4,000 people.

"This national project will be built on nearly one acre of state land. About 1.8 billion afghanis have been invested in this project," said Hamidullah Akhundzada, acting minister of Transport and Aviation.

Construction of the terminal costs 20,500,000 US dollars, 70 percent of which is paid by the private sector and 30 percent by the Islamic Emirate.

"This project is one of the most crucial projects for Herat province, especially

the western zone," said Habibullah Samadi, project manager of the terminal.

Noor Ahmad Islam Jar, the governor of Herat, also assured about the availability of investment opportunities in this province and asked investors and businessmen to invest in Afghanistan to improve the economic situation and provide work opportunities.

The passenger terminal of Herat is now located in the north of the city, where the movement of large passenger cars from the central roads of Herat city has always caused disorder and traffic accidents.

# US vows to continue pressing for reopening of girls' schools

KABUL (Khaama Press): The U.S. Embassy for Afghanistan, operating from Doha, has stated that Washington will not cease its efforts to reopen girls' schools in Afghanistan.

On Thursday, September 12, the U.S. Embassy for Afghanistan posted on its X account that it supports girls' education in Afghanistan.

The embassy added, "As students around the world return to school, 1.4 million seats in classrooms in Afghanistan remain empty."

The embassy reiterated its commitment to supporting educated Afghans and voiced hope for a brighter future by continuing to call for the reopening of schools for girls.

The U.S. Embassy's statement coincides with the start of the academic year in many countries around the world, where schools reopen after summer breaks, unlike in Afghanistan where girls above sixth grade are still barred from attending.

Since the Taliban's takeover in August 2021, girls' education beyond sixth grade has been banned in Afghanistan.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the Taliban's



spokesperson, recently stated in an interview with an Iranian media outlet that the Taliban have yet to create the necessary conditions for girls to return to school.

The plight of Afghanistan's girls has only worsened under the Taliban regime, with severe restrictions placed on their education, employment, and freedom of movement.

Since the Taliban took control, Afghan girls and women have faced increasing suppression, including the loss of basic rights, which has drawn widespread international condemnation and further isolated Afghanistan on the global stage.

# Afghan fighters pull no punches after Taliban ban on professional MMA



KABUL (AFP): Hissing like a quiver of angry cobras, a group of young Afghan mixed martial arts (MMA) athletes shadow box in a Kabul club despite the uncertain future of the sport after a Taliban government ban on professional competitions.

Late last month, the Taliban authorities banned the sport in professional competition calling it too "violent" and "problematic with respect to sharia", in the latest restriction based on their interpretation of Islamic law implemented since they swept to power

in 2021.

"Initially, when a friend told me that MMA has been banned in Afghanistan, I didn't believe but when I reached the club, all my friends were gutted, and obviously I was too," 21-year-old Khalil Rahman told AFP.

Rahman had ambitions to "raise Afghanistan's flag high in the world", through international MMA competitions, but now that professional bouts have been cancelled, he and other trainees at the well-equipped private gym in eastern Kabul worry their days in the octagonal fighting cage are numbered.

For now, training and amateur competitions have continued with protective gear, leaving MMA enthusiasts in limbo, uncertain of the exact rules in the order from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice.

The state sporting authority was not immediately available for comment, but a source from the organisation confirmed to AFP that the order text "was vague about what actually has been banned and the general directorate of sports



and physical education has requested clarity".

"It made me sad"

But Rahman is already thinking of trying to leave the country to follow his pro MMA dreams abroad.

His fellow trainee Mohammad Waseem Qayumi is holding out hope he can keep up with the sport at an amateur level. "Initially, it made me sad when MMA was banned," he said, sweating after

punching and kicking through the training session.

"Then I thought if free fighting (without safety gear) is banned, that's OK. I will put on headgear and other safety equipment and will continue to freestyle with my fighting."

Qayumi was inspired by the growth of the sport in the country in recent years, as he saw Afghan athletes taking part in international competitions on popular

MMA platforms like the US Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC).

A number of non-Afghan Muslim fighters have won world titles and enormous purses on the international stage, including Russians Khabib Nurmagomedov and Islam Makhachev.

