

**Bugti calls on Bilawal**  
**F.P. Report**  
ISLAMABAD: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Monday called on Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari in Islamabad. According to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat, political situation of Balochistan and other issues of bilateral interest came under discussion during the meeting.

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**Mashal removed from post**  
**F.P. Report**  
PESHAWAR: The KP government has decided to remove Mashal Yousafzai from her position as Adviser on Social Welfare, sending a summary for denotification to Governor Faisal Karim Kundi on Monday. The Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur-led KP government has also decided to transfer the Ministry of Population Welfare from Mashal Yousafzai to Qasim Ali Shah.

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ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan, Jiang Zaidong called on Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif.

## Bill seeking increase in number of SC judges lands in Senate

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A bill was introduced in Senate on Monday seeking to increase the number of Supreme Court judges. Senator Abdul Qadir tabled the bill that was referred to the concerned standing committee.

According to the proposed amendment by the Senator, the apex court should have 20 judges excluding the chief justice. However, the bill was opposed by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). "There are more than 53,000 cases pending in the Supreme Court and it takes almost two years to fix a case for hearing in the apex court," the Senator said.

He added that most of the judges are busy in the constitutional matters and therefore it is necessary to increase the number of judges in the Supreme Court. "The number of judges should be increased to clear the backlog in the apex court," he said.

Speaking on the floor of the upper house, Senator Abdul Qadir called for appointing "at least 16 judges" to the top court, saying that several constitutional matters were being referred to the top court. "Larger benches are formed and these judges look into the constitutional matters," he added. Not only constitutional cases, but several cases related to financial matters worth billions were also pending in the top court as it does not have time to hear these cases, the senator claimed.

"Our judicial system is lowest on the [global] ranking," he added. Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar also backed the legislation and suggested forwarding the new bill to the relevant committee.

tee. However, the opposition senators opposed the new legislation.

Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar also backed the legislation and suggested forwarding the new bill to the relevant committee. Tarar, while addressing the Senate session, endorsed the points raised by Senator Qadir, saying several cases pertaining to capital punishments still awaiting verdicts since 2015. "A person spent 34 years in jail due to a pending appeal before the top court," he added. Tarar further said that the architects of the Constitution of Pakistan have not fixed a specific number of judges and gave parliament power to determine the judicial strength.

In his remarks on the amendment, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Senator Syed Ali Zafar said that the law was "suddenly tabled" in the the upper house to increase the number of jurists. He termed the amendments "an attempt to impose a judicial martial law" by bringing seven new judges. Zafar added that his party was ready to approve the appointment of two more judges.

The senator suggested the government to start increasing the judicial strength from subordinate courts instead of the Supreme Court. He also alleged that Senator Qadir "is being used" for the new legislation which he said apparently going in favour of the coalition government. PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan told journalists earlier today that the party has decided to oppose any amendment bill regarding the judiciary and all their members of parliament have been officially notified about it.

"None of our MNA or senator will

vote in the favour of the proposed amendments. Every MNA has been individually instructed in this regard in the light of Article 63 of the Constitution," Gohar said. Responding to the PTI's opposition to the bill, Tarar in Monday's session said the former ruling party is worried over the proposed amendment as the bill would seize something, asking the opposition party to give logical reasons behind its apprehensions.

"The Peshawar High Court (PHC) had sought an increase of 10 judges. The PTI is the ruling party there but we are still making the required appointments," he added. Taking part in the debate over the new legislation in the upper house of the parliament, Senator Aimal Wali Khan, the president of the Awami National Party (ANP), admitted that a judge cannot hear dozens of cases in a day.

Expressing his concerns, Aimal questioned why the government is cherished over the opposition's bill amid media reports questioning the requirements of additional judges. He was referring to the tabling of the said amendment by an independent senator instead of a government legislator. He also questioned the law minister regarding his pledge to introduce a bill on comprehensive legal reforms. He was of the view that the amendments related to increasing the number of judges could be included in the promised bill. The ANP president recommended the constitution of a separate court for constitutional amendments. Responding to Aimal's query, the law minister said that the federal government will introduce detailed reforms for subordinate courts in the coming days.

## IHC to resume hearing contempt plea

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: A full bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) will hear a contempt plea over a "malicious campaign" against Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri regarding his law degree on September 19.

The development comes after a controversy over Justice Jahangiri's LLB degree, which first emerged in July, but resurfaced last week as the Karachi University's syndicate reportedly cancelled his degree. The full bench comprises all the IHC judges, except Justice Jahangiri himself. Headed by Chief Justice Aamer Farooq, the bench also includes Justices Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Mianul Hassan Aurangzeb, Babar Sattar, Ejaz Ishaq Khan, Arbab Muhammad Tahir and Saman Rafat Imtiaz.

Over two months ago, a letter began circulating on social media, purportedly from the KU's controller of examinations, regarding Justice Jahangiri's law degree. A reference against the judge had also been filed in the Supreme Judicial Council. On July 8, the IHC stepped in to counter the drive against the judge, with its full bench issuing notices to journalists Hassan Ayub Khan and Gharida Farooqui, as well as social media activist Ammar Solangi.

The three individuals had shared a letter and an annexure from the KU to an application seeking information under the Sindh Transparency Right to Information Act 2016 about the degree. The IHC had also issued notices to the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (Pemra), the P a k i s t a n Telecommunications Authority (PTA) and the director general of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA).

The court had directed them to identify the individuals involved in the malicious campaign and submit their responses within four weeks. The hearing had been adjourned till the end of summer vacations. KU's syndicate, on the recommendation of its Unfair Means (UFM) Committee, cancelled the degree and enrolment of a candidate, who was said to be Justice Jahangiri. The decision came after hours-long detention of academic and syndicate member Dr Riaz Ahmed.

## Two cops hurt in check post attack

**F.P. Report**

MIANWALI: At least two policemen sustained injuries after more than a dozen terrorists attacked Qabool Khel police check post in Punjab's Mianwali on Monday.

According to a police spokesperson, about 12 to 14 khawarij attacked the check post with rockets and hand grenades. However, the Punjab Police thwarted attacked by the terrorists after which they escaped, said the spokesperson, adding that two cops were injured in the attack.

Following the incident, district police officer of Mianwali, Deputy Superintendent of Police Isa Khel reached the check post along with heavy personnel.

Last month, at least 12 policemen were martyred and six sustained injuries after bandits attacked their vans with rockets in a riverine area of Punjab's Rahim Yar Khan. The horrific attack occurred in the Machka area located in one of Rahim Yar Khan's riverine areas.

Police officials told the media that two police vans with more than 20 cops were trapped in rainwater in the locality when bandits launched rockets at them. As a result of the fierce attack, a dozen cops were martyred while seven others were wounded and five went missing, the police added.

# China always supported Pakistan: PM

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said that Pakistan aims to enhance its collaboration with China in areas such as information technology, artificial intelligence, modern agriculture, and other sectors.

In a conversation with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong, the prime minister remarked that the friendship between Pakistan and China has endured and remained strong throughout the years. He stated that the friendship between Pakistan and China has withstood the test of time, with China providing unwavering support to Pakistan during every challenging period.

The prime minister praised the Chinese leadership's vision to consistently enhance Pakistan-China strategic relations and collaborate on upgrading the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). He emphasized that the friendship between Pakistan and China is essential not only for both nations but also for regional and global peace and development.

Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi, and other relevant officials were also present in the meeting. Shehbaz hails 'major achievement': Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed satisfaction over the single-digit inflation rate of 9.6 percent in August 2024, as reported by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS), attributing this achievement to the hard work of the government's economic team.

The prime minister noted that this decrease in inflation is a reflection of the government's effective measures to

improve the economy. He credited the economic team for achieving the lowest inflation rate in the last three years, said a press release issued by Prime Minister's Office. According to the Ministry of Finance's Economic Outlook Report, the inflation rate was predicted to be between 9.5 percent and 10.5 percent in August 2024. Economic experts also forecast a further decrease in inflation in September, which the prime minister hailed as good news for the nation.

In 2018, the inflation rate was also brought down to a single digit, but the subsequent years saw a record increase in inflation due to criminal negligence and anti-people policies. The prime minister emphasized that his government has saved the country from economic bankruptcy and put it on the path to stability and growth. He reiterated his commitment to fulfilling his promise to the people to alleviate their sufferings.

The prime minister acknowledged Allah's blessings in achieving this milestone and noted that the positive results of government economic reforms are now reaching the people, improving their lives and contributing to Pakistan's development. Achieving Pakistan's development goals is unattainable without improving the lives of ordinary people and ensuring economic prosperity, PM concluded.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed grief over the death of the mother-in-law of Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan. The prime minister prayed to Allah Almighty for peace for the departed soul and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss, according to a PM Office press release.

## Inflation comes down, stands at 9.6 %: NA told

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar informed the National Assembly that as per the statistic issued by State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) on Monday, inflation in the country came down to a single digit and stood at 9.6 per cent for the first time in last three years.

Responding to various supplementary questions during the Question Hour, the minister said inflation was mere 4 per cent during the tenure of PML-N government led by Nawaz Sharif in 2018 which then surged to 22 per cent. Inflation in a single digit is a proof of success under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he said.

The minister said the Punjab government has given subsidy to the electricity consumers of entire province including Islamabad from its development budget. Similarly, the federal government has already given Rs 50 billion subsidy to the consumers utilizing upto 200 units, he added. Attaullah Tarar said it would be better if other

provinces could also give subsidy to the electricity consumers. It would also be good if those who took money from the timber and tobacco mafias, would also facilitate the consumers of their province.

In response to a supplementary query, he said that the interior minister regularly attended the session but today due to some pressing engagements, he (interior minister) could not attend the sitting. However, he assured the House that the interior minister would be present in the next sitting.

The minister said that five centres of National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) were working in Upper South Waziristan and Lower South Waziristan. NRC Ladha, NRC Wana, NRC Sararogha, NRC Khula and NRC Sarwakai were full-fledged registration units, equipped with state of the art equipment and necessary amenities catering to the registration needs of the residents of the Districts concerned. Establishment of NADRA Office at Tiarza Upper South Waziristan is in process where necessary renovation is being carried

out and the same will be completed soon, he added. Tarar said there were some security issues at Makeen and Birmil tehsils. However, he would direct the interior secretary to set up NADRA centres at both the tehsils. There would be total eight NADRA centres at South Waziristan, he added.

Responding to another question, the minister said as per Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Zoning Regulation 1992, Islamabad was divided into five Zones. Private Housing Schemes were allowed to be developed in Zone-2, 5, E-11 and selected locations of Zone-4 after seeking permission from CDA.

Under these regulations, CDA has permitted number of private housing schemes in Islamabad and CDA has uploaded the status of approved housing schemes on its website www.cda.gov.pk, he said. The minister said there were number of housing schemes which have been developed without permission of the authority which were called illegal/unapproved/unauthorized housing schemes.

## Suicide attack blast kills six, injures 13 in Kabul

KABUL (AFP, Reuters): An explosion took place on Monday in Afghanistan's capital Kabul killing at least six people and injuring 13 others, the country's Interior Ministry spokesperson said. The police described the explosion as a "suicide attack" blast. A suicide bomber detonated explosives in the Afghan capital on Monday, police said, killing six people and wounding 13 more.

"This afternoon, a person wearing explosives on his body detonated," Kabul police spokesman Khalid Zadran posted on social media platform X. "Unfortunately six civilians, including a woman, were killed and 13 others were injured." Spokesperson Abdul Mateen Qaniee told Reuters over the phone that the blast took place in the southwestern area of Darul Aman.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. It took place in the southern Kabul area of Qalae-Bakhtiar and investigations were ongoing, according to

Zadran. Violence has waned in Afghanistan since the 2021 Taliban takeover ended a two-decade war. However the regional chapter of Daesh, known as Daesh Khorasan, is active in Afghanistan and has regularly targeted civilians, foreigners and Taliban officials with gun and bomb attacks.

Meanwhile, Taliban supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada has ordered Afghan officials to enact a sweeping new morality law curtailing women's rights and enshrining an austere vision of Islamic society. Taliban authorities last month announced the law, which includes rules that women's faces, bodies and voices should be "covered" outside the home, among 35 articles dictating behaviour and lifestyle.

While many of the measures have been informally enforced since the Taliban's takeover in 2021, their formal codification sparked an outcry from the international community and rights groups. Akhundzada told

civil and military officials "they should implement ... the law of promoting virtue in society", a statement by the Information and Culture Department of Faryab province said.

The reclusive Akhundzada rules by decree from a hideout in southern Kandahar province but made the order in a rare trip to northern Faryab last week, according to the statement released. The new law prohibits women from raising their voices in public and requires them to cover their entire body and face if they need to leave their homes, which they should only do "out of necessity".

Men's behaviour and dress are also strictly regulated under the edict, which instructs them not to wear shorts above the knee or to trim their beards closely. Other parts of the law dictate prayer attendance as well as bans on keeping photos of living beings, homosexuality, animal fighting, playing music in public and non-Muslim holidays.

## Court extends judicial remand of Imran, wife

**F.P. Report**

RAWALPINDI: The Accountability Court in Rawalpindi has extended the judicial remand of PTI founder Imran Khan and his wife, Bushra Bibi, in the new Toshakhana case until Sept 16. Judge Nasir Javed Rana conducted the hearing at Adiala Jail, where Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi were presented in the courtroom.

Their lawyers, including Salman Safdar, Intizar Panjtoha, and Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, attended the proceedings. NAB Prosecutor General Sardar Muzaffar Abbasi and Umair Maqsood were also present.

During the hearing, the defence lawyers argued that the new Toshakhana reference against Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi was similar to the previous one and that two references with the same allegations could not be made. Barrister Salman Safdar, representing the defence, argued against the new reference based on its similarity to the earlier one.

In response, the NAB prosecutor stated that the similarity between the new reference and the previous one could only be determined through the documents. The prosecutor requested the court to obtain the judicial record of the old Toshakhana reference.

## CPI inflation dips to nearly three-year low in August

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: The core inflation measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI) decelerated further to 9.6 percent during August 2024 to hit the 34-month low level. The Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) data shows the CPI inflation was recorded at 11.1 percent in July 2024. However, during the same month last year (August 2023), it was recorded at 27.4%.

On a month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.4% in August 2024 compared to an increase of 2.1% in the previous month and an increase of 1.7% in August 2023. According to data, the CPI inflation urban increased to 11.7% on a year-on-year basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 13.2% in the previous month and 25.0% in August 2023. On a month-on-month basis, it

increased to 0.3% in August 2024 compared to an increase of 2.0% in the previous month and an increase of 1.6% in August 2023.

CPI inflation rural, increased to 6.7% on year-on-year (YoY) basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 8.1% in the previous month and 30.9% in August 2023. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, it increased to 0.6% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.2% in the previous month and an increase of 1.9% in August 2023.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 10.8% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 15.7% in August 2023. On MoM basis, it decreased to 0.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.0% a month earlier and an increase of 4.1% in

August 2023.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 6.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 10.4% a month earlier and an increase of 24.3% in August 2023. On MoM basis, it increased by 0.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.3% in the previous month and an increase of 4.2% in corresponding month of last year i.e. August 2023.

The core inflation, measured by non-food, non-energy for Urban increased to 10.2% on (YoY) basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 11.7% in the previous month and 18.4% in August 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 0.4% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.7% in the previous month and an increase of 1.8% in corresponding month of last year i.e. August, 2023.

## 'No compromise on Sept 8 rally'

**F.P. Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Sher Afzal Marwat has stated that the rally scheduled for September 8 would take place regardless of circumstances.

Speaking to media, "Marwat affirmed that he would return to Islamabad to prepare for the rally. Marwat criticised delays and said that the PTI

founder had stressed the importance of making the rally a success. He mentioned that the PTI founder's cause was harmed by repeated postponements and that the rally had been canceled without valid reasons.

Marwat told that following Barrister Gohar's statement regarding his inclusion in PTL, Marwat was added to a WhatsApp group. Marwat said that it

was necessary to follow the PTI founder's orders. According to Marwat, a movement for the release of the PTI founder and the return of the mandate has been decided which would soon commence.

"This movement will be for the Pakistani people, aiming to eliminate fear and intimidation. It will start in Punjab and will include marches and protests" Marwat reiterated.







# Appointment of hospital, medical directors at MMC challenged in PHC

**Humayun Khan**

PESHAWAR: A writ petition has been filed against the appointment of 'Hospital Director' and 'Medical Director' in Mardan Medical Complex at Peshawar High Court (PHC) while seeking declaration of both notifications in this regard as illegal and unconstitutional.

The appointment letters issued by Chairman Board of Governor MMC to accommodate his blue eyed, the petition stated.

PHC's decision dated 15th August 2024 banned recruitment while Department of health issued on 16th Aug in the continuation and imposed ban on recruitment as well as on procurement in Medical Teaching Institutions (MTIs).

Both Hospital Director and Medical Director were appointed on 24th Aug but the appointment notification was issued in back date, on 16th August due to agitation and protest initiated by public in the Mardan district in this regard, the writ argued.

The Hospital Director has already been removed from his previous service due to his illegal activities and was ordered to be compulsorily retired from his services, so such person is not to be entitled under MTI Act 2015, the writ pleaded.

The writ seeks to declare notifications dated 16th and 24th August as illegal, unlawful, without legal authority and against the decision of PHC as well as against the legal and fundamental rights of the petitioner.

Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Minister Health, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister, Search and Nomination Council, Secretary health, Establishment's department, Additional Secretary MTIs, Chairman BoG Mardan, Medical and Hospital Directors made as respondents in the writ petition.