"The people of Afghanistan are fighters, and this sport is also a fight, where you can kick and punch freely, that's why people like this sport," Qayumi said.

Women banned from sport

The Taliban government has not been recognised by any other state, complicating sports' teams participation in international arenas, but athletes from other countries have recently been welcomed to Afghanistan for competition.

The authorities have

also effectively banned women from sports and male athletes have been ordered in a new morality law to cover their bodies from the navel to the knee.

Bilal Fazli, who trains in a club based in a dark basement in the southwest of the Afghan capital told AFP he was disappointed to see an immediate drop in the number of trainees coming to the club after the ban.

"All the boys were frightened... The government could have done a better job by working on other important things such as helping the poor than banning sport," the 21-year-old said before punching his trainer's gloves hard in frustration.

"I don't know what to do, we don't have jobs and if we can't even have the sports of our liking, maybe we will leave this country."



# Facilitation to incarcerated PTI MNAs NA Speaker declares parliament lodges sub-jail

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday declared the parliament lodges sub-jail on the request of PTI MNAs. All the incarcerated MNAs of PTI would be moved to parliament lodges today (Friday) while the arrangements in this regard have been finalised.

Earlier, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq held detailed consultation with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi over the request of PTI MNAs to move them to the lodges. A notification to declare the parliament lodges sub-jail has been issued. Earlier, the MNAs of PTI had requested the speaker to move them to the parliament lodges.

All the 10 arrested MNAs of PTI were earlier produced for the National Assembly session. A heavy contingent of Islamabad police had 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 Dogar, Ahmad Chatha, Zubair Khan Wazir, Syed Ahmad Ali Shah, Syed Naseem Ali Shah, and Yousaf Khan.

Meanwhile, Minister for Information, Broadcasting, National Heritage and Culture Attaullah Tarar also informed the National Assembly that the government would fully implement a minimum wage of Rs 37,000 in private hospitals for nurses and paramedical staff.

Responding to a question during the session's question hour, he said that the Islamabad Healthcare Regulatory Authority (IHRA) had issued directives to all private hospitals to ensure 100% compliance with the minimum wage for nurses and paramedical staff. The minister said, "At present, nurses are drawing between Rs 30,000 and Rs 50,000, while paramedical staff receive between Rs 20,000 and Rs 30,000."

He assured the assembly that the government would enforce the wage

directive within one month following the IHRA's orders and warned that hospitals failing to comply would face strict action. In response to another question, Tarar mentioned that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had instructed the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NVTTC) to train nurses to meet the growing demand in domestic markets, as well as in the Middle East and Europe.

He said that the NVTTC had been directed to ensure international-standard training and to enhance its capacity for training nurses. He also supported the suggestion to introduce nursing as a subject in educational curricula. In response to another question, the minister said, "The government has taken significant steps to comprehensively address women's health challenges. These measures include establishing Postpartum Family Planning (PPFP) guidelines and the Essential Package of Health Services (EPHS), which focus on family planning and addressing complications related to pregnancy and childbirth, to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality."

"Basic Health Units (BHUs) have been upgraded to provide Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (B-EmONC) services around the clock," he added. "The government has also launched national screening and awareness campaigns for breast and cervical cancer among women. The LHW Strategic Plan (2022-2028) particularly focuses on strengthening primary healthcare services in marginalized, remote, rural, and urban slum communities," he said.

He said, "Pakistan Maternal Nutrition Strategy (2022-2027) is another significant initiative aimed at improving maternal health. The Pakistan Adolescent Nutrition Strategy addresses challenges adolescent girls face, including anaemia, micro-nutrient deficiencies, underweight, and obesity, by promoting healthy eating habits, targeted supple-

mentation, physical activity, hygiene practices, and overall healthy lifestyles." "The government has also strengthened laws to combat harassment, such as the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act (2010), helping to prevent mental health crises resulting from harassment," he said.

"An Anti-Rape Crisis Cell (ARCC) was established at the Federal Government Services Hospital in August 2024 to provide survivors with comprehensive services, including medical and psychological support, legal aid, and counselling, all in one place," he added. He said, "A campaign focused on breast cancer screenings has been launched, particularly targeting rural areas. Camps have already been set up to educate people on the issue. Private TV channels have been encouraged to broadcast breast cancer awareness ads free of cost, and Breast Cancer Week is being observed across the country."

According to World Health Organization (WHO) statistics, "Approximately 40,000 women globally die from breast cancer each year. The Ministries of Health and Information are working together to ensure the success of awareness campaigns in rural areas." Regarding health cards, the minister explained that the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for Islamabad began on January 1, 2022, covering all permanent resident families of Islamabad until December 15, 2023.

As of that date, approximately 278,830 families (around 933,720 individuals registered with NADRA) in Islamabad had received health cards. However, during the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC) meeting on February 7, the coverage was restricted to families below the poverty line, defined as those with a Proxy Means Test (PMT) score below 32.5 in the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Survey.



ORAKZAI: Chief of Army Staff General Syed Asim Munir laying floral wreath at Yadgar e Shuhada.

## Imran should have been out of jail by now: Omar

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Omar Ayub Khan said on Friday that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan should have been released by now as all cases against him were bogus.

Speaking to reporters outside an anti-terrorism court (ATC), Lahore, the opposition leader said that if the PTI founder's stay was prolonged in jail, his life would become more endangered, pointing out that the PTI leaders were whisked away from inside the parliament which also merited an inquiry. He said he used to study in Lahore where people rejected the government on Feb 8 and voted for the PTI.

"The PTI founder was not involved in any case. The agreements with the Independent Power Producers (IPPs) were finalised during the PPP and the PML-N's tenure. According to these agreements, you are given capacity payments whether you produce electricity or not. When I was the energy minister, we brought the rate down to 2.5 cents," he reiterated.

Meanwhile an ATC court in Lahore conducted hearing of May 9 cases against the PTI leaders. ATC duty judge Arshad Javed heard the case where Ayub appeared along with Azam Swati, Jamshed Cheema and Musarrat Cheema while Asad Umar filed application for exemption from hearing citing medical reasons. The court extended interim bails till Oct 8.

## LHC seeks response from federal govt

### F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court (LHC) has directed the federal government and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) to submit their responses by September 27 in a case regarding the implementation of the decision on reserved seats.

Justice Raheel Kamran Sheikh presided over the hearing on a petition filed by citizen Muneer Ahmed, represented by Advocate Azhar Siddique. During the proceedings, the government counsel informed the court that the Attorney General was engaged in a meeting of the Supreme Judicial Council and that a related petition had already been filed in the Supreme Court by Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

The judge questioned the admissibility of the case, asking Advocate Azhar Siddique to explain its standing in light of the fact that the Supreme Court was already hearing a related matter. Advocate Siddique argued that no formal notices or case numbers had been issued by the Supreme Court and reiterated that under Article 184(3) of the Constitution, a direct petition could not be filed in the Supreme Court.

# Common man facing difficulties, says Bilawal

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari while talking to journalists at the Parliament House on Friday discussed in detail the issues of Pakistani politics, economy and judiciary.

While answering the questions of the journalists, Chairman Bilawal said that the biggest task for any parliament is changes in legislation and changes in the constitution. He said that this was demonstrated and was the first and the biggest success achieved by Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto when he gave a consensus Islamic democratic and federal constitution to the country. After that we restored the same constitution by the 18th amendment.

At present every institution is facing one or the other challenge and everyone can see that this system is not working. It is also known that the third gener-

ation of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had to wait for justice. Now when this is the situation, a common man has to face many difficulties to get justice. All our institutions are facing problems, including the Parliament. Journalism is also faced with difficulties. Journalism plays an important role.

We need independent journalism as well as responsible journalism. Recently, journalists were abused in a rally. The media should also have a standard so that if any wrong news is broadcast, it should be clarified in the same way.

The law and order situation in the country is also worrying. Recently there were incidents of terrorism in Balochistan and the situation in KP is even worse. The Chief Minister of KP is facing problems in his own village. Terrorism has to be fought by the provincial and federal government together. At this time, it is seen for the first time that there are difficulties in

giving peace to the people of Pakistan and it is the first time that politics is being done on this issue. There is a glimmer of hope since yesterday an all-party committee has been formed in Parliament to look into the issues. He said that we have established this committee willingly. There should be a working relationship in Parliament so that people's problems can be resolved. If we do that, it will be a huge success.