PESHAWAR: Minister for Education Faisal Khan Tarakai talking to students during his visit to Government Shaheed Usama Tahir Awan Higher Secondary School Nanakpura where students displayed their science projects.

## Minister announced holding National Rahmatul Lilaalameen Conference

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Hajj, Aqaf Religious and Minority Affairs Sahibzada Adnan Qadri has said that the National Rahmatul Lilaalameen Conference will be celebrated with dignity, devotion and respect. He expressed these views while presiding over the National Rahmatul Lilaalameen Conference meeting in his office in Peshawar.

On this occasion, Secretary Auqaf Adil Siddiq, Administrator Hamid Gaghiani and other officers also participated.

In the meeting, there was a detailed discussion about various arrangements and activities related to Ushra Rehmatul Lilaalameen Mahfil Qaraat . Naat Khwani and im-

portant decisions were also taken in this regard.

Before the National Rahmatul Lilaalameen Conference and Mahfil Qaraat and Naat Khwani, regular Mahfil Qaraat and Naat Khwani competitions will be held at each district, division and provin-

cial level. In which the first, second and third position holders will be encouraged with cash prizes.

Provincial minister directed the concerned authorities to take special interest in the national Rahmat-ul-Lilaalameen Conference Mahfil Qaraat and Naat-Khwaani celebrations by sincerely using all available resources because it is about the Orders and teachings of Allah Almighty and the Prophet Khatamiun Nabieen, Well-known scholars and intellectuals will express their views.

## POWA to held Prosecutor's convention next week

**F.P. Report**

PESHAWAR: Prosecution Officers Welfare Association (POWA) has decided to hold a convention of prosecution officers and supporting staff across the province due to non-fulfillment of their demands, after which a future course of action will be decided, on Monday.

This was claimed by POWA president Sangeen Shah and General Secretary Javed Ali Mohmand while talking to media and added that the association had boycotted the courts a few months ago in support of their demands, after which the provincial government invited them for negotiations and assured them that all their demands would be met. They met with various officials, including the Chief Minister, Additional Chief Secretary, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar, and Provincial Adviser Finance, who assured them that their demands were justified and would be fulfilled.

However, despite the passage of several months,

their issues have not been resolved, and their demands have not been accepted. Therefore, the association's cabinet has decided to hold a convention of all prosecution officers and staff in the province next week, which will discuss protest and other matters.

According to POWA, all prosecutors and supporting staff across the province have been appealed to ensure their participation in the convention. They said that when they protested, the government not only

accepted their demands but also promised to take immediate action, after which the government sent a summary to the Finance Department to increase the prosecution allowance and basic pay, which is still pending.

They said that the government has not fulfilled any of their demands.

POWA decided that we will hold a convention next week, in which all prosecution staff will be invited to participate. In the convention, we will decide on a future course of action.

## Governor Kundi: A guiding light in KP's crisis response and recovery — I

**Humera Ambreen**

**I**N times of crisis, true leadership shines brightest. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has emerged as a figure of resilience, hope, and unwavering commitment to his people during one of the most challenging periods in the province's history. Faced with threats from terrorism, economic hardships, and the need for social empowerment, Governor Kundi has taken a multi-faceted approach to governance that has not only addressed immediate crises but also laid the groundwork for long-term recovery and development.

Combating terrorism with strength and compassion

Terrorism has been a

persistent threat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, disrupting lives and sowing fear across the province. Governor Kundi has made it his mission to combat this menace with both strength and compassion. Understanding that security is paramount, he has worked closely with law enforcement agencies and the military to ensure that robust measures are in place to protect the people. His proactive leadership has prevented threats and responded to them through improved intelligence and coordinated efforts.

However, Governor Kundi's approach to fighting terrorism goes beyond security measures. He has consistently reached out to victims and their families, offering comfort and support during their darkest hours. His visits to hospitals, where he meets with

those injured in terrorist attacks, demonstrate his deep empathy and personal commitment to the well-being of his people. Additionally, he regularly attends condolence meetings and prayer sessions for families who have lost loved ones, offering words of solace and solidarity. This compassionate side of his leadership has helped to heal wounds and bring communities together in the face of tragedy.

Governor Kundi's strong stance against terrorism has also been evident in his public statements, where he has condemned acts of violence and called for unity among the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He has said the province will fight terrorism and destabilizers. His leadership has been crucial in fostering a sense of resilience and determination among the

people, reinforcing the belief that together they can overcome even the most daunting challenges.

Revitalizing the economy through strategic initiatives

While security is a pressing concern, Governor Kundi has also recognized the critical importance of economic stability in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's recovery. The province has faced significant economic challenges, including high unemployment, inflation, and a struggling business environment. Governor Kundi has tackled these issues head-on, implementing a series of strategic initiatives aimed at revitalizing the economy and creating new opportunities for growth.

Governor Kundi has promoted the local handicrafts industry as one of his key economic initiatives,

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is known for its rich cultural heritage and skilled artisans, and Governor Kundi has sought to elevate this sector as a cornerstone of the province's economy. He has called on the provincial government to provide financial support and create opportunities for artisans to showcase their talents both locally and internationally. He aims to preserve traditional crafts while also generating income and employment for thousands of families.

Governor Kundi's commitment to economic development extends to large-scale infrastructure projects that are vital for the province's long-term growth. He has been instrumental in advancing projects such as the construction of the Dera Ismail Khan to Rajanpur road, the Chashma Right Bank

Canal, and the establishment of an international airport in Dera Ismail Khan. These projects are designed to improve connectivity, facilitate trade, and attract investment, ultimately driving economic growth and development in the region.

In addition to infrastructure development, Governor Kundi has actively engaged with the business community to address economic challenges. He has held numerous meetings with local and international business leaders to discuss ways to attract investment and stimulate economic activity in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. His efforts to foster partnerships and encourage entrepreneurship are helping to create a more dynamic and resilient economy that can withstand external shocks and provide a stable foundation for future growth.

Empowering women and youth for a brighter future

Governor Kundi has long understood that the true progress of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa depends on the empowerment of its women and youth. These groups represent the future of the province, and Governor Kundi has made it a priority to ensure that they are given the opportunities and support they need to thrive.

In the realm of education, Governor Kundi has taken decisive action to promote gender equality. He issued directives to universities across the province to ensure that women are adequately represented in both the syndicates and senates, as mandated by the Universities Act 2012. This move is not just a matter of compliance; it reflects Governor Kundi's deep commitment to creating an inclusive educational environment where women can take on leadership roles and influence the future of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By advocating for equal representation, he is helping to break down barriers and pave the way for more women to participate in decision-making processes that shape the province's future.

Governor Kundi's focus on women's empowerment extends beyond education. He has supported initiatives that provide women entrepreneurs with the resources they need to succeed, from financial assistance to business development training. By encouraging women to participate actively in the economy, Governor Kundi is helping to build a more inclusive and dynamic economic landscape in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Continued



PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Nadeem Aslam presiding over meeting of Polio Prevention Provincial Task Force.

## 10-year agri policy awaits Cabinet's approval

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Agriculture Major (R) Sajjad Barkwal has said that in order to ensure food security, the new agricultural policy for the next 10 years will be implemented after the approval of the provincial cabinet.

He was presiding over the review meeting of the Joint coordination committee of the Agriculture Department. Secretary Agriculture Atta-ul-Rehman, DGs of all wings and other relevant officials participated in the meeting.

In order to increase the crops significantly, Provincial minister Sajjad Brakwal said that they should utilize their capabilities to make barren lands cultivable, suitable land will be selected for the successful cultivation of saffron and increase its production.

He directed that A committee should be formed which can ensure the use of the funds allocated by the government for various agricultural projects in a timely manner and in the best interest of the landowners.

## DC hailed over ban on e-cigarettes, vapes

PESHAWAR (APP): The Provincial Alliance for Tobacco and Nicotine Control (PATNC) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa commended Deputy Commissioner Peshawar for taking decisive action to protect the health of youth by imposing a ban on use, sale, storage, promotion, and advertisement of e-cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine pouches in District Peshawar.

This proactive measure is an essential step in curbing the rising trend of nicotine addiction among young people and safeguarding public health, says a press release issued here on Monday.

E-cigarettes, vapes, and nicotine pouches have increasingly become popular among youth due to their easy availability and aggressive marketing tactics.

These products are often wrongly perceived as a safer alternative to traditional tobacco products, but research shows they pose significant health risks, particularly to young users.

The nicotine content in these products can lead to addiction, impaired brain development, and an increased likelihood of transitioning to other harmful substances.

## Failure to arrest killers of PESCO official WAPDA Hydro Union stage protest

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The All Pakistan WAPDA Hydro Electric Workers Union Khyber Pakhtunkhwa held a major protest demonstration on Monday in front of the Peshawar Press Club, condemning the government's failure to arrest the killers of Hafiz Kamranullah Shaheed and Hasan Muhammad. The protest was led by the Chairman of the Union, Haji Muhammad Iqbal.

Despite the passage of four days since the tragic shooting incident involving Swabi PESCO personnel Hafiz Kamranullah and Hasan Muhammad, the perpetrators remain at large. The protestors, who carried placards and black flags, expressed their frustration with the lack of action from authorities.

In his address, Haji Muhammad Iqbal criticized the government and administration for their failure to secure the safety of WAPDA employees and other citizens. He highlighted the recent attack in Maneri Payan Nawab Bandh area of Swabi District, where Hafiz Kamranullah was martyred and Hasan Muhammad was seriously injured by unknown assailants.

Haji Muhammad Iqbal and other union leaders, including Provincial Vice-Chairman Yasser Kamran, Deputy Chairman Naseerullah Mohmand, Joint Secretary Tariq Khan, Secretary Finance Nasir Khan, and Regional Secretary Tesco Liaqat Ali, demanded that the federal and provincial authorities take immediate action. They called for the arrest and legal prosecution of the attackers within three days and for enhanced security for WAPDA personnel and installations.

The union leaders warned that if their demands are not met, they will resort to a province-wide strike and cease operations from September 2 to September 4. They urged the Federal Minister of Interior, the Federal Minister of Energy, the Power Division, and the provincial government to address the issue promptly to avoid further disruptions.

## JUI-F to complete intra party elections in September

PESHAWAR (APP): The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan (F) is currently holding intra-party elections in tehsils, UCs, and wards across the country. The district-level elections are also underway, with the schedule for provincial and central elections expected to be announced soon.

According to Assistant Election Administrator Abdul Jalil Jan, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Pakistan is the only political and religious party that conducts organizational elections every five years through secret balloting from the grassroots level to the center. So far, elections have been completed in over 600 tehsils and 7,000 UCs, wards, and villages across Pakistan, while district-level elections are still underway. Central Election Administrator Maulana Ataul Haq Darwesh, along with his assistants, has visited all four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, and tribal districts to oversee the membership campaign.

The party expects to complete the central and provincial elections by September, with the schedule to be announced soon.



PESHAWAR: A laborer busy cutting firewood into pieces at his workplace near Charsadda Road. — APP photo





## In brief

### Demo against police held F.P. Report

QUETTA: Citizens on Monday demanded a strict action against SHO Police Station Satellite Town Quetta over the charge of illegally detaining a trader. This demand was made in the protest demonstration held outside Satellite Town Police Station Quetta by the relatives of trader Hazrat Umer Kakar who was allegedly been detained at PS Satellite Town Quetta. Talking to media, the protesters said that trader Hazrat Umer Kakar was detained the previous day from Ada area of Quetta by the police of Satellite Town Police Station, Quetta headed by special duty constable Shafique despite the fact that new Ada area falls in the ambit of Industrial Police Station Quetta. They said that when SHO Police Station Satellite Town Quetta Muhammad Amin Jaffar was asked whether FIR had been lodged against Hazrat Umer Jaffar, he got infuriated and starting using abusive remarks. They called on the authorities to take action against the SHO forthwith.

### Elderly man stabbed to death F.P. Report

OKARA: A man was stabbed to death over financial issue and his body was dumped into rain water nullah which was recovered by police on Monday. According to details, 70-year-old Muhammad Ahmed hailing from Kandowal came to 35 GD to receive Rs200,000 from Zahoor Ahmed and others against the plot sold to them. The culprits stabbed the elderly person with sharp edged weapon and threw his body in a rain water nullah in nearby locality. The police recovered the body from nullah and shifted it to District Headquarter (DHQ) Hospital for post-mortem. A case was registered against the culprits and raids were being conducted for their arrest.

### Roof collapse leaves 8 injured F.P. Report

FAISALABAD: Collapse of dilapidated roof of a house left eight family members including women and children injured in Dijkot police station jurisdiction here on Monday. According to details, roof of a decrepit house located in Chak No 271-RB of Faisalabad suddenly came down. As a result, eight family members including Muhammad Akram, his wife Saadia (35), their two sons-Israr (10) and Waseem (18), three daughters-Asma Akram (12), Noor Fatima (8), Kashaf Akram (4) and a guest Robina Riaz (35) were buried under the debris and seriously injured. The Rescue 1122 team after getting information rushed the scene and pulled out the injured after removing the rubble and shifted them to hospital.

### Rivals loot, burn house of expat F.P. Report

HAFIZABAD: A rival group looted, set fire to, and demolished the house of an overseas Pakistani with a crane over suspicions of involvement in a murder case consultation in Hafizabad. The incident took place in Asadullahpur, where the assailants targeted a one-kanal house, reducing it to ashes. According to the FIR filed by the complainant, her husband, who has been residing in Spain for a long time, was falsely accused of being involved in the consultation of a murder case.

# Farmers demand release of water for irrigation

## F.P. Report

LARKANA: The Sindh Abadgar Board has expressed concern that if the crop is not watered within 5 to 6 days then there will be nothing left for the farmers. If water is not released in the canals and branches of the Rice Canal from 5 to 6, otherwise the Sindh Abadgar Board will stage a sit-in against the Sindh Government and the Irrigation Department at the Sukkur Barrage bridge.

Board Larkana President Advocate Irfan JATOI and Abadgar leader Shoaib Rehman Shaikh in a press conference at Larkana Press Club said that in Right Bank Larkana, 95% of the population grows sarin on an area of more than 1.2 million acres, which is currently being grown more and more. Water is needed already for Sarin crop, water has come late, but despite this, farmers and farmers bought seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at expensive prices to prepare their fields for Sarin crop and within about 30 to 40 days, it The crop is ready, but the irrigation department is making fun of the farmers and the farmers by cutting off the water.

Farmers will become victims of hunger and poverty, with nothing left for them to eat and drink,

and the economy of the country will also suffer. The leaders of the Sindh Abadgar Board further said that three months ago, heavy rains were predicted by the federal government, the Sindh government and the NDMA, after which the Sindh government made a budget, but no effective measures were taken to deal with the rains. Every gauge of the barrage broke, after which there is a continuous problem of water in Sindh because there are no good technical officers and engineers in the irrigation system of Sindh, while there are only first grade experts who have complete knowledge of water.

The best officers are that they are replaced by employees with political affiliations and sent to the side. There is no shortage of water, but 10 to 15 days after the rains in Sindh, the irrigators cut off the water, which has not been released even after two weeks. On the other hand, they are damaging the crops by pouring water in some districts. They said that 40 mm of rain was predicted in Larkana, due to which rain water has stopped on the roads. On seeing the water, they are trying to drown the people by closing the canal, while the officials of the irrigation department are disturbing the farmers and the villagers to steal the

budget without realizing their responsibility. By waking up the Sindh government from its slumber, it has demanded an end to the water shortage caused by the shutdown.

**Five alleged culprits held:** Police arrested the accused Muhammad Paril Nohani without a license along with pistol and bullets and registered a case. In a successful operation in "Rahoja Laro" area of Kutch, the accused Mureed son of Ibrahim Solangi was arrested, while Aqil Pir Sher police in a successful operation in Musohab area arrested the accused drug dealer Sajjad Ditho along with two kilos of 2000 grams of hashish.

A case was registered while Market Police and In-charge Anti-Organized Crime Sub-Inspector Syed Asghar Ali Shah arrested the accused drug dealer Akhlaq alias Bobby Mughiri along with one kilo (1000 grams) of hashish during a joint operation and a case was registered. Garrillo Police during the checking, the accused Wahid Bhiu was arrested and a case was registered along with five bottles of liquor. The motorcycle stolen last month was handed over to the original owner Waseem Saekh, while Rahmatpur police also recovered the motorcycle.

# Serving humanity noble cause across the globe

## F.P. Report

TOBA TEK SINGH: The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of Rana Osama Ali Qadri, President of International Human Rights Movement Kamalia. The meeting was presided over by respected individuals including Hafiz Alamgir, Owais Matloob Butt advocate, Abdullah, Ameen Anjum, Asif Pomi Bhai, Hakim Ghulam Rasool, Atiq, Hafiz Abdul Rauf, and others, on Monday.

During the meeting, participants discussed the organization's goals, charter, and constitution. President Rana Osama Ali Qadri emphasized that "serving humanity is a noble act, and we will work diligently and with devotion towards this noble cause." He further stated that the International Human Rights Movement is a non-political organiza-

tion aimed at amplifying the voices of the oppressed and addressing human rights violations.

During the meeting, members committed to continuing their efforts in serving humanity and advocating for the rights of the weak and oppressed in society. The meeting concluded with a prayer, and all participants agreed to continue their collective efforts to achieve the organization's goals.

**NOCs for new petrol pumps issued:** A meeting of District Petrol Pump Committee was held under the Chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih. The meeting was attended by the officers of all the concerned departments.

In the meeting, the applications received regarding the approval of new petrol pumps were reviewed. Orders were issued to issue

NOCs to the petrol pumps that meet the merits, while the remaining applications issued orders to complete and submit again.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Zeeshan Labbha Masih said that orders have been issued to issue NOC to the applications that are completed as per the law, petrol pump owners have been strictly instructed that they must plant plantations in the petrol pump premises and they will be bound to provide all the facilities that are in the law, he said that the Punjab government has issued a timeline for the issuance of NOC regarding the installation of petrol pumps for the convenience of the business community and to create new employment opportunities. It is fixed and all the departments are directed to follow the timeline while issuing NOCs and there should be no undue delay in issuing any NOCs.



THARPARKAR: Passengers travelling on the rooftop of a jeep to reach their destination.

# Punjab launches operation to check fuel quality at petrol pumps

## F.P. Report

MULTAN: The Punjab provincial government has launched a grand operation targeting petrol pumps in a significant move to ensure the quality of fuel being sold across the province.

This initiative aims to conduct regular inspections at all fuel stations every month to verify that the fuel meets the required standards. The operation has been initiated under the Punjab Environmental Protection Act, reflecting the government's commitment to environmental conservation and consumer protection. According to the order, staff from the

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and oil marketing companies will collaborate to inspect fuel at various petrol pumps across the province.

To ensure that the fuel being sold adheres to the standards set by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), the EPA will utilize its state-of-the-art fuel quality laboratories. These laboratories will carry out chemical analyses of fuel samples collected from petrol stations to identify any discrepancies or sub-standard products.

The authorities have emphasized that this operation is crucial for maintain-

ing the integrity of fuel sold in Punjab, ensuring that consumers receive high-quality products that meet regulatory standards. The inspections will also help in curbing the sale of adulterated or substandard fuel, which can have harmful effects on vehicles and the environment.

Meanwhile, from Sept 1, the federal government announced a reduction in the prices of petroleum products, effective immediately. The new pricing structure reflects modest decreases across several fuel types, providing some relief amidst the rising cost of living.



BANNU: KP Minister, Pukhtunyar Khan, DIG Imran Shahid and others offering funeral prayer of Shaheed police constable Allah Yar.

## Two killed over property issue in Nowshera Syed Waliullah Shah

NOWSHERA: At least two people were killed and as many injured during cross fire between the two groups over a property dispute in Nowshera district, police informed on Monday.

Police said the incident took place in Misri Banda of Akora Khattak tehsil in Nowshera district where two groups resorted to indiscriminate firing at each other over a property dispute.

As a result of firing two persons identified as Shah Wali (23) and Gohar Ali (45) were killed. On receiving information, police and officials of Rescue 1122 reached the site and shifted the dead and injured to Nowshera Medical Hospital. The police, after registering the case, have started an investigation into the incident.

## Police arrests six proclaimed offenders F.P. Report

TAKHTBHAI: Police conducted search and strike operation in the Saddar area, on Monday. Deputy Superintendent of Police Takhtbhai along with 25 personnel conducted search operation in which approximately 20 residences in the regions of Maho, Akbarabad, Sherpur, Faqir Kaly, Chamtar, and Khazna Dheri were check for security purposes.

During the operation police recovered two pistols, one shotgun, and several rounds of ammunition. Among the notable recoveries, the police also arrested six proclaimed offenders in high profile criminal cases.

District police officer commended the police force for their diligence and effective execution of the operation. He emphasized that such actions are essential for maintaining peace and security in the region. Police committed for upholding law and ensuring public safety, DPO says.

## SHO crushed to death after falling from bus F.P. Report

NAROWAL: An SHO was killed while the bus conductor was seriously wounded after they fell from the moving vehicle in Narowal on Monday.

According to reports, Ali Asghar, the SHO, and the conductor were standing close to the bus's entrance when their feet slipped and both of them fell onto the road. While the SHO died instantly after he was run over by the bus, the conductor received serious injuries.

In another incident reported from Narowal, a 65-year-old farmer named Ali Asghar was seriously wounded after he was attacked by a jackal while he was working in the fields. The man was rushed to District Headquarters Hospital. It merits mention here that for the last five days, monkeys too have become a headache for residents of the area, and even one person has been injured in their attack. But to rub salt into their wounds, the Wildlife Department and the local administration have failed to catch these animals.

# Kohatians devotion to Imran exemplary: Aftab

## F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has said that the whole Kohat for him is equal and will work wholeheartedly for its every area adding that the Kohatians unprecedented devotion and support to Quaid Imran Khan is me memorable. He assured that the trust reposed in PTI by the people of Kohat will not be hurt at all and their expectations will be fulfilled.

This he said while addressing the Public Day held in Toro Stano area of Ziarat Sheikh Allah Dad Kohat. On this occasion,

Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, elders of the area, party workers and a large number of people were present. The people of the area while thanking the Minister for holding the Public Day at the local level, openly presented their individual and collective problems in detail.

The Minister said that individual problems of the people will definitely be solved but our first priority is the collective problems as with the solution of collective problems, individual problems of common nature will be solved automatically.

Aftab Alam while referring to the mega project Zameer Gul Dam in the

area, said that the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur has approved the required funds for its completion which will bring green revolution in the area and change the destiny of the region.

The Law Minister said that he believes in selfless service to the people beyond personal likes and dislikes and political affiliation and InshaAllah, all the problems of the area will be solved in consultation with the local party leadership and elders. He appealed to the people to strengthen his hands by putting aside their petty differences in the larger interests of the area.

# PPP calls for including Harnai in calamity-hit-areas

## F.P. Report

HARNAI: Pakistan Peoples Party Harnai on Monday called on the authorities to include district Harnai in the calamity-hit-area of Balochistan and allocate funds for construction of highways and roads washed away by recent rains in district Harnai of Balochistan province.

This demands were made by President, Pakistan Peoples Party, Harnai, Yasin Khan Tarin in a statement. He said form-47 MPA from Harnai had turned Harnai into ruins, adding that funds allocated to compensate the earthquake affected families of Harnai had been embezzled.

Tarin said recent rains had washed away Quetta to Harnai highway and Harnai to Sanjawi highway besides completely destroying the

structures in the district. He remarked that form-47 MPA from the constituency had completely ignored Harnai in development projects, turning thereby Harnai into ruins.

He called on Chief Minister Balochistan to include Harnai into calamity hit districts of the province, allocate special funds for construction of all roads of Harnai, including bridges Quetta to Harnai highway and Harnai to Sanjawi highway, and conduct inquiry as to where funds for compensation of earthquake affected families had been utilised.

**Plea to post suitable DEO:** Government Teachers Association Harnai on Monday called on the authorities to post a suitable officer against the post of District Education Officer Harnai.

This demand was made by President, Government Teachers Association, Harnai, Sahib Jan Tarin, General Secretary, Abdul Nasir Malazai, Organizer, Amanullah, Chairman, Hafiz Usman Ghani, Qutub Shah, Haji Sultan Muhammad, Saleh Muhammad, Bangulzai, Obaidullah and other office bearers of GTA, Harnai in a joint statement.

They said that a post of District Education Officer, Harnai has been lying vacant for the last many months due to which routine official business has been suffering. They said that GTA Harnai has requested the higher authorities, but needful has not been done due to unknown reasons. They called on the authorities to post a suitable officer against the post of District Officer Education, Harnai.

# Bio-fortified crop to fulfill nutritional deficiencies

## Shafi Ullah

MONGORA: A one-day roundtable dialogue workshop on bio-fortified crop production held by the Lasoona organization in collaboration with Welthungerhilfe (WHH) and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The workshop aimed to enhance the production of wheat, rice, and corn while improving their nutritional value. Attendees included officials and experts from the Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Universities, Halal Food Authority, and seed-producing companies. Experts presented

research findings, highlighting the need to address nutritional deficiencies affecting women and children. According to the National Nutrition Survey Pakistan-2018, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa faces significant challenges, including underweight and stunted children, anemia, and zinc deficiency among women.

The Department of Agriculture is conducting research to boost crop production and improve nutritional quality. Five new wheat varieties have been introduced, with successful testing, and research on corn and rice varieties is ongoing.

Experts emphasized the need for integrating research into policy and promoting public awareness through various strategies, including bio-fortification, fortification at mills and chakki levels, micronutrient supplements, and regional awareness campaigns.

Program Manager Noor Malik and Project Manager Sajad Ahmed highlighted the program's importance and thanked participants for their engagement. The workshop aimed to advance the production of nutrient-rich crops, addressing nutritional deficiencies and promoting public health.

# Awareness walk against drug-abuse arranged

## F.P. Report

BUNER: An awareness walk against drug menace held at historical bazaar of Peer Baba in which district police officer Buner personally participated and claimed his commitment for elimination of drug dealers, on Monday.

DPO requested for public cooperation with police to eradicate the scourge of drug addiction from the society, Social personality Abdul Latif Khan. An organization working against drugs was organized the awareness

walk to sent a message to drugs suppliers and addicts that public were united against them.

The PTI Tehsil Gadezai Salarzai General Secretary Zia Hussain, social personality Abdul Latif Khan and Pir Baba Bazar President Abdul Wahid took part in the walk.

Talking to the media, DPO Shah Hasan Khan said that there is no place for drugs dealers on the land of Buner and whoever is involved in this black trade will be brought under the grip of the law and given severe punishment. He

added such people are not entitled to any concession and police policy is zero tolerance against them. DPO Buner has appealed to the people of the area to cooperate in eradicating the menace of drugs so as to best protect own new generation.

Social personalities assured all kinds of support to DPO Buner adding they appreciate the efforts of the police to eliminate the menace of drugs from the society and cooperate with the police to eradicate the menace and protect future statesman.





## Russia says it will change nuclear doctrine

LONDON (Reuters): Russia will make changes to its doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons in response to what it regards as Western escalation in the war in Ukraine, state media quoted Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov as saying.

The existing nuclear doctrine, set out in a decree by President Vladimir Putin in 2020, says Russia may use nuclear weapons in the event of a nuclear attack by an enemy or a conventional attack that threatens the existence of the state. Some hawks among Russia's military analysts have urged Putin to lower the threshold for nuclear use in order to "sober up" Russia's enemies in the West.

Putin said in June that the nuclear doctrine was a "living instrument" that could change, depending on world events. Ryabkov's comments were the clearest statement yet that changes would indeed be made. "The work is at an advanced stage, and there is a clear intent to make corrections," state news agency TASS cited Ryabkov as saying. He said the decision is "connected with the escalation course

of our Western adversaries" in connection with the Ukraine conflict.

Moscow accuses the West of using Ukraine as a proxy to wage war against it, with the aim of inflicting a "strategic defeat" on Russia and breaking it apart. The United States and its allies deny that, saying they are helping Ukraine defend itself against a colonial-style war of aggression by Russia. Putin said on day one of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 that anyone who tried to hinder or threaten it would suffer "consequences that you have never faced in your history". Since then, he has issued a series of further statements that the West regards as nuclear threats, and announced the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

That has not deterred the US and its allies from stepping up military aid to Ukraine in ways that were unthinkable when the war started, including by supplying tanks, long-range missiles and F-16 fighter jets. Ukraine shocked Moscow last month by

piercing its western border in an incursion by thousands of troops that Russia is still fighting to repel. President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said the operation made a mockery of Putin's "red lines". He is also lobbying hard for the US to allow it to use advanced Western weapons to strike targets deep inside Russia. Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said in an interview published that the West was "going too far" and that Russia would do everything to protect its interests. Ryabkov did not say when the updated nuclear doctrine would be ready. "The time for completing this work is a rather difficult question, given that we are talking about the most important aspects of ensuring our national security," he said.

Russia has more nuclear weapons than any other country, Putin said in March that Moscow was ready for the eventuality of a nuclear war "from a military-technical point of view". He said, however, that he saw no rush towards nuclear confrontation and that Russia had never faced a need to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine.

## Kim pushes for uplift with construction projects

SEOUL (Reuters): North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has called for developing health, science and education facilities in rural areas alongside factories, state media KCNA reported on Monday, amid concerns over economic hardships and poor living conditions.

Kim convened a high-level meeting as the ruling Workers' Party seeks to adopt a "new important decision" to speed up rural development under his "Regional Development 20x10 Policy" aimed at opening modernised factories in at least 20 remote counties every year for the next 10 years, KCNA reported.

He has been pushing to modernise the farming industry and rural communities because North Korea's economy relies heavily on agriculture but continues to struggle with food shortages amid sanctions over its nuclear and missile programmes as well as seasonal impacts from natural disasters. Kim said the construction of health, science and grain management facilities in cities and counties is an essential, urgent task in accelerating and improving regional development, according to KCNA.

"Building light industry factories in local areas ... alone is not enough to provide the regional people across the country with a sustained and improved material and cultural life," KCNA quoted him as telling the meeting. Kim ordered prioritising the completion of modern health facilities "without fail" in the face of any challenges, KCNA said.

He said that it is his first cherished desire to build city and county hospitals which will greatly contribute to improving the regional health situation (that is) relatively inferior, and promoting the life and security and health of local people," it added. The country has launched a new military unit and mobilised troops nationwide to spur the construction initiative, but South Korean officials and experts have questioned its feasibility, citing a lack of resources given Pyongyang has long prioritised its weapons programmes.

## Thousands in Mexico rejects judicial reforms

MEXICO CITY (AP): Tens of thousands of supporters of President Andrés Manuel López Obrador crowded around him as he began his last month in power by calling again for support of his judicial reform plan.

In a rebuke to critics, López - who has spent six tumultuous years in office - demanded a show of hands in a symbolic vote on one of his most criticized initiatives: the proposed judicial reform plan that opponents warn would weaken democratic checks and balances. A sea of hands rose in favor of one proposal: having judges elected by popular vote.

"Let our friends and neighbors in the United States internalize it," López said, referring to one of the proposal's biggest critics. Opponents have warned such a change could lead to politically biased judges with limited experience, and protesters took to the streets again, some with signs reading, "There's no future without justice." Demonstrators also rallied on Aug. 25. Mexico's Congress, where the governing coalition has the majority, is expected to soon vote on the controversial constitutional reforms that López has proposed.

Among the proposals is eliminating seven autonomous bodies, including the National Institute of Transparency. The Chamber of Deputies was scheduled to meet following the mass rally in the morning for its first session since June elections when the president's Morena party and its allies clinched big victories. Critics had complained in the courts about what they describe as an unusual and fast-track procedure of the proposed reforms, with a judge ruling that a discussion and vote on the issue could not be held.



WEST BANK: A health worker marks the finger of a Palestinian child vaccinated against polio in az-Zawayda.

## 160 people detained over suspected cybercrime operation

MANILA (AP): Philippine authorities raided a suspected illegal online gaming and cyberscam complex in a central province and took into custody more than 160 people - mostly Chinese and Indonesians - who were committing internet-based crimes, officials said.

The raid by more than 100 government agents, backed by military intelligence, on a resort compound in Lapu-Lapu city was part of an ongoing crackdown after President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered a ban in July on widespread - and mostly Chinese-run - online gaming operations that cater mostly to clients in China, where illegal gambling is banned. Marcos said then that the massive illegal gambling operations have ignored Philippine laws with largescale violations of regulations and also committed other crimes, including financial scams, human trafficking, torture, kidnappings and murder.

The raid at the Tourist Garden Resort, which has 10 buildings with swimming pools, karaoke bars and restaurants, came after the Indonesian Embassy in Manila requested the rescue of eight Indonesians who were reportedly forced to work in the online gaming hub, according to the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime

Commission. At least 162 foreign nationals "were found working in three separate scam farms within the compound," the commission said without elaborating. Such crimes include fraudulent love, gaming and investment schemes online that have defrauded victims of large amounts of money, according to Philippine officials. The 83 Chinese, 70 Indonesians, 6 Myanmar nationals, 2 Taiwanese and a Malaysian will be flown to Manila to face an investigation by the Bureau of Immigration and possible deportation, it added.

The owner of the hotel compound was arrested and could face criminal complaints, including for harboring illegally staying foreigners, the commission and immigration officials said. "We will suggest to the authorities to file cases against resort owners who allow their properties to be used by illegal aliens in their covert operations," Tansingco said. "This will serve as a warning to those who might attempt to start illegal online gambling operations." Marcos's move to ban the Chinese-run online gambling outfits - estimated to number more than 400 across the Philippines and believed to be employing tens of thousands of Chinese and Southeast Asian nationals - was welcomed by Beijing. It has led to the shutdown of

several sprawling complexes where authorities suspect thousands of Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesians and others mostly from Southeast Asia have been illegally recruited and forced to work in oppressive conditions.

Philippine authorities have also been tracking down a dismissed mayor of a small town in Tarlac province north of Manila, Alice Guo, who apparently left the country in July after the Philippine Senate ordered her arrest after she failed to appear at public hearings where allegations against her were being investigated, including her alleged links to a large online gambling complex near the town hall. She has also been accused of fraudulently hiding her Chinese nationality to be able to run for a public office that is reserved for Filipino citizens. Guo, who is believed to be hiding in Indonesia, has denied any wrongdoing but has been dismissed from her post for grave misconduct by the Ombudsman, an agency that investigates and prosecutes government officials accused of crimes, including graft and corruption. Philippine senators say the massive online gambling industry has flourished across the country largely due to corruption in government regulatory agencies and big payoffs to officials.

## Lebanese who fear war is coming have an unusual backup plan

BEIRUT (AP): Residents of Beirut's southern suburbs have been scrambling to make contingency plans since an Israeli airstrike on an apartment building in a busy neighborhood killed a top Hezbollah commander and touched off fears of a full-scale war.

For most, that means moving in with relatives or renting homes in Christian, Druze or Sunni-majority areas of Lebanon that are generally considered safer than the Shiite-majority areas where the Hezbollah militant group has its main operations and base of support. But for a small number, plan B is a move to neighboring Syria.

Although Syria is in its 14th year of civil war, active fighting has long been frozen in much of the country. Lebanese citizens, who can cross the border without a visa, regularly visit Damascus. And renting an apartment is significantly cheaper in Syria than in Lebanon. Zahra Ghaddar said she and her family were shaken when they saw an apartment building reduced to rubble by the July 30 drone strike in her area, known as Dahiyeh. Along with Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur, two children and three women were killed and dozens more were

injured in the targeted Israeli attack. Previously, the Lebanese capital had been largely untouched by the near-daily cross-border clashes that have displaced around 100,000 people from southern Lebanon and tens of thousands more in Israel since Oct. 8. That's when Hezbollah began firing rockets into northern Israel in support of its ally Hamas, which a day earlier led a deadly raid in Israel that killed some 1,200 people and took another 250 hostage. Israel responded with an aerial bombardment and ground offensive in Gaza that has killed more than 40,000 Palestinians.

In recent weeks, the conflict in Lebanon appeared on the brink of spiraling out of control. Ghaddar said her family first considered moving within Lebanon but were discouraged by social media posts blaming displaced civilians, along with Hezbollah, for the threat of all-out war. Also, surging demand prompted steep rent hikes. "We found the rents started at \$700, and that's for a house we wouldn't be too comfortable in," she said. That amount is more than many Lebanese earn in a month.

So they looked across the border. Ghaddar's family found a four-bedroom apart-

ment in Aleppo, a city in northwestern Syria, for \$150 a month. They paid six months' rent in advance and returned to Lebanon. Israel periodically launches airstrikes on Syria, usually targeting Iranian-linked military sites or militants, but Bashar Assad's government has largely stood on the sidelines of the current regional conflict. Israel and Hezbollah fought a bruising monthlong war in 2006 that demolished much of southern Lebanon and Beirut's southern suburbs. At the time, some 180,000 Lebanese took refuge in Syria, many taking shelter in schools, mosques and empty factories. Those who could afford it rented houses. Some put down permanent roots. Rawad Issa, then a teenager, fled to Syria with his parents. They returned to Lebanon when the war ended, but Issa's father used some of his savings to buy a house in Syria's Hama province, just in case.

"That way, if another war happened, we would already have a house ready," Issa said. The house and surrounding area were untouched by Syria's civil war, he said. A few weeks ago, his sister and her husband went to get the house ready for the family to return, in case the situation

in Lebanon deteriorated. Issa, who works in video production, said he initially planned to rent an apartment in Lebanon if the conflict expanded, rather than joining his family in Syria. But in "safe" areas of Beirut, "they are asking for fantastic prices," he said. One landlord was charging \$900 for a room in a shared apartment. "And outside of Beirut, it's not much better."

Azzam Ali, a Syrian journalist in Damascus, told The Associated Press that in the first few days after the strike in Dahiyeh, he saw an influx of Lebanese renting hotel rooms and houses in the city. A Lebanese family - friends of a friend - stayed in his house for a few days, he said. In a Facebook post, he welcomed the Lebanese, saying they "made the old city of Damascus more beautiful."

After the situation appeared to calm down, "some went back and some stayed here, but most of them stayed," he said. No agency has recorded how many people have moved from Lebanon to Syria in recent months. They are spread across the country and are not registered as refugees, making tracking the migration difficult. Anecdotal evidence suggests the numbers are small.

## 'If China wants Taiwan it should also take back land from Russia'

TAIPEI (Reuters): If China's claims on Taiwan are about territorial integrity then it should also take back land from Russia signed over by the last Chinese dynasty in the 19th century, Taiwan President Lai Ching-te said in an interview with Taiwanese media.

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has never renounced the use of force to bring the island under its control. Taiwan's government rejects those claims, saying only the island's people can decide their future.

Speaking in an interview with a Taiwanese television

station broadcast, Lai, who China calls a "separatist", brought up the 1858 Treaty of Aigun in which China signed over a vast tract of land in what is now Russia's far east to the Russian empire, forming much of the present day border along the Amur River. China's Qing dynasty, then in terminal decline, originally refused to ratify the treaty but it was affirmed two years later in the Convention of Peking, one of what China refers to as the "unequal" treaties with foreign powers in the 19th Century.

"China's intention to attack and annex Taiwan is not because of what any

one person or political party in Taiwan says or does. It is not for the sake of territorial integrity that China wants to annex Taiwan," Lai said. "If it is for the sake of territorial integrity, why doesn't it take back the lands occupied by Russia that were signed over in the Treaty of Aigun? Russia is now at its weakest right?" he added.

"The Treaty of Aigun signed during the Qing - you can ask Russia (for the land back) but you don't. So it's obvious they don't want to invade Taiwan for territorial reasons." China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

China's government says Taiwan has been Chinese territory since ancient times.

The Qing signed over Taiwan to Japan in 1895 in another "unequal" treaty, and in 1945 at the end of World War Two it was handed over to the Republic of China government, which four years later fled to Taiwan after losing a civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. Lai said that what China really wants to do with its designs on Taiwan is to change the rules-based international order. "It wants to achieve hegemony in the international area, in the Western Pacific - that is it's real aim."

## 'Russian spy' whale found dead in Norway

OSLO (AFP): A Beluga whale whose strange harness sparked suspicions it was trained by Russia for spying purposes has been found dead in Norway, according to an NGO which tracks his movements.

Nicknamed "Hvaldimir" in a pun on the Norwegian word for whale, hval, and its purported ties to Moscow, the beluga first appeared off the coast in Norway's far-northern Finnmark region in 2019.

At the time, Norwegian marine biologists removed an attached man-made harness with a mount suited for an action camera and the words "Equipment St. Petersburg" printed on the plastic clasps. Norwegian officials said Hvaldimir may have escaped an enclosure and may have been trained by the Russian navy as he appeared to be accustomed to humans. Moscow

has never issued any official reaction to speculation that he could be a "Russian spy".

The beluga's lifeless body was discovered off the southwest coast at Risavika by Marine Mind, an organisation that has tracked his movements for years. "I found Hvaldi dead when I was scouting for him yesterday like usual," Marine Mind's founder Sebastian Strand told AFP. "We had confirmation of him being alive little more than 24 hours before finding him floating motionlessly," he added. Fredrik Skarbovik, maritime coordinator at the port of Stavanger, confirmed the beluga's death to the VG tabloid newspaper.

Strand said the cause of the whale's demise was unknown and no visible injuries were found during an initial inspection of

Hvaldimir's body. "We've managed to retrieve his remains and put him in a cooled area, in preparation for a necropsy by the veterinary institute that can help determine what really happened to him," Strand added. With an estimated age of around 14 or 15, Hvaldimir was relatively young for a Beluga whale, which can live to between 40 and 60 years of age. Beluga whales can reach a size of six metres (20 feet) and generally tend to inhabit the icy waters around Greenland, northern Norway and Russia.

Those include the Barents Sea, a geopolitically important area where Western and Russian submarine movements are monitored. It is also the gateway to the Northern Route that shortens maritime journeys between the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

## 3 children found dead with man all under four

WARSAW (BBC): Three children who were found dead with a man at a house in Surrey were all aged under four, police have said. The man was Polish national Piotr Swiderski. Police have confirmed all four found in the house in Staines, were related. Neighbours said they believed a young Polish family with three boys, including twins, lived at the house, where a tribute outside said: "Rest in peace little ones. We will always think of you."

Police said post-mortem examinations and formal identification would take place in due course. Surrey Police said it was called by the ambulance service to the house in Spelthorne, at about 13:15 BST. The force said it was investigating and had referred itself to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC),

due to previous contact with the family.

It said at this stage, officers believed it was an isolated incident with no third-party involvement. The mother of the children and next-of-kin were aware, it added, and were being supported by specialist officers. Det Ch Insp Gareth Hicks said: "This is a truly tragic incident and a thorough investigation is under way to establish exactly what happened."

"We would like to thank the local community for their support and understanding whilst we have been conducting our enquiries," He said Bremer Road, which was closed "for a significant amount of time", had fully reopened, and there would continue to be a police presence in the area "for the foreseeable". Lisa Townsend, Surrey's Police

and Crime Commissioner, said she was being kept regularly updated by senior officers as the investigation progressed. She added: "My thoughts are with the family, friends and local community." A spokesman for the IOPC said it had been notified by Surrey Police about the "tragic incident".

They added: "We will be assessing a referral from the force to decide whether any action is required by the IOPC." Tim Oliver, leader of Surrey County Council, said: "Everyone at Surrey County Council is devastated to learn of the tragic loss of life in our community, and our thoughts are with those who knew the family. "I would encourage people not to speculate on the circumstances, and let Surrey Police carry out their investigations."

## Putin accuses West of persecuting Russian journalists

MOSCOW (Reuters): The West is openly persecuting Russian journalists, President Vladimir Putin said in remarks published, days after Moscow banned dozens of US journalists from entering the country.

"In order to hide from inconvenient facts, from truthful information, the West, which considers itself the standard of freedom, has launched an open persecution against Russian correspondents," Putin told the Mongolian newspaper Onodoor on the eve of his visit to the country, according to a transcript provided on the Kremlin's website.

His remarks come after Moscow said it was banning

entry to Russia for 92 US citizens, including journalists, lawyers, and the heads of what it said were key military-industrial firms, over what it described as Washington's Russophobic stance. They also follow years of the Kremlin's suppression of independent media and Moscow's swift blocking of dissenting voices in Russian-language media outlets at the start of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

Putin said that in Russia, media are free. "The only requirement for them is compliance with Russian legislation," he said. "Foreign correspondents accredited in our country should understand this." Russia has frequently

accused Western countries of imposing unfair restrictions on its media abroad, including bans on some state-backed news outlets.

Putin told the Mongolian newspaper that Russian journalists face "direct censorship" in almost all Western countries. "The only thing our media do is to convincingly convey the Russian point of view on current modern problems and processes taking place in the world," Putin said. In May, Russian lawmakers passed a bill giving prosecutors powers to shut foreign media bureaus in Moscow if a Western country has been "unfriendly" to Russian media.



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## Neither hostages nor cease-fire on his mind

THE widespread protests and strikes that swept across Israel on Sunday after the recovery of the bodies of six hostages that had been held by Hamas would seem to have increased the pressure on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to reach an agreement on a cease-fire with the militant group.

But the anger over the deaths of the hostages, who were reportedly killed hours before their bodies were recovered in a tunnel in Rafah on Saturday, may have served the opposite purpose by prompting the Israeli leader to dump the ongoing cease-fire talks that involve Israel, the United States, Egypt and Qatar. Hamas had initially prepared to release the six hostages as part of the temporary cease-fire pact that had appeared so near in the latest round of negotiations. But although Washington claims the death of the hostages will not derail the talks, the incident might give the Israeli prime minister, who blames the tragedy on Hamas, a new excuse to carry on with his operations in Gaza and the West Bank. The large-scale Israeli military aggression into multiple towns in the West Bank launched from last week, under the excuse of fighting terrorism, when the cease-fire talks were at a critical juncture, indicates participating in negotiations might be just a stalling tactic of Netanyahu to fend off the pressure from home and abroad.

After about 11 months, despite the heavy losses that have been incurred in the Gaza Strip and beyond, Netanyahu has never been so close to realizing his goals, which include eliminating Hamas from Gaza and turning the Palestinian enclave into a buffer zone under Israel's control.

That explains why US officials have called for new urgency in reaching a deal as they have acknowledged that the incident may have thrown the negotiations into tumult, with US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan saying that "the next few days will be critical" in the push to free the hostages still held in Gaza.

The sticking point of the talks is whether Israel will continue to maintain its control of the Philadelphi Corridor, which is a 14-kilometer strip of land along Gaza's border with Egypt. Netanyahu insists on Israel's control of the corridor that he thinks would prevent Hamas from smuggling arms through the tunnels beneath it. That also serves to indicate that he has never sincerely considered the cease-fire deal, which Washington has told the world he supports, as it entails Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza.

"The significance of this is that Hamas won't agree to it, so there won't be an agreement and there won't be any hostages released," said Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant at a Thursday meeting of the Israeli security Cabinet. Notably, in their statements late on Saturday, neither US President Joe Biden nor Vice-President Kamala Harris applied pressure — either explicit or implied — on Netanyahu to reach a deal. That's undoubtedly a worrying sign that Netanyahu will continue to stick to his guns with the de facto go-ahead of the US.

By taking advantage of the Hamas attack on Oct 7 to expand Israel's territory, and form a new buffer ring around it, Netanyahu would be able to hold power firmly in his hand, rendering the hostages' deaths as a sacrifice for his own political life, and as well as the necessary costs for him to make indelible "historic contributions" to his country.

## Brazilian judge blocks 'X'

IT looks like technopreneur tycoon Elon Musk cannot keep himself out of trouble for too long. After his legal tangles at home in the United States, he is quite deep in trouble in Brazil, where his social media platform X, with a huge following, is blocked by Supreme Court judge Alexandre de Moraes. Justice Moraes demanded that X appoint a legal representative in Brazil. Musk withdrew his team from the country when he faced fines for allowing inaccurate posts on X. Now, Musk is an absolute libertarian; that is, he believes that there should be no restrictions of any kind on free speech. When the regulators in Brazil began to block X across the country on Friday and Saturday, Musk hit back saying that Brazilians were being deprived of truth. Some of the Brazilians included Justice Moraes and President Luis Inacio Lula de Silva.

The president said, "Just because a guy has a lot of money does not mean he can disrespect" law. Moraes was firm in his stand. He said, "Those who violate democracy, who violate fundamental human rights, whether in person or through social media, must be held accountable." Musk called Moraes a "dictator" and President de Silva the "lapdog" of a "dictator".

Stripped of the heated exchanges, the Musk stand is not unreasonable as far as it goes, but on the other posts on social media, in this case X, can trigger violence as they did in the recent outbreak of far-right riots in Britain. So reasonable limits of freedom of speech are accepted as necessary by all those who believe fully in democracy. Musk seems to think that when the state's institutions, including the judiciary, intervene for the right reasons, it is an example of state intervention and that it is a violation of freedom of speech. But Moraes has rightly argued that freedom of speech cannot violate the democratic rights of others. This would unleash an unending battle of words and worldviews.

There is also the deep suspicion that Musk is not playing the pure democrat as he claims to be, and that he is indirectly serving American interests in the political and strategic spheres. It can be said that this remains to be proven. A fair demand indeed, but one can see through the harmful effects of false posts on social media that it is not an honest game. There is need for fair restrictions on freedom of speech. Propaganda that is vicious and diabolical loses its legitimacy. In many ways, Musk is challenging the status quo. He is very much the future man and he is quite right in believing that the old institutions and old rules may not work, and there is need to change them. If Musk had his way, he would make the new laws all on his own in the manner of a Napoleon. But the international landscape is cluttered with states, big and small, and with laws and rules governing within them and between them.

What is very clear is that hate speech, propagandas with an intent to unleash violence is not acceptable, and there have to be restrictive rules to maintain public order and public peace. There has to be a general atmosphere of amity for individuals to exercise their rights. Musk believes that he is a genius and that rules applicable to others cannot be imposed on him. The exceptionalism that Musk seeks, much like his country of adoption, the United States, is not acceptable. And that is pretty much the message that Supreme Court Justice Moraes has sent out through his ruling. The good things, and the bad things too, that Musk does, wittingly or unwittingly, carry the weight of the United States behind him.

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## Can Pakistan turn the tide during China's economic winds shift

Farhan Ahmad

CHINA'S economic juggernaut, once the envy of the world, is experiencing a significant slowdown, with far-reaching consequences for the global economy. For Pakistan, a close ally and major beneficiary of Chinese investment through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), this slowdown presents both challenges and opportunities. The resilience of the Pakistan-China relationship, often described as "iron brothers," is now being tested in new and complex ways as Beijing grapples with economic headwinds that are reshaping its policies and global engagements.

China's economic deceleration is not a sudden phenomenon but rather the result of a convergence of long-standing structural issues and recent external shocks. Over the past decade, China has transitioned from an economy driven by rapid industrial expansion to one that is increasingly focused on services, innovation and domestic consumption. This shift, while necessary for sustainable growth, has also exposed vulnerabilities that are now becoming more apparent.

One of the primary reasons for the slowdown is the maturing of China's economy. The double-digit growth rates of the past were largely driven by massive infrastructure investments, export-led manufacturing and an abundant, low-cost labor force. However, as China's population ages and its labor force shrinks, these growth engines have begun to lose steam. The demographic shift is particularly concerning, with China facing a rapidly aging population and a declining birth rate, which together threaten long-term economic stability.

Another significant factor is China's mounting debt. Over the years, Beijing has fueled its economic growth with substantial borrowing, particularly by local governments and state-owned enterprises. This has led to a buildup of debt that now poses a serious risk to the financial system. The Chinese government is

increasingly focused on deleveraging and managing financial risks, which has resulted in tighter credit conditions and a slowdown in investment, particularly in the real estate sector, which has been a key pillar of China's economy.

Externally, China's ongoing trade tensions with the United States have added to the economic pressures. The tariffs and trade barriers imposed during the trade war have hurt Chinese exports, particularly in key sectors like technology and manufacturing. Although there has been some easing of tensions, the underlying issues remain unresolved, leading to continued uncertainty for Chinese exporters. Moreover, the global shift towards decoupling and the reconfiguration of supply chains away from China are challenging its position as the world's factory.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had a lasting impact on China's economy. While China was initially praised for its swift and effective response to the outbreak, the prolonged lockdowns, strict zero-COVID policies and disruptions to global trade have taken a toll. Consumer confidence has been slow to recover and many small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are struggling to stay afloat. The pandemic has also accelerated shifts in global supply chains, with many countries and companies looking to diversify their production bases away from China to reduce dependency.

In response to these challenges, China is adjusting its economic policies in an effort to stabilize growth and revive its economy. The Chinese government is increasingly focusing on boosting domestic consumption as a key driver of growth. Initiatives like the "dual circulation" strategy emphasize the need to strengthen the domestic market while maintaining China's position in global trade. This shift is aimed at reducing reliance on exports and fostering a more balanced and sustainable economic model.

To support this transition, Beijing is implementing a

range of measures designed to stimulate domestic demand. These include increasing public investment in social services, expanding access to education and healthcare and promoting urbanization. The government is also encouraging innovation and the development of high-tech industries, particularly in areas like artificial intelligence, renewable energy and electric vehicles. These sectors are seen as critical to China's future economic competitiveness and are receiving significant state support.

In the financial sector, China is taking steps to address the risks associated with high levels of debt. The government is promoting greater financial discipline among local governments and state-owned enterprises, while also encouraging the development of the bond market to provide more stable funding sources. Additionally, China is gradually opening up its financial markets to foreign investors, a move aimed at attracting more international capital and reducing the economy's reliance on domestic savings. China is also making efforts to strengthen its trade relationships with countries outside the United States, particularly in Asia, Africa and Europe. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China is seeking to deepen economic ties with emerging markets, which are seen as key to sustaining long-term growth. While the BRI has faced criticism and challenges, it remains a central pillar of China's foreign economic policy.

For Pakistan, these shifts in China's economic landscape present both risks and opportunities. The slowdown in Chinese investment under CPEC has raised concerns about the future of this flagship project. Delays in key infrastructure projects, coupled with a more cautious approach from Beijing, could slow down Pakistan's economic development and delay the benefits that were expected to flow from CPEC. This is particularly concerning given Pakistan's current

economic challenges, including high inflation, a growing debt burden and a struggling export sector.

However, there are also potential opportunities for Pakistan if it can adapt to the changing circumstances. As China shifts its focus towards domestic consumption and innovation, there may be new avenues for collaboration in sectors such as technology, renewable energy and agriculture. Pakistan could position itself as a key partner in these areas by leveraging its growing IT sector, vast agricultural resources and strategic location.

Moreover, the global realignment of supply chains offers Pakistan a chance to attract new investment. As multinational companies seek to diversify their production bases away from China, Pakistan could emerge as an alternative manufacturing hub, particularly if it can improve its industrial base and business environment. This would not only help reduce Pakistan's trade deficit but also create new jobs and stimulate economic growth.

In terms of foreign policy, Pakistan must continue to strengthen its relationship with China while also diversifying its economic partnerships. Engaging more deeply with other BRI countries, particularly in Central Asia and Africa, could open up new markets for Pakistani goods and services. Additionally, renegotiating certain aspects of CPEC, such as project timelines and debt repayments, could provide Pakistan with the financial flexibility it needs to navigate the current economic challenges.

As China works to stabilize its economy, Pakistan must be proactive in adapting to these changes. By identifying and capitalizing on new opportunities, Pakistan can turn the challenges posed by China's economic slowdown into a catalyst for its own economic transformation. The road ahead will require careful planning, strategic vision, and a continued commitment to the enduring partnership between Pakistan and China.

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## The 'Gazafication' of the West Bank may be inevitable

Chris Doyle

PALESTINIANS are openly speaking about the "Gazafication" of the West Bank. To put that into perspective, this would mean the near-total destruction of Palestinian civilian infrastructure and the forced displacement of 90 per cent of the population, without even considering the casualties involved.

Is this the next sorry chapter for Palestine?

The pre-Oct. 7 West Bank situation was appalling enough. Settler violence was at a record high, as was settlement construction. The global human rights community was nearly unanimous in accusing Israel of operating systematic discrimination in the West Bank — the crime of apartheid. Some 750,000 settlers have exclusive privileged rights under Israeli civil law, whereas Palestinians endure martial law and imprisonment in detention centers, where evidence shows they are regularly abused and tortured.

Yet, as Israeli forces last week launched the largest military operation in the West Bank since 2002, one wonders how far this could go.

Some of the tactics will be eerily familiar to Gazans. Airstrikes for starters. The targeting of hospitals, clinics and medical infrastructure for another. The way in which Israel has monopolized the water infrastructure also echoes the process in Gaza.

The harsh reality is that Israel has the means, motive and opportunity.

Israel has crushed the Palestinian population in Gaza and made the enclave effectively uninhabitable. Palestinian communities in the West Bank may face this same process.

The West Bank could well morph into the caged system of Gaza, even challenging it for the unwanted title of the world's largest prison camp. All the infrastructure is there: the wall, the mounds, the checkpoints and the systems of control.

Israel's declared intent is there too. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has pushed for years for the annexation of Area C. Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich promised 1 million new settlers in the West Bank just two months ago. Emptying the Jordan Valley and South Hebron Hills of Palestinian communities is a process that will now be jet-propelled.

Israel Foreign Minister Israel Katz was hardly reassuring when he posted on X: "We must address this (terror) threat by all necessary means, including, in some cases of intense combat, allowing the population to temporarily (evacuate) from one neighborhood to another within the refugee camp to prevent civilian harm and to enable the dismantling of terror infrastructures established there."

EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell responded: "It is still more worrisome the call from the minister for foreign affairs of Israel

to displace people from the West Bank, doing more or less the same thing that they did with the people in Gaza. This is completely unacceptable."

Katz tweeted back: "I oppose the displacement of any population from their homes." Some comment given the monumental displacement of Palestinians his government has overseen.

Iran will be the excuse. Israeli ministers have been falling over themselves to say that Iran has opened up an eastern front in the West Bank. This is all a little too convenient, predictable and lacking in evidence.

In terms of the Palestinian leadership, this Israeli coalition is likely to start treating the Palestinian Authority just like Hamas unless it acts as the occupier's poodle. Senior ministers want to see the PA eradicated, just as they do Hamas.

Yet it could be argued that Gaza is about to get the West Bank treatment as well. Settlers are queuing up for Gaza real estate to colonize, even planting trees to symbolically claim the land. Israel has apparently segmented the enclave into three, as it was pre-2005, and that could be just the start. Settlements in Gaza would also see the reintroduction of the same regime of apartheid as in the West Bank; two laws for two peoples, with superior rights for Israeli Jews at every level.

None of this means that there is a clear-cut Israeli government plan. The coalition is too incoherent for that. But there are a series of commonly held ambitions that, amid the current horrors, could be opportunistically realized. These include the retaking of Gaza, with a degree of ethnic cleansing, aims which have already been pretty much achieved. It could mean further major land transfers to Israel in the West Bank, leading to the annexation of Area C at least, with major Palestinian displacement into already overcrowded cities. And it could mean the crushing of all forms of Palestinian leadership and governance structures.

The cherry on the cake would be the final smashing of the status quo agreements on the holy places in Jerusalem, leading — in the most alarming scenario — to a synagogue on Al-Haram Al-Sharif, as promised by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir.

It is naked Israeli opportunism on steroids, facilitated by US complicity and the ineptitude of the rest of the international community.

If it can get away with genocide in Gaza, what else can Israel do? That is what many on the Israeli right are asking. But it is also brought about by the gouging out of the Israeli political center and left and the utter failure of the existing Palestinian leaderships.

None of these scenarios are inevitable. Yet, with every passing week of unhalted, unbridled Israeli atrocities, the unthinkable becomes thinkable, even inevitable.

## Harris walking a tightrope on US support for Israel

Kerry Boyd Anderson

US President Joe Biden withdrew from the presidential election race, Vice President Kamala Harris, the new Democratic candidate, has had some time to express her own views on policy issues to American voters — including the war in Gaza and ongoing US support for Israel.

Before Biden withdrew, opposition among many Democrats and some independent voters to the president's unconditional support for Israel was building into a serious problem for his campaign. For example, in the Michigan Democratic primary earlier this year, a movement encouraging people to vote "uncommitted" in a sign of opposition to the war in Gaza demonstrated that Biden's support for Israel was a potential electoral liability. Voters who are committed to using their votes to oppose Israel's actions in the Occupied Territories remain a small group, but in crucial swing states like Michigan, where just a few votes could determine the election, they have gained influence.

As vice president, Harris

is in a tricky position, as she must remain aligned with Biden's policies while also presenting her own views as a candidate. On many issues, including support for Israel, she has tried to balance loyalty to Biden's policies with suggesting a change in course if she were to win the election. For example, she has expressed commitment to Israel's security while also expressing more concern for Palestinian suffering than Biden has done. When Harris became the nominee, many activists and voters hoped that she might offer a significant change in US policy. In particular, the uncommitted movement called for her to demand an immediate cease-fire and to pledge to stop sending weapons to Israel. Harris had already called for a cease-fire earlier this year, but activists felt that she needed to do more to distinguish her position from Biden's. In the last few weeks, Harris has had several opportunities to clarify her views on the Israeli-Palestinian war. One opportunity was the Democratic National Convention. Activists reported that Harris and her campaign were listening to them and express-

ing sympathy, where-as the Biden team had ignored them. Harris addressed the war in Gaza during her speech, calling for a ceasefire deal, pledging to "always stand up for Israel's right to defend itself" and stating that "what has happened in Gaza over the past 10 months is devastating." Many observers of Democratic politics were surprised that Harris directly mentioned the controversial issue at all and saw it as a sign of shifting views in the party. However, for uncommitted activists, the speech was disappointing.

Also, the Democratic leadership refused to grant time at the convention for a Palestinian American parents of hostage Hersh Goldberg-Polin to speak (tragically, he has since died in Gaza). The activists did not object to the parents of a hostage speaking, but rather felt that the exclusion of a Palestinian American voice sent a clear signal that the Democratic leadership is not ready to truly hear their perspective.

Harris had another oppor-

tunity in Aug. 29 interview with CNN. The host directly asked if she would withhold some shipments of weapons to Israel and she dodged the question. Rather, Harris repeated positions similar to her convention speech: that she is "unwavering in my commitment to Israel's defense," but how Israel defends itself "matters" and "far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed." She called again for a deal to end the war and promised to work toward a "two-state solution, where Israel is secure and, in equal measure, the Palestinians have security and self-determination and dignity." Harris' comments on this issue demonstrate both a subtle shift away from the traditional commitment to unconditional support for Israel and yet reluctance among Democratic Party leaders to significantly change course. Polls have shown growing sympathy for Palestinians among Democrats and younger voters for several years and that shift has accelerated in the face of the destruction in Gaza. Many Democratic voters want a change in US pol-

icy; for example, a June poll from CBS found that 77 per cent of Democrats do not support sending weapons to Israel in the current situation.

However, this major change among Democratic voters has not fully reached the party's political and foreign policy leaders. One reason is that such leaders tend to be older and older Americans are more likely to maintain the traditional pro-Israel consensus. Experienced politicians and policymakers also developed their careers in an environment in which criticizing Israel was seen as a good way to lose an election or damage your career. Furthermore, the Harris campaign is trying to promote a positive image and, for Democrats at the convention who wanted to celebrate, protesters reminding everyone that US weapons are being used in Gaza felt like killjoys.

A key question is whether the change from Biden to Harris will encourage voters concerned about Gaza to vote for the Democratic candidate. For some, the answer is yes. There are many voters who oppose the war in Gaza but are also concerned about

other political and economic issues and believe that Harris will take a more balanced approach to Israel and the Palestinians than Donald Trump or Biden. For others, the answer is no. There are Palestinian, Arab and Muslim Americans who understandably say they cannot vote for anyone who will use US resources to kill Palestinian civilians. Others may not share the same personal ties but will hold fast to social justice principles. Few of these voters will vote for Trump; rather, they will vote for a third-party candidate or simply choose to not vote for Harris. Harris has diminished some of the sting that many Democrats have felt over US support for Israel, but she has not taken sufficient steps to gain the support of uncommitted activists and voters who are unwilling to compromise on this issue. Unfortunately, the next few weeks in Gaza and the West Bank are likely to be bloody and she will find it difficult to walk the tightrope between traditional Democratic support for Israel and the growing demands among many voters to stop supporting Israel's military actions.



# Ben-Gvir and the acceleration of the collapse of Israel

**ISRAELI National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir vowed, on Aug. 26, to build a synagogue inside the Muslim holy site Al-Haram Al-Sharif.**

Ben-Gvir, as a representation of Israel's powerful religious Zionist class in the government and society at large, has been candid regarding his designs in East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Territories. He has advocated a religious war, calling for the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, the starvation or killing of prisoners and the annexation of the West Bank.

In his capacity as a minister in the equally extremist government of Benjamin Netanyahu, Ben-Gvir has worked hard to translate his language into action. He has raided the Palestinian Al-Aqsa Mosque compound repeatedly and implemented his starvation policies against Palestinian detainees, going as far as defending rape inside Israeli military detention camps and calling the accused soldiers "our best heroes."

His supporters have carried out hundreds of assaults and dozens of pogroms targeting Palestinian communities in the West Bank.

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 670 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the Gaza war. A large number among those killed or injured were victims of illegal Jewish settlers.

But not all Israelis in the political and security establishments agree with Ben-Gvir's behavior or tactics.

For example, on Aug. 22, Israel's Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar warned against the "indescribable damage" done to Israel by Ben-Gvir's actions in East Jerusalem. "The damage to the state of Israel, especially now ... is indescribable: global delegitimization, even among our greatest allies," Bar wrote in a letter sent to several ministers.

Bar's letter may seem

**Dr. Ramzy Baroud**

Seven months before the start of the war, Israeli President Isaac Herzog said in a televised speech that "those who think that a real civil war ... is a border we won't cross, have no idea." The context of his comments was the "real, deep hate" among Israelis resulting from the attempts by Netanyahu and his extrem-

The Oct. 7 attack took place at a time of social and political vulnerability that was arguably unprecedented since the founding of Israel atop the ruins of historic Palestine in May 1948.

The subsequent war — particularly the failure to achieve any of its objectives — deepened that existing conflict. This led to warnings from politicians

by Herzog, is that "Kahanism needs to be removed from the government." Kahanism here is a reference to the Kach Party of Rabbi Meir Kahane. Though now banned, Kach has resurfaced in numerous forms, including in Ben-Gvir's Otzma Yehudit party. As a disciple of Kahane, Ben-Gvir is set to achieve the vision of the extremist rabbi: the complete ethnic cleansing of the Palestinian people.

Ben-Gvir and his ilk are fully aware of the historic opportunity that is now available to them as they hope to ignite their much-coveted religious war. They also know that, if the war in Gaza ends without advancing their main plan of colonizing the rest of the Occupied Territories, such an opportunity may not present itself ever again.

Ben-Gvir's rush to achieve the religious Zionist agenda contradicts the traditional form of Israeli colonialism, which is predicated on the incremental genocide of Palestinians and the slow ethnic cleansing of Palestinian communities from East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

Though the Israeli military believes that illegal settlements are essential, they perceive these colonies to be — in strategic language — a security buffer for Israel.

The winners and losers of Israel's ideological and political war are most likely to emerge following the end of the Gaza war, the outcomes of which will determine other factors, including the very future of the state of Israel, as per the estimation of Brik himself.

— Arab News

**According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health, at least 670 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank since the start of the Gaza war. A large number among those killed or injured were victims of illegal Jewish settlers. But not all Israelis in the political and security establishments agree with Ben-Gvir's behavior or tactics. For example, on Aug. 22, Israel's Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar warned against the "indescribable damage" done to Israel by Ben-Gvir's actions in East Jerusalem. "The damage to the state of Israel, especially now ... is indescribable: global delegitimization, even among our greatest allies," Bar wrote in a letter sent to several ministers. Bar's letter may seem odd.**

odd. The Shin Bet has been instrumental in the killing of numerous Palestinians in the name of Israeli security. Bar himself is a strong supporter of the settlements and is as hawkish as is required of the person who leads such a notorious organization.

Bar's conflict with Ben-Gvir, however, is not one of substance, but style. This conflict is only an expression of a much greater ideological and political war among Israel's top institutions. This war, however, began before the Oct. 7 attack and the ongoing Israeli war and genocide in Gaza.

ist government coalition partners to undermine the power of the judiciary.

That fight over the Supreme Court was, however, merely the tip of the iceberg. The fact that it took Israel five elections in the space of four years to settle on a stable government was indicative of the country's unprecedented political conflict.

The government formed in December 2022 may be "stable" in terms of parliamentary balances, but it has destabilized the country on all fronts, leading to mass protests involving the powerful but increasingly marginalized military class.

and military men that the country was collapsing.

The clearest of these warnings came from Yitzhak Brik, a former top Israeli military commander. He wrote in Haaretz on Aug. 22 that Israel "is galloping toward the edge of an abyss" and that it "will collapse within no more than a year."

Though Brik was, among various other factors, blaming Netanyahu's losing war in Gaza, the anti-Netanyahu political class believes that the crisis mainly lies in the government itself.

The solution, according to recent comments made

## Polio and Israel's attrition genocide in Gaza

**IN August, the Palestinian Health Ministry announced Gaza's first proven case of polio infection in 25 years. The virus had infected a 10-month-old baby in Deir el-Balah, leaving him paralysed. While only one case has been confirmed so far, this does not mean it is the only one or that the spread of the virus is limited.**

**Nicola Perugini**

official Gaza death toll.

All of this is a reflection of Israel's attrition genocide: that is, the destruction of the conditions of survival of Palestinians as a group through techniques of killing less visible than the horrific livestreamed violence we have been witnessing for the last 11 months.

To borrow from Jewish-Polish lawyer Raphael Lemkin, who introduced the notion of genocide in 1944, the "endangering of health" and the creation of conditions of life "inimical to health" constitute one of the main techniques of genocide.

Over the past 11 months, Israel has all but obliterated Gaza's health system. Recent data published by the WHO Global Health Cluster speak for

diseases in Gaza. According to a London School of Hygiene and Johns Hopkins University study, thousands of Palestinians may have died in the last six months due to infectious diseases.

Israel's narrative to justify these deaths is that they are the result of a tragic humanitarian crisis provoked by Palestinians. But they were not unintended, as more honest statements of Israeli officials have revealed.

In November 2023, former head of Israel's National Security Council Giora Eiland and current adviser to Defence Minister Yoav Gallant wrote on Yedioth Aharonoth that "the international community warns us of a humanitarian disaster in Gaza and of severe epidemics. We must not shy away from this, as difficult as that may be", adding that

**Nevertheless, a vaccination campaign was officially launched on Sunday. The rollout started in the central Gaza Strip – Deir el-Balah governorate – and in the coming days is supposed to be extended to Khan Younis in the southern Strip and then the northern governorates, where Israel has been severely limiting aid and mobility. It is unclear if the UN will reach its target of vaccinating 640,000 children given the difficult conditions of operation, the dramatic number of displaced people, the Israeli restriction on fuel supplies needed to run generators and fridges to store the vaccines and Israel's refusal to fully stop fighting.**

itself: in the first 300 days of the war, 32 out of 36 hospitals were damaged, 20 (out of 36) hospitals and 70 primary healthcare centres (out of 119) are not functioning. Some 492 attacks on healthcare were reported, which resulted in the death of 747 people.

The Israeli army has also systematically destroyed the water and sewage system in Gaza. According to an Oxfam report published in July, people in Gaza are left with only 4.74 litres of water per person per day for all uses, including drinking, cooking, and washing.

This means a 94 percent reduction in the amount of water available before October, and a level significantly below the internationally accepted minimum standard of 15 litres of water per person per day for basic survival in emergencies.

Simultaneously, Israel has destroyed 70 percent of all sewage pumps and 100 percent of wastewater treatment plants since October.

The destruction and obstruction of Gaza's water and sanitation infrastructures have had catastrophic effects on public health, certainly causing a significant number of indirect deaths.

Prominent public health reports have projected terrifying scenarios when it comes to deaths caused by the spread of infectious

"after all, severe epidemics in the south of the Gaza Strip will bring victory closer and reduce casualties among army soldiers".

Netanyahu's finance minister, Bezalel Smotrich, tweeted that he agreed with "every word" written by Eiland in his column. In other words, infectious diseases are among the genocide-by-attrition tools considered by the Israeli leadership.

This is not a completely new story. Israel has already subjected Palestinians to systematic policies of slow death and disablement, with the highest peaks during the two Intifadas. But since October 7, these policies have reached an unprecedented level and they meet two key standards of the Genocide Convention.

First, by obliterating the healthcare sector and obstructing the distribution of healthcare supplies and services, Israel is ensuring that Palestinians in Gaza face serious bodily and mental harm.

Second, by destroying almost entirely the water and sewage system and creating a debilitating environment, the Israeli military has inflicted on Gaza Palestinians conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part.

This is how Israel pursues attrition genocide in Gaza.

## Jenin, a turbulent history and a violent present

**"JENIN," the name of the northern West Bank city has a lovely ring like a bell. Jenin is an ancient city with a turbulent history dating to the 14th century BCE and a violent present thanks to Israel's 57-year occupation.**

Jenin city has a population of 50,000 and the Jenin refugee camp, which has merged into the city, has 14,000 inhabitants. While the Jenin enclave fell under the administration and security control of the Palestinian Authority in 1993, Israel has made a practice of violating prohibitions enshrined in the defunct Oslo Accords by dispatching its army into Jenin at will. The camp, the northernmost of 19 in the West Bank, has a high rate of unemployment and poverty which have fostered fierce resistance to the Israeli occupation. Israel's most critical columnist Gideon Levy wrote yesterday in the liberal daily Haaretz, "Israel has exploited the war in Gaza to cause turmoil in the West Bank."

During the Second Intifada (2000-2005) Jenin's suicide bombers struck Israeli cities and towns, prompting Israel to carry out devastating raids in the city and camp. The most famous event was the Battle of Jenin during then Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's five-week Defensive Shield campaign, the largest Israeli offensive in the West Bank since the occupation. At

that time Israeli troops swept into Ramallah where they besieged Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's compound, Tulkarem, Qalqilya, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Jenin.

During the Battle of Jenin, which took place between April 1st and 11th, Israeli commandos and helicopter gunships fought Palestinian defenders in the refugee camp, killing 52-54, half of whom were fighters, at the cost of 23 Israeli soldiers' lives.

After entering the camp Israeli troops burst into homes and broke openings in interior walls so they could move from place to place without being targeted on the streets by Palestinian snipers. Once the fighting ended, Israeli bulldozers levelled large areas in the camp before withdrawing on April 18th. As is the case today with Gaza, journalists were barred from the camp during Israel's operation but were grudgingly allowed to enter on April 19th-20th.

When I first tried to go to Jenin in a minibus with European municipal officials, Israeli troops in armoured scout cars shot over our vehicles, arrested us, and took us to a military camp. While the Israelis were interrogating our driver, I escaped in an ice cream van and caught an intercity bus on the road to Tel Aviv where I took another bus to Jerusalem. The next day I joined a Jordanian television team

**Michael Jansen**

and other journalists in another minibus and succeeded in reaching the outskirts of Jenin. The Israelis had blocked the road with an earth berm, forcing us to walk to Jenin.

The first person I met was an old lady in black probing a mound of earth with a long pole. When I asked her what she was doing, she replied, "I'm looking for my grandson." How old was he? I asked. "Six." I visited shattered houses, the wall in one spattered with black fibrous brain matter. The front wall of a second storey flat had been sliced away revealing a green sitting room with furniture intact and a confused well-dressed woman. Scores of refugees who had fled the fighting had returned to the camp to see if their homes had survived. The smell of death hung in the air although bodies had been taken away.

After a couple of hours, I met my companions and began the walk to our vehicle. As I made my way along a terraced slope with olive trees in bloom, an Israeli sniper on the opposite hillside shot over my head, showering me with leaves. Ahead of me Palestinian women in embroidered dresses risked death or injury for visiting what was left of their camp. The television team recorded the incident which was shown that evening on Jordanian television. The Israelis were

not keen on people seeing what had happened to Jenin.

In recent years, its angry, alienated youth formed the Jenin Brigade comprised of fighters from Islamic Jihad, Hamas, and Fatah and making Jenin the city of "martyrs" and drawing Israeli retaliation. The most recent incursions by Israeli troops and border police backed up by tanks, drones, and fighter planes, have been resisted by Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades which has joined forces with other resistance forces. Al-Quds commander argued Israel is behaving in the same way as in Gaza. To meet the challenge, he said "there are cells spread across all cities and camps, now operating under the formations of the al-Quds Brigades and the resistance." As always, the battle involves Palestinian youngsters armed with light weapons and heavily armed regular Israeli forces backed up by armour and air strikes on civilian areas.

Jenin has been presented with new martyrs while Israeli troops have bulldozed streets, water mains, power lines, and homes while besieging the city and camp. Israeli forces sealed off and desecrated Al-Ansar mosque on Friday. Palestinian residents plead for access to food, water and paramedics. Journalists have been allowed into Jenin. After turning Gaza into a wasteland without incur-

ring the wrath of the world, Israel is free to wreak havoc wherever it likes in the West Bank. On Saturday, Israel claimed it had killed 26 Palestinians and arrested 30. On Sunday, three Israeli police officers were shot to death in the southern West Bank. UN Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian Territories Francesca Albanese said on X, "Israel claims that what it is doing in the West Bank is justified under the law of self-defence. This claim has no validity." She pointed out that the International Court of Justice has ruled, "Israel's very presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is itself unlawful."

Former Human Rights Watch director Kenneth Roth told Al-Jazeera, "Even though there's extensive combat between Israeli forces and militants in the Jenin refugee camp, that doesn't mean there are no rules – the Geneva Conventions still apply."

"One of the basic rules is Israel has to allow access to humanitarian aid. So, it can't just cut off food, water, electricity, and medical care – as we've heard it's doing. It has a duty to allow those for the civilian population. It can't use the excuse of the fighters to starve civilians, and that's what it did in Gaza," he stated. More than 622 Palestinians and 18 Israelis have been killed in the West Bank since October 7th, 2023.

**Vox South**

and Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, not to mention railways and bridges funded by China.

China also shares technology and management expertise with Africa in line with principles of equality and respect, helping African countries build capacity for self-generated development.

Equality and respect, they are the secrets behind Africa's trust in and closeness to China. As victims of colonialism, the two sides empathize with each other, and always render mutual sympathy, respect, and support to one another.

In the 1950s, the newly founded People's Republic of China spared no efforts to support African countries' national independence movements, and treated them as equals regardless of their size. African coun-

tries reciprocated with their support to China in the international arena including the United Nations. Such mutual respect and support, built up over decades, has become an incredibly strong bond connecting Africa and Beijing.

This bond has brought about more exchanges in education, art, sports, and tourism, and the two peoples have begun to experience and appreciate each other's culture. Such amity between the people has reinforced the China-Africa friendly ties.

On the contrary, the colonial record of the West still casts a long shadow over the African continent. Western countries still cling to the legacy of the colonial times - arrogance and contempt. How would African countries possibly let down their guard? It has been most obviously shown in the

US-Africa Leaders Summit 2022, where representatives from 49 African countries and the African Union were invited to Washington for a meeting with the US President. Many African leaders later expressed their feeling of "humiliation".

President William Ruto of Kenya once said indignantly in public that, "It is not intelligent for 54 of us to go and sit before one gentleman from another place. And sometimes we are mistreated. We are loaded into buses like school kids. It's not right." The reference to some African countries as "shithole" nations by some former American leader has also offended the entire continent. The Sudanese-born British IT entrepreneur Mo Ibrahim has put it bluntly during an interview with the CNN that "We are not a shithole. We are decent people like everybody else."

Such insults have made African countries more eager to pursue independent and self-sustained development. The rapid growth and modernization of China, a fellow member of the developing world, has brought confidence and hope to African countries, which also explains their closeness to China. African countries have come to realize that, with years of trials and tribulations, following the footsteps of the West will never allow them to catch up, and Westernization is by no means the only way towards modernization.

With its own success, China has shown Africa another path to modernization. China's unreserved sharing of its modernization experience will also help Africa accelerate progress and avoid detours.

Furthermore, China, the largest developing country in the world and

Africa, the continent with the largest number of developing countries, share more common interests and topics when it comes to inequality and injustice in the international political and economic order created by Western hegemony. The two sides have stood up against Western neo-colonialism, rendered each other support in the international arena, worked together to gain rights and advance interests for other developing countries, and strived to increase the representation and voice of the Global South in global governance.

In conclusion, with common experiences, interests, and aspirations, China and Africa will never cease their efforts to reach out to each other. How could such friendship between the two, with strong intrinsic dynamism, be easily undermined?

— China Daily

## Why is Africa so close to China?

**CHINA and Africa used to seem so far away from each other. As the British poet W. H. Auden once wrote, "I'll love you, dear, I'll love you till China and Africa meet." However, Africa and China have established an exceptionally close and friendly relationship a long time ago. This September, the 2024 Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) will be once again held in Beijing. According to announcements from Beijing and Africa, dozens of African leaders are expected to travel thousands of miles against all odds for the gathering, which will undoubtedly underpin Beijing's recent statement that the China-Africa relationship is "in its prime in history".**

Why are China and Africa so close, though

geographically far apart? It baffles the Western world, which always views Africa as its own sphere of influence. Many have attributed it to China's generous investment in Africa. Well, economic ties do matter. China has proposed the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which is warmly welcomed by Africa.

It has also invested in major infrastructure projects across the continent. Up to now, China's non-financial direct investment stock in Africa has exceeded \$40 billion, roughly on par with the United States. China has been Africa's largest trading partner for 15 years in a row, with the trade volume reaching \$282.1 billion in 2023, four times that of the US-Africa trade in the same year.

The West has indeed tried to catch up. Since the Obama era, US administrations have launched global initiatives similar to the BRI,

with an aim to channel more investment to African infrastructure. They include Power Africa during Obama's tenure, Prosper Africa proposed by Donald Trump, and the Build Back Better World (B3W) and Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) initiated by the G7 during the Biden administration.

Unfortunately, all these initiatives have become empty promises. They not only faded into obscurity along with the switch of Presidents in the US, but also often came with tough political and economic conditions. In contrast, China has always treated Africa as an equal partner and never slackened any efforts before its projects were finally completed. That's why China-aided projects are visible everywhere in Africa today, such as the African Union headquarters, the new ECOWAS headquarters,





# Sun of 25 Sept will rise with message of BF victory, says Ilyas Bilour

## F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Leader of the Businessman Forum former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour said the BF is fully prepared for election of the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and claimed that the sun of 25 September will rise with a message of the forum candidates' victory.

Speaking at a dinner hosted by the Businessman Forum in honour of SCCI members here at a local hotel on Monday, Ilyas Bilour said so-called leaders of traders will have a humiliating defeat in the election.

He went on to say that the Businessman Forum had never compromised on rights of the business community and believed in their selfless service and implemented it practically.

Ilyas Bilour said the business community has

recognized self-interested and opportunist elements as they knew that Businessman Forum is the only true representative forum.

The BF leader claimed traders and shopkeepers issues have been raised in parliaments and with relevant authorities and played a vital role in their prompt resolution.

Ilyas Bilour said BF, being a true traders representatives forum, had taken steps for protection of trading community rights, because of which, for the last 24 year, Businessman Forum candidates elected unopposed. He hoped the BF candidates would sweep the elections.

The BF leader stressed to vote true traders' community representatives on September 25 and to make the BF Associate and Corporate candidates victorious and give historic defeat to opponents.

Fuad Ishaq while speaking on the occasion said that under the dynamic leadership of former senator Ilyas Ahmad Bilour, the leader of Businessman Forum, during his tenure, he had raised traders' community issues with provincial and central authorities and played a pivotal role in their resolution.

The dinner was attended by former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, SCCI president Fuad Ishaq, Senior vice president Sanaullah Khan, Vice president Ejaz Khan Afridi, Anjuman e Tajran Lifetime President Haji Muhammad Afzal, Anjuman e Tajran KP Chairman Shaukat Ali Khan, Traders' leader Inayat Khan, former presidents SCCI Zahidullah Shinwari, Riaz Arshad, Zulfiqar Ali Khan, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, Hasnain Khurshid, Adeel Rauf, Sherbaz Bilour, IAP president Ayub Zakori,

SCCI executive members Haji Ghulam Hussain, Naeem Qasmi, Affaf Ali Khan, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Pervez Khan Khattak, Monawar Faisal Afzal, Fazal Muqeem, Kashif Amin, former SCCI SVPs Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Shahid Hussain, Naeem Butt, Imran Khan Mohmand, the chamber ex-VPs Javed Akhtar, Abdul Jalil Jan, Malik Niaz Ahmad Awan, Nadeem Rauf, Tajir Itehad president Mujeibur Rehman, Tajir Insaf President Shahid Khan, Tajir leader Habibullah Zahid, Khalid Ayub, Haji Naseer, Saddar Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq Paracha, presidents and office bearers of Bazar Organisations and Associations, traders, industrialists, importers and exporters in a large number.

Ghazanfar Bilour, SCCI former presidents, traders' leaders and industrialists also addressed the event.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a review meeting with Pak-Kuwait Investment Company.

## Minister holds review meeting PKIC team

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting with the leadership of Pak-Kuwait Investment Company (PKIC) here on Monday to discuss the strategic initiatives and future directions of the joint venture in Pakistan.

According to press release issued by finance ministry, the attendees included Managing Director Pak-Kuwait Investment

Company, Saad ur Rehman Khan, Finance Secretary and senior officials from the Finance Division.

The finance minister commended Pak-Kuwait Investment Company for its strategic contributions to Pakistan's economy, especially in sectors vital to the nation's long-term development.

He specifically acknowledged PKIC's proactive approach to integrating Islamic finance into its operations, noting that this approach not only aligns with Pakistan's development priorities but also resonates with the broader goals of ethical and sustainable growth.

On the occasion, Saad ur Rehman Khan provided an overview of PKIC's current portfolio, highlighting the PKIC's initiatives in the real estate sector leveraging Islamic finance structures to fund major infrastructure projects addressing Pakistan's investment needs while ensuring that investment activities adhere to Islamic principles, thereby attracting a broader range of investors.

The discussions also highlighted PKIC's dedication to supporting small and medium enterprises (SMEs) across Pakistan.

Both sides emphasized the need for continued collaboration and support to enhance the effectiveness of such joint ventures, the press release added.

## Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity remained active at the port where four ships namely Southern Robin, Estia, Al-Thakhira and Lusail Carrying Chemicals, Gas Oil and LNG, berthed at Engro Terminal, Oil Terminal, Elengy Terminal and Gasport Terminal respectively on Sunday.

Meanwhile another bulk cargo carrier DSI Pyxis carrying 58.10 tonnes of Coal also arrived at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim during the last 24 hours.

A total of nine ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them two ships, Southern Robin and Bateleur are expected to sail on today afternoon.

Cargo throughput during last 24 hours stood at 161,278 comprising 155,747 tonnes imports cargo and 5,531 tonnes export cargo was handled at the Port.

There are 06ships at outer anchorage of the port, out of them a bulk cargo carrier DSI Pyxis and another ship Meratus Jayawijaya carrying Coal and Containers are expected to take berths at PIBT and QICT on Monday, while another container ship Northern Jamboree is due to arrive at Port Qasim on same day.

## PSX witnesses bearish trend, loses 204 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed bearish trend on Monday, losing 204.92 points, a negative change of 0.26 percent, closing at 78,283.30 points against 78,488.22 points on the last working day.

A total of 457,280,204 shares were traded during the day as compared to 680,810,524 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 15.874 billion against Rs 21.186 billion on the last trading day.

As many as 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 107 of them recorded gains and 287 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 53 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Hascol Petrol with 46,430,036 shares at Rs 7.65 per share, Agha Steel Industries with 28,794,375 shares at Rs 13.68 per share and Secure Logistics Group with 21,545,106 shares at Rs 14.89 per share.

Unilever Pakistan Foods

Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 100.07 per share price, closing at Rs 17,599.00, whereas the runner-up was PIA Holding Company Limited with a Rs 75.20 rise in its per share price to Rs 908.95.

Hoechst Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 50.00 per share closing at Rs 2,050.00 followed by Rafhan Maize Products Company Limited with Rs 48.92 decline to close at Rs 7,390.25.

**Rupee sheds 11 paise against dollar:** Pakistani rupee on Monday depreciated by 11 paise against the US dollar in the interbank trading and closed at Rs 278.64 against the previous day's closing of Rs 278.53.

However, according to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market stood at Rs 278.25 and Rs 279.75 respectively.

The price of Euro increased by 36 paise to close at Rs 308.44 against the last day's closing of Rs 308.80, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.

The Japanese yen came down by 02 paise closed at Rs1.90, whereas a decrease of Rs 1.25 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which traded at Rs366.09 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs367.34.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 03 paise each to close at Rs75.86 and Rs74.25 respectively.

**Gold rates remain unchanged at Rs.262,500 per tola:** The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed no change on Monday and was traded at Rs.262,500, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 gram 24 karat and 10 gram 22 karat gold also remained constant at Rs. 225,051 and Rs.206,297.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained unchanged at Rs.2,950 and Rs.2,529.14, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market remained stagnant at \$2,503, the Association reported.

## Core inflation decelerates to single digit in August

ISLAMABAD (APP): The core inflation measured by Consumer Price Index (CPI) decelerated further to 9.6 percent during August 2024 as compared to 11.1 percent recorded during July 2024, Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported Monday.

According to PBS data, the CPI based inflation during the same month of last year (August 2023) was recorded at 27.4%.

On month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.4% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.1% in the previous month and an increase of 1.7% in August 2023.

According to data, CPI inflation Urban increased to 11.7% on year-on-year basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 13.2% in the previous month and 25.0% in August 2023. On month-on-month basis, it increased to 0.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.0% in the previous month and an increase of 1.6% in August 2023.

CPI inflation Rural, increased to 6.7% on year-on-year (YoY) basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 8.1% in the previous month and 30.9% in August 2023. On month-on-month (MoM) basis, it increased to 0.6% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.2% in the previous month and an increase of 1.9% in August 2023.

The Sensitive Price Indicator (SPI) inflation on YoY increased to 10.8% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 15.7% a month earlier and 27.9% in August 2023. On MoM basis, it decreased to 0.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.0% a month earlier and an increase of 4.1% in August 2023.

The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) inflation on YoY basis increased to 6.3% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 10.4% a month earlier and an increase of 24.3% in August 2023. On MoM basis, it increased by 0.3%

in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 2.3% in the previous month and an increase of 4.2% in corresponding month of last year i.e. August 2023.

The core inflation, measured by non-food, non-energy for Urban increased to 10.2% on (YoY) basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 11.7% in the previous month and 18.4% in August 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 0.4% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 0.7% in the previous month and an increase of 1.8% in corresponding month of last year i.e. August, 2023.

The core inflation measured by non-food, non-energy Rural increased to 14.4% on (YoY) basis in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 16.9% in the previous month and 25.9% in August 2023. On (MoM) basis, it increased by 0.6% in August 2024 as compared to an increase of 1.1% in the previous month and an increase of 2.8% in the corresponding month of last year i.e. August 2023.

## Emirates doubles partnership connectivity

KARACHI (PPI): In the past year, Emirates has significantly expanded its global reach, doubling the number of cities it offers beyond its own network, unlocking travel opportunities to nearly 1,700 additional cities. This expansion has enabled over 61,000 passengers to seamlessly connect on the shared networks of Emirates and its partners every week.

According to a statement issued today, Emirates has achieved this growth by forging new partnerships and deepening existing ones across the transport ecosystem. The airline now collaborates with 162 partners, including 31 code-share, 118 interline, and 13 rail and helicopter service partners, spanning over 100 countries. This extensive network provides travelers with enhanced connectivity, seamless single-ticket

itineraries, improved baggage transfers, frequent flyer benefits, and lounge access, ensuring a smooth travel experience at every touchpoint.

For customers of partner airlines, popular destinations are more accessible through Emirates' extensive network of over 140 destinations, offering seamless connectivity at Dubai International Airport (DXB) and industry-leading experiences both on the ground and in the air. In the last year alone, Emirates launched 16 new partnerships, including codeshares with Avianca and Batik Air Malaysia, and finalized interline agreements with airlines such as KAM Air, Sri Lankan Airlines, Condor, Flynas, and Kenya Airways.

Emirates has also expanded its connectivity options across Europe, offering fast connections

with a single ticket through codeshare partnerships with Trenitalia, Renfe, Austrian Rail OBB, and Swedish Rail SJ. Additionally, Emirates became the first full-service carrier to partner with BLADE, providing helicopter flights between Nice and Monaco.

Adnan Kazim, Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer of Emirates Airline, highlighted the strategic importance of these partnerships: "In the last year, we've deepened our global presence and expanded our footprint across six continents by forging new partnerships with like-minded airlines, rail partners, and air mobility operators. While organic growth remains central to our strategy, we'll continue to leverage our partners' networks to help our customers reach every corner of the globe with ease."

## Pakistan's mining sector:

# Denmark delegation explores heavy investment opportunities

ISLAMABAD (APP): A high-level delegation from Denmark, led by the Global CEO of FLSmidth, Mikko Keto, accompanied by Danish Ambassador to Pakistan, Jakob Linulf on Monday met with Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, to discuss potential investment opportunities in Pakistan's mining sector.

The Danish delegation expressed strong interest in making substantial investments, particularly in mining zones, said a press release issued here.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan highlighted vast mining potential in Pakistan, with a special emphasis on Balochistan's untapped resources and opportunities where small scale mining and processing can be empowered.

He suggested that FLSmidth and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan could organize awareness sessions and workshops, aimed at enhancing industry knowledge and skills.

The Minister also proposed the establishment of sectoral councils of Mining

and Cement to facilitate deeper business coordination and matchmaking between local and international stakeholders.

In addition to discussing investment opportunities, the Minister emphasized the importance of adopting a green framework and the transfer of technology to ensure sustainable development in the mining and cement sectors under Pakistan Denmark Green Framework Engagement, which will also help in complying with EU's Green Deal related regula-

tions like Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). Mr. Mikko Keto, CEO of FLSmidth, acknowledged government efforts to protect and promote foreign investment and expressed a strong desire to increase investment, particularly in the mining sector.

He also highlighted the company's commitment to upskilling and training the local workforce, including the youth, to ensure that the benefits of these investments are widely shared within the community.

## Chevron celebrates opening of Caltex-branded oil change facility

## F.P. Report

KARACHI: Chevron Pakistan Lubricants (Private) Limited ("Chevron Pakistan") is proud to announce the opening of the 200th Caltex-branded oil change facility in the country, expanding the network to more than 50 cities across Pakistan. This milestone in Chevron Pakistan's journey represents our ongoing commitment to the Pakistan market.

The 200th oil change facility was inaugurated in Karachi by Ahmed Zahid Zaheer, Country Chairman and General Manager of Chevron Pakistan.

The newly opened 200th facility offers a wide array of services, including oil change, tire alignment, car detailing and car wash.

Caltex-branded oil change facilities provide both convenience and top-quality products and services to customers. The growth of the network of facilities is a testimony to



motorists' trust in the Caltex brand and its automotive lubricants.

Chevron is one of the world's leading integrated energy companies. We believe affordable, reliable and ever-cleaner energy is essential to enabling human

progress.

Chevron produces crude oil and natural gas; manufactures transportation fuels, lubricants, petrochemicals and additives; and develops technologies that enhance our business and the industry. We aim to

grow our traditional oil and gas business, lower the carbon intensity of our operations and grow lower carbon businesses in renewable fuels, carbon capture and offsets, hydrogen and other emerging technologies.

## IUCN celebrates Beach Day

### F.P. Report

KARACHI: IUCN Pakistan observed World Beach Day 2024 at Sandspit, Karachi, under its project 'Building Resilience of Coastal Ecological and Social Systems of Pakistan'. Students and teachers from Government Boys and Girls Secondary School Younisabad participated in the event to raise awareness on the significance of beaches, which serve as a rich ecosystem for marine life, safeguards shorelines, and provide livelihood support to local communities.

The event featured interactive discussions and a beach cleaning drive engaging students and teachers. This received an encouraging response and commitment from the participants to protect the beaches. A briefing was provided on the significance of protecting the coast for maintaining ecological balance, supporting marine life, and safeguarding local communities.

## Pakistan's regional exports increase 25.59%

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan's exports to the seven regional countries increased 25.59 per cent in the first months of the current fiscal year (2024-25) compared to the corresponding month of last year.

The country's exports to the regional countries including Afghanistan, China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and the Maldives account for a small amount of \$339.880 million, which is 14.21 per cent of Pakistan's overall exports of \$2390.595 million during July (2024-25), State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported.

China tops the list of countries in terms of Pakistan's exports to its neighbouring, leaving behind other countries such as Afghanistan and Bangladesh.

Pakistan carried out its border trade with the farther neighbour Sri Lanka, India, Nepal, and Maldives.

Pakistan's exports to China witnessed an

increase of 4.13 per cent to \$160.100 million in July this year from \$153.745 million during last year while exports to Afghanistan also surged to \$88.065 million from \$42.173 million.

The country's exports to Bangladesh also increased by 8.65 per cent to \$57.866 million this year from \$53.258 million whereas exports to Sri Lanka rose by 59.86 per cent to \$32.715 million from \$20.464. The exports to India decreased to \$0.005 million from \$0.019 million in the previous year.

Exports to Nepal increased by 33.90 per cent to \$0.213 million from 0.159 million while to Maldives increased by 15.51 per cent to \$0.916 million from \$0.793 million, it added.

On the other hand, the imports from seven regional countries were recorded at \$1506.378 million during the month under review as compared to \$994.003

million during last year, showing an increase of 51.54 per cent.

The imports from China during July 2024-25 were recorded at \$1478.174 million against the \$962.980 million during July 2023-24, showing an increase of 53.49 per cent during the month.

Among other countries, imports from India decreased to \$17.757 million from \$17.817 million whereas imports from Afghanistan increased by 55.02 per cent from \$0.905 million to \$1.403 million. However, imports from Sri Lanka decreased by 21.52 per cent from \$5.310 million to \$4.167 million whereas Pakistan imports from Bangladesh recorded at \$4.715 million from \$6.991 million during last year.

The imports from Nepal into the country were recorded \$0.062 million as compared to the zero import during same month of last year, it added.





In brief

Naqvi for early upgradation of Gaddafi Stadium

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Monday directed that the upgradation of Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium be completed at the earliest since the ground had to be readied for the Champions Trophy. During his visit to the stadium, he went round its different sections, including its basement where he inspected the quality of the construction of a water tank and steel fixing. Later, the PCB chairman also presided over a meeting at the FWO camp office and directed the NESPAK to finish drawings as early as possible and hand these over to the FWO. FWO project director, on the occasion, gave a briefing on the project. PCB's director infrastructure, senior general manager infrastructure, NESPAK and FWO officials were also present on the occasion.

Pak team to feature in Scrabble C'ship

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Scrabble Association (PSA) has named a 14-member team to feature in the 19th World Youth Scrabble Championship to be played in Sri Lanka from September 6 to 8. The team comprises 12 boys and 4 girls, Tariq Pervez, Director Youth Program of Pakistan Scrabble Association told APP. Players selected include Affan Salman, Aehzam Ahmed, Bilal Asher, Ahmed Salman, Manaal Asher, Muhammad Yadaan, Muzammil Hassan, Manhamah Mukarram, Syed Maaz, Misbah ur Rehman, Ibrahim Mansoor, Ayesha Naqvi, Shanzay Fazil, Zayan Zaman, Muhammad Usman, Syed Musaab. Pakistan was the winner of the 2022 championship but finished second behind by Sri Lanka in the 2023 championship played in Thailand. The team led by Tariq Pervez will depart on the early hours of September.

Yuvraj's father levels allegations against Dhoni

NEW DELHI (Agencies): Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh's father Yograj Singh levelled serious allegations against former Indian skipper MS Dhoni. Yograj, who represented India in one Test and six ODIs, has been a regular critic of India's World Cup-winning captain Dhoni. Meanwhile, in his latest remarks, Yograj Singh accused MS Dhoni of destroying his son, Yuvraj Singh's career, stating that the former captain will never be forgiven. "I won't forgive MS Dhoni. He should look at his face in the mirror. He is a very big cricketer, but what he has done against my son, everything is coming out now; it can never be forgiven in life, said Yograj while talking to the Zee Switch YouTube channel. "I have never done two things in life — first, I have never forgiven anybody who has done wrong for me, and second, I have never hugged them in my life, be it my family members or my kids," he continued. Earlier this year, Yograj claimed that Chennai Super Kings (CSK) lost the 17th edition of the cash-rich Indian Premier League (IPL) due to Dhoni. He further claimed that the former wicketkeeper batter is jealous of Yuvraj, who was named the ambassador of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2024. "CSK lost IPL 2024. Why did they lose? It's whatever you sow, so shall you reap. Yuvraj Singh is the ICC Ambassador, hats off to him! And this jealous Dhoni, where is he? He didn't even shake hands with Yuvraj, and that is the reason why CSK failed this year," stated Yograj.



RAWALPINDI: Bangladeshi players celebrates after taking wicket of Pakistani batsman Mir Hamza during the fourth day of 2nd test match between Pakistan and Bangladesh at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium.

PCB Hall of Famer Waqar Younis to mentor Lions

ISLAMABAD (PPI) Pakistan Cricket Board's Hall of Famer Waqar Younis has been confirmed as mentor of the Lions side for this month's Champions One-Day Cup, which will be played in Faisalabad from 12-29 September. Additionally, the Lions have been allocated National Cricket Academy for training and practice during the 2024-25 domestic cricket season. Last week, Shoaib Malik and Misbah-ul-Haq were named as mentors of the Stallions and Wolves, respectively. Details of the player names and player support personnel will follow later this week. The Champions One-Day Cup will feature country's 150 best of the best cricketers. This will be a 50-over tournament that will be played on a single-league format. All but 16 September match between Lions and Panthers, which will start at 9.30am, will commence at 3pm. There

will be three playoffs in four days with the final on Sunday, 29 September. The Lions will open their campaign against Shoaib Malik's Stallions on 13 September, followed by matches against Panthers (day match), Misbah's Wolves on 20 September and Dolphins on 22 September. Waqar Younis (Captained Pakistan in 17 Tests and 62 ODIs; played in three 50-over World Cups; holds the record for fastest to 400 ODI wickets; leads the list of captains with best ODI bowling figures; is one of the bowlers to dismiss all 11 batters in a Test match; was named as one of Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 1992; was inducted into the ICC and PCB Hall of Fames in 2013 and 2021, respectively; coached Pakistan in the 2010 and 2016 T20 World Cups and 2011 and 2015 World Cups; last served Pakistan as bowling coach from 2019-2021)

"I am excited about the opportunity to once again contribute to player development. This new role presents a fresh challenge that I embrace with great enthusiasm. Beyond the chance to work with some of the most talented cricketers, there will be a fascinating dynamic among the mentors as each of us will strive to outmaneuver the others. "This friendly rivalry will certainly add an extra layer of excitement and intensity to the competition. "This unique format, where every match counts, promises to bring a new level of excitement to the game. Fans can look forward to a thrilling 14-match tournament over 17 days, filled with high-stakes action and memorable moments. "With a series of high-profile 50-over international matches on the horizon, culminating in the ICC Champions Trophy 2025, the Champions One-Day Cup is an invaluable opportunity for players to show-

case their skills and stake their claim for national selection. I have no doubt that this tournament will help us identify future stars who, with the right guidance and development, can serve our country for many years to come. "As for my role, I am committed to sharing as much knowledge and insight as possible with both the coaching staff and the players. My goal is to help them grow into more effective and impactful players, ensuring a bright future for our Lions and the Pakistan cricket team." Schedule of the Lions' matches (Day match will start at 9.30am, day/night matches will begin at 3pm): 13 Sep — Stallions v Lions (d/n) 16 Sep — Lions v Panthers (d) 20 Sep — Lions v Wolves (d/n) 22 Sep — Dolphins v Lions (d/n).

Salah belongs at highest level, says ex-Liverpool defender Carragher

LONDON (AFP): Former Liverpool defender Jamie Carragher believes Mohamed Salah will want to play at the highest level until his late 30s and is targeting Premier League and club records despite uncertainty over his future. The Egypt international put the ball firmly in the club's court after scoring and setting up two goals in Liverpool's 3-0 victory at Manchester United on Sunday. "Nobody in the club talked to me yet about contracts so I was just like, 'OK, I play my last season and see at the end of the season,'" he told Sky Sports. Salah is 32 but Carragher does not believe that will be a barrier to the forward and therefore should not be

for Liverpool. "I'm not sure it will be his last year. I think Mo Salah is a little bit like (Cristiano) Ronaldo," he told The Gary Neville Podcast. "Most footballers think 35 is the time to finish. I think Mo Salah will be looking at his late 30s and winding down then in his head. "He will be looking at breaking every record he possibly can, either in the Premier League or Liverpool. "I think he is aware of his status and I find it very difficult to see Mo Salah in the Saudi league, for instance, next season. He is playing that well at one of the biggest clubs in the world." In July 2022 Salah signed a new three-year deal, reportedly making him the highest-paid player in the

club's history on around £350,000 (\$460,000) a week. Liverpool reportedly rejected a £150 million offer from Saudi's Al-Ittihad for Salah last year. The Egyptian has scored 214 goals for Liverpool since joining in 2017, putting him fifth on the club's all-time scoring charts. New Liverpool boss Arne Slot refused to be drawn on the issue of Salah's future after the win against United. Asked about the player's comments, Slot said: "It's a lot of 'if'. At this moment he is one of ours and I am really happy with him being one of ours and he played really well. "I don't talk about contracts from players but I can talk for hours about how Mo played today."

Transgender sprinter qualifies for Paralympic semi-finals

PARIS (Agencies): Transgender athlete Valentina Petrillo has qualified for the women's T12 400m semi-finals at the Paris Paralympics. The 51-year-old Italian sprinter competed in the women's T12 classification on Monday, for athletes with visual impairments, and finished second in her heat with a time of 58.35 seconds, 1.38secs behind Venezuela's Alejandra Paola Perez Lopez. Petrillo qualified sixth fastest for the semi-finals - 2.99secs behind top qualifier and world record holder Omara Durand from Cuba. The semi-finals get under way later on Monday at 19:43 BST, with the final on Tuesday at 11:14 BST. Petrillo is also competing in the women's T12 200m in Paris. What are the rules and what has been the reaction? Speaking to BBC Sport before the Games, Petrillo, who transitioned in 2019, said her participation in Paris would be an "important symbol of inclusion". After Monday's heat, she added: "The atmosphere in the stadium is great, it's just a dream come true. "From today I don't want to hear anything more about discrimination, preju-



dice against transgender people." Currently, there is no unified position in sport towards transgender inclusion. The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) allows international sport governing bodies to set their own policies. IPC president Andrew Parsons told BBC Sport that, while Petrillo would be "welcome" in Paris under current World Para Athletics policies, he wants to see the sporting world "unite" on its transgender policies. It had been reported Petrillo was the first openly transgender athlete to compete at the Paralympics. But the IPC has since told the BBC Dutch transgender athlete Ingrid van Kranen, who died in 2021, finished ninth in the women's discus final at the Rio 2016 Games. Van Kranen's story was not widely known at the time. Mariuccia Quilleri, a lawyer and athlete who has represented a number of fellow athletes who opposed Petrillo's participation in women's races, said inclusion had been chosen over fairness and "there is not much more we can do". Tokyo 2020 silver medalist Ukraine Oksana Boturchuk, who is racing in the semi-final heats, said: "I find this not fair, in my opinion. I am not against transgenders in general but in this situation I do not understand and don't support it." Venezuela's Paralympic Committee (VPC) has called it a "a terrible inequality that puts female athletes (born female) at a great disadvantage". General secretary Johan Marin told BBC Sport: "We are completely against discrimination, inequality and/or exclusion of any person or group in any social sphere. "Therefore, respect for individual rights, inclusion and equality must always prevail. "Precisely because of the latter, we consider that the inclusion of a transgender athlete (born male), in a female category."

SAAF Jr Athletics C'ship from Sep 11

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan team will feature in the SAAF Junior Athletics Championship scheduled to be held at Chennai, India from September 11 to 13. According to Chairman, South Asia Athletics Federation, Maj. Gen. Muhammad Akram Sahi (R), both men's and women's teams from seven countries are participating in the championship, including Pakistan, hosts India, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. He said 15 categories of men and women's events will be held in the championship. The men's events include 100m race, 200m race, 400m race, 800m race, 1500m race, 3000m race, 110m hurdle race, long jump, triple jump, high jump, shot put, desk throw, javelin Throw, 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay while women will compete in 100m race, 200m race, 400m race, 800m race, 1500m race, 3000m race, 100m hurdle race, long jump, triple jump, high jump, shot put, desk throw, javelin throw, 4x100m relay and 4x400m relay. He said prizes will be distributed among the winning players at the end of the championship.

Rain halts Bangladesh victory bid after Hasan, Nahid demolish Pakistan

RAWALPINDI (AFP): Pacemen Hasan Mahmud and Nahid Rana shared nine wickets on Monday to set Bangladesh on course for victory over Pakistan before rain stopped play on the fourth day of the second Test. Hasan took 5-43 while Nahid added 4-44 — both career-best figures — in dismissing Pakistan for 172 in their second innings and giving the visitors a target of 185 to secure a 2-0 series win in Rawalpindi. Openers Zakir Hasan and Shadman Islam raced to 42 without loss — with Zakir hitting two sixes and two boundaries — before rain clouds gathered and bad light suspended play one over after the tea break. Bangladesh lead the two-match series 1-0 after a surprise win in Rawalpindi last month, their first in 14 tests against Pakistan. They have only won two series away from home — against the West

Indies in 2009 and Zimbabwe in 2021 — and need another 143 runs on the final day on Tuesday to secure victory. Pakistan had been 117-6 at lunch, with Mohammad Rizwan and Salman Agha fighting to save the hosts' blushes before Hasan ended their 55-run stand. He had Rizwan caught behind for 43 and had Mohammad Ali caught in the slips on the next ball for a golden duck to leave Pakistan teetering on 136-8. Salman, who top-scored with 47, added 27 for the last wicket with Mir Hamza before Hasan wrapped up the innings with his fifth wicket, getting Hamza caught in the slip. The morning session belonged to 21-year-old Nahid, who dismissed Shan Masood (28), Babar Azam (11) and Saud Shakeel (two) in a spell of express bowling. The rain-affected Test saw Friday's first day's play washed out and then a

remarkable fightback by Bangladesh on Sunday. The visitors were 26-6 in reply to Pakistan's first innings 274 before Liton Das (138) put together a seventh-wicket partnership of 165 with Mehidy Hasan Miraz (78) that enabled Bangladesh to reach 262. Pakistan took their overnight score of 9-2 to 47-2 in 10 overs on Monday before Bangladesh broke through with a spell of three wickets for 18 runs. Saim Ayub fell for 20 to a brilliant catch by Najmul Hossain at mid-off as the opener failed to keep down a drive off fast bowler Taskin Ahmed. Nahid then had Pakistan skipper Masood caught behind by Liton off a wild shot before getting the prized wicket of Azam, caught at slip off a sharp delivery in his next over. Nahid grabbed his third by dismissing Shakeel and went to lunch with figures of 3-22 off five overs.

Turkish shooter aims to trademark viral stance



ANKARA (AFP): Turkey's Olympic pistol sharpshooter Yusuf Dikec has filed to trademark his nonchalant stance at the Paris Games that went viral around the world, his coach told AFP on Monday. His coach Erdinc Bilgili said that the move to protect the commercial use of his pose with the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office came in response to others trying to trademark it without Dikec's say-so. "After being informed of numerous trademark registration initiatives carried out without Yusuf Dikec's knowledge, we submitted an application about a week

ago," Bilgili told AFP, adding that the "other applications have been rejected". Dikec's apparent sangfroid inspired a flood of memes online, some comparing him to fictional spy James Bond, while billionaire Tesla founder Elon Musk shared a video of himself striking the stance. His pose also became widely imitated among his fellow athletes since he won silver, Turkey's first medal in the mixed-team 10m air pistol, with teammate Sevvall Ilayda Tarhan. Chelsea striker Nicolas Jackson also copied it on Sunday as he celebrated scoring against Crystal

Palace in the English Premier League. Various bits of memorabilia bearing his likeness have gone on sale, T-shirts, mugs and mobile phone covers among them, Turkish news channel TRT Haber reported. The Turkish trademark office did not immediately respond to AFP's requests for comment. In an interview with AFP at the beginning of August, Dikec said there was a natural explanation for his hand-in-pocket technique. "I only do it to keep my body more stable, to keep my balance. There's nothing more to it," he said.

Sinner, Swiatek target US Open quarter-finals

NEW YORK (AFP): World number one Jannik Sinner and former champion Daniil Medvedev set their sights on the US Open quarter-finals on Monday in a tournament stripped of superstar duo Novak Djokovic and Carlos Alcaraz. Top seed Sinner, who won his maiden Slam at the Australian Open this year, takes on Tommy Paul while 2021 New York champion Medvedev meets Portuguese outsider Nuno Borges. French Open champion and women's world number one Iga Swiatek, meanwhile, hopes to take another step closer to a second US Open title when the 2022 winner faces Liudmila Samsonova of Russia. Sinner, 23, faces Paul of the United States hoping to become the only man this year to reach the quarter-finals at all four Grand Slams. The Italian made the last-eight in 2022 where he squandered a match point in losing to eventual champion Alcaraz. His Spanish rival has been removed from the New York equation this time around after the world number three and reigning French Open and Wimbledon champion was knocked out in the second round. Paul, the 14th seed, is looking to join compatriots Frances Tiafoe and Taylor

Fritz in the quarter-finals as the US looks for a first male Grand Slam champion since Andy Roddick triumphed in New York in 2003. "I don't know if I'm thinking, like, 'opportunity' too much," Paul said. "But it's definitely an opportunity to play on Arthur Ashe Stadium so I'm looking forward to that." With four-time champion Djokovic and Alcaraz both eliminated, fifth-seeded Medvedev is the only former champion remaining in the draw. The Russian faces 34th-ranked Borges in a rematch of their Australian Open last-16 clash this season. Medvedev aims to reach the quarter-finals in New York for the fifth time in the last six years. All-Aussie clash If Sinner and Medvedev come through their assignments, they will meet in the quarter-finals in what would be their fourth clash of 2024. Sinner came back from two sets to love down to defeat the mercurial Medvedev in the Australian Open final and came out on top in the Miami semi-finals. Medvedev avenged those losses at Wimbledon in a five-set quarter-final victory. The 27-year-old Borges is looking to defeat a top 10 player for the first time and become the first Portuguese man to reach a Grand Slam quarter-final in the Open era.

Swiatek will play her 100th Grand Slam match when she meets 16th seed Samsonova who is chasing a first ever last-eight spot at the Slams. Poland's Swiatek holds a 3-0 head-to-head edge over Samsonova but the 25-year-old Russian will be buoyed by making the quarter-finals of both WTA 1000 events in Toronto and Cincinnati on the eve of the US Open. Elsewhere in the women's draw, Russia's Diana Shnaider can reach her first Slam semi-final when she takes on US sixth seed Jessica Pegula. Caroline Wozniacki, the runner-up to Serena Williams in 2014, faces Brazil's Beatriz Haddad Maia. The winner of that clash will take on 2023 semi-finalist Karolina Muchova who knocked out French Open and Wimbledon runner-up Jasmine Paolini, the fifth seed, 6-3, 6-3. Muchova, ranked at 52, who only returned to the tour in June after 10 months out with a wrist injury, has yet to drop a set at the tournament and knocked out two-time champion Naomi Osaka in the second round. The men's last-16 line-up on Monday is completed by Britain's Jack Draper facing unseeded Tomas Machac of the Czech Republic while Alex de Minaur and Jordan Thompson clash in an all-Australian duel.





## In brief

### IESCO issues power shutdown programme

ISLAMABAD (APP): Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Monday issued power suspension programme for Tuesday for various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to IESCO Spokesperson, the power supply of different feeders and grid stations would remain suspended for the period from 06:00 AM to 12:00 Noon, Islamabad Circle, Alipur, Upper Topa, Patriata, TDCP, Mangyal Feeders, Rawalpindi City Circle, Khurram Colony, Bajnail, Bhadana Feeders, Rawalpindi Cantt Circle, New Kalam, Old Kalam, Jhata Hatial, Bisali, Industrial, Bhal, Gumti, Jarrar Camp Feeders, Attock Circle, Pind Pran, Valley, Gulshan Sehat, Sangjani, Shahullah Dutta, Paswal, NASTP, GBHP Colony, Qaziabad Feeders, Chakwal Circle, Dhoda Feeder, GSO Circle from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM, Dhirkot, Chamankot, Ringla, Dana Express, Dhila, Manhasa Suhawah, Nimal, Birut Kazmi, Ghaziabad, Gujar Kohala Feeders and surrounding areas.

### Police intensify crackdown

RAWALPINDI (APP): In a significant operation, Police have arrested four drug dealers and recovered 05 kg drugs from their possession here on Monday, informed police spokesman. During course of action, Wah Cantt Police apprehended Raheel and recovered 1.3 kg drugs from his possession. Similarly, Saddar Barooni Police detained Abdullah and confiscated 1.6 kg drugs from his custody. While, City Police arrested Irfan and seized 1.5 kg drugs from him. Following operation, Bani Police nabbed drug dealer Usman and recovered 550 grams of charas from his possession. Police have registered separate cases against all of them and further investigation was in progress. SSP Operations appreciated the performance of police tams and said that all legal procedures will be followed to ensure the perpetrators are properly prosecuted. He emphasized that strict action will be taken against drug traffickers to combat drug-related crimes in the region.

### Crackdown at Sunday Bazaar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Assistant Commissioners City and Shalimar have conducted an operation against the market vendors overcharging shoppers at the Sunday Bazaars, and arrested seven price gougers during the operation. According to the spokesman of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Administration, a large crowd gathered at the Sunday Bazaars met with Assistant Commissioners of Shalimar and City, along with officials from G-6 and G-11 Bazaars. The visit was part of a crackdown following complaints from citizens about vendors charging inflated prices for goods. During the operation, seven individuals were arrested for overcharging customers. On the occasion, the teams of ICT Administration have warned that shopkeepers who continue to defy the official price list would face heavy fines. Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon emphasized the importance of adhering to the urban price list. He urged consumers to report vendors who did not comply with the listed prices. He directed the officials concerned to identify and take action against vendors not following the pricing guidelines.



ISLAMABAD: Senator Rubina Khalid, Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), met with a delegation from JazzCash led by Ibrar Khan. —APP Photo

## Naqvi Commends Police for Foiling Terrorist Attack

ISLAMABAD (APP): Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has commended the police for foiling a terrorist attack on a check post in Mianwali.

He said that the Punjab Police has once again thwarted the nefarious designs of the Fitna Al Khawarij terrorists.

The minister praised the

police personnel deployed at the Isa Khel police station checkpoint for bravely repulsing the attack by 14 Khawarij terrorists. He said that the police gave a befitting response to the terrorists who attacked under the cover of darkness.

He saluted the brave police personnel who foiled the terrorist attack,

saying that the Punjab Police had once again thwarted the evil intentions of the Khawarij terrorists. He added that the police have always shown bravery and courage in the fight against terrorism.

He highlighted that the police are a bulwark against terrorism, which is highly commendable.

## Ministry chalked-out advisory regarding M.pox virus

ISLAMABAD (APP): Coordinator to the Prime Minister on National Health Services, Regulations, and Coordination, Dr. Malik Mukhtar Ahmed on Monday said that an advisory will be issued soon to prevent the monkeypox virus.

Talking to a private news channel, he said that the Ministry of Health chalked out a complete plan of action to prevent M.pox. The advisory will be issued with the support and coordination of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) and the Ministry of Religious Affairs, he added.

Through these ministries, overseas Pakistanis and pilgrims will be informed about the complete guidelines of this virus, he further added.

He said that there is no evidence of local transmission of monkeypox. He said that the Ministry of Health had a complete tracking arrangement on airports for this deadly virus.

Approximately 10 thousand passengers have been screened by Border Health Services at various entry points in the last 20 days, he said adding that these screenings, 14 suspects of the M.pox virus have been identified.

He said that nine of these suspects travelled from Gulf countries, while the rest have come from other countries. Out of all these suspected travellers, four cases have tested positive, and treatment is underway, he added.

He said that the Ministry of Health is diligently taking measures to limit the spread of this virus.

## Five more dengue patients reported

RAWALPINDI (APP): Dengue patients reach to 15 after 5 more were confirmed and admitted in the hospitals during the last 24 hours, says a report issued by the District Health Authority here on Monday.

The projection of overall dengue risk remains on decline as compared to previous years, yet 87 cases have been confirmed so far this year.

According to the report, the regular monitoring by the health departments within and without hospitals has resulted in the dengue situation