The idea behind the Charter of Democracy was to solve the problems of the people of Pakistan and all the institutions become functional. We have implemented 90% of the Charter of Democracy, only a few points remain. One of them is the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which can work on every national issue and is very important. The NAB reforms which were in the Charter of Democracy must also be implemented.

# Former DG Health KP faces unjust inquiry

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Dr. Shaukat Ali, former Director General (DG) Health Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), finds himself at the center of a highly controversial and politically charged case. Having served the province with distinction, Dr. Shaukat Ali was first uncereimoniously suspended from his post, a move many claim was fueled by political motivations rather than any genuine misconduct.

Sources close to the matter suggest that his suspension was a direct result of political maneuvering aimed at sidelining him from his crucial role in the provincial health department. Despite his impeccable service record, Dr. Shaukat became a target in an alleged attempt to appease certain political figures.

Following his removal, the situation escalated when the provincial government initiated an inquiry

against him, claiming his involvement in irregularities surrounding the procurement of medicines and medical equipment. The inquiry, which Dr. Shaukat has consistently maintained is baseless and part of a broader campaign to malign him, is being overseen by a committee headed by Musaddiq Abbassi, Advisor to the Chief Minister on Accountability. Dr. Shaukat when contacted by "Frontier Post" responded that Abbassi is a controversial figure in this case, and has played an instrumental role in advancing these allegations against him. He further stated that he has not only challenged the inquiry in court but has also provided detailed explanations and justifications for the procurement processes under his tenure. Despite this, the government continues to press forward with the inquiry, leading to believe that the investigation is less about accountability and more

about harassment.

The media has also been complicit in what many are calling a "trial by media," as Dr. Shaukat's reputation continues to be tarnished with regular stories portraying him in a negative light. Legal experts and supporters of Dr. Shaukat Ali argue that the inquiry lacks substantial evidence and is merely a tool of political vendetta. His legal team maintains that the government's actions are malicious and that the inquiry is being used as a weapon to further tarnish his career and public standing.

The questionnaire issued by the inquiry committee, led by Abbassi, and Dr. Shaukat's comprehensive responses are set to play a pivotal role in determining the outcome of the case. Dr. Shaukat has expressed hope that the judiciary will see through the politically motivated nature of the charges and provide him with the justice he deserves.

# JI Ameer calls for end to irrational taxes, IPPs to revive economy

## F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naemur Rahman has said that the country is passing through a critical phase and we unitedly have to pull it out of this mess and turn it as per the dreams of its founders by frustrating the conspiracies of its enemies.

Addressing a hugely attended ceremony entitled 'Economic Problems of Pakistan and their Solutions', at Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry he said that our country is blessed with unlimited resources, it enjoys the ability to bounce back but the only needed thing is serious, united and selfless efforts. He went on to say that economic and political stability are correlated, therefore politicians

should sit together and chalk out a comprehensive frame work for the economic wellbeing of the country.

He dubbed the irrational taxes and IPPs as the mother causes of all the problems and demanded broadening of tax net on genuine basis and forensic audit of IPPs to get rid of them once and for all and put the economic wheel on run. He asked that if the Reko Dik issue can be resolved, why can't the IPPs.

He underlined the need for immediate initiation of work on Pak-Iran gas pipeline project, as well as the long pending gas exploration from the domestic sources to overcome the gas crisis for the benefit of the domestic consumers and the industry to enhance production of export oriented goods.

He said that we have to focus on IT industry, abolish class-based education system by saying good bye to vested interests for the cause of the country adding that the business community especially all the Chambers of Commerce and Industry have to stand shoulder to shoulder with Jamaat-e-Islami in its peaceful struggle to get rid of IPPs and irrational taxes to enable the people to have a sigh of relief.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry by narrating the grim picture of country's economy, emphasized that government must take on board the business community and other stakeholders before taking decisions relating to the economy of the country.

## Spain hosts meeting on Gaza issue

MADRID (AFP): Ministers from Muslim and European countries along with the European Union's foreign affairs chief gathered Friday in Madrid to discuss how to advance a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"Together, we want to identify the concrete actions that will enable us to make progress toward this objective," Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez wrote on social network X. "The international community must take a decisive step toward a just and lasting peace in the Middle East," the Socialist premier added.

Sanchez welcomed participants at his official residence before the start of the meeting at the foreign ministry in central Madrid, hosted by his top diplomat Jose Manuel Albares. In attendance were Palestinian Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa and the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye — all members of the Arab-Islamic Contact Group for Gaza — as well as the heads of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The European Union was represented by its foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell as well as the foreign ministers of Ireland, Norway and Slovenia in addition to Spain. "The implementation of the two-state solution is the only way to ensure a just and lasting peace in the region through the peaceful and secure coexistence of the state of Palestine and the state of Israel," Albares told a news conference.

Asked about Israel's absence from the meeting, he said the country had not been invited because it belonged "neither to the group of Europeans nor to the Arab-Islamic contact group" but stressed he would be "delighted" if Israel took part in discussions on the two-state solution. Calls for the solution have grown since the outbreak of the war in Gaza, which began with Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel. That attack resulted in the deaths of 1,205 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures. The militants also seized 251 hostages, 97 of whom are still in Gaza, including 33 the Israeli military says are dead.

# PPP to put an end to politics of hatred: Sharjeel

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, while congratulating Pakistan People's Party candidate Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed on his victory in NA-171 Rahim Yar Khan, stated that the PTI has suffered a significant defeat in the by-elections in NA-171. He highlighted that in yesterday's elections, there was no opportunity for anyone to make accusations based on Form 45 and Form 47.

In a statement, Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that the victory of Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed is proof that the people of Punjab have embraced the vision and leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Under his leadership, the

Pakistan People's Party will put an end to the politics of hatred, division, and baseless accusations across the country, paving the way for unity and progress.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that the leadership of the Pakistan People's Party seeks to involve everyone in addressing the challenges faced by the nation. The historic victory of the People's Party in NA-171 marks the beginning of a new era of positive and constructive politics in Pakistan.

He said that the victory of PPP candidate Makhdoom Tahir Rasheed in NA-171 is a clear endorsement of the vision, leadership, and pro-people policies of the Pakistan People's Party in Punjab. The people of Rahim Yar

Khan have once again placed their trust in the Arrow as a symbol of hope, progress, and commitment to democracy.

Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said that under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Pakistan People's Party has been working tirelessly to protect the rights of the common man and improve the conditions of marginalized communities. With the dynamic leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and President Asif Ali Zardari, we will continue our journey to make Pakistan a more prosperous and just nation. He said that the Pakistan People's Party will stand with the people, striving for development, stability, and a bright future for all.



PESHAWAR: KP Chief Minister, Ali Amin Gandapur distributing Goggle Career Certification Vouchers among youth.

# PHC hearing political cases instead of poor petitioners' pleas: CJ

## Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: The Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim remarked that unfortunately, we are now hearing political cases instead of cases of poor petitioners. All political cases are coming to the Peshawar High Court, and we are hearing them, while on the other hand, cases of poor petitioners have been pending for years, and we have less time to address them, on Friday.

He also said that we have set a specific parameter to dispose of all cases from 2015 by December 2024, after which we will address the pending cases from 2020

under a new strategy. He made these remarks during the hearing of a writ petition filed by Member Provincial Assembly Akram Khan Durrani against the decision of the Election Tribunal.

During the hearing Chief Justice observed that political cases have come once again, and other petitioners are being affected. But what can we do? We have to hear them. Political cases should not come to the courts.

The counsel for the petitioner argued that they had filed a writ against the decision of the Election Tribunal, Bannu. Meanwhile, Justice Waqar Ahmed said that he was a member of the Election Tribunal Bannu, so

he could not hear the case, and it should be sent to another bench.

The Chief Justice directed that the case be sent to another bench. During the hearing of another case, the Chief Justice addressed all the lawyers and said that we have to dispose of all pending cases from 2015 by December, and there will be no adjournment. After that, we will hear cases from 2020 on a priority basis because the cases of petitioners are being severely affected, and the burden on the courts is also increasing. The Chief Justice PHC argued that lawyers will also have to cooperate with the courts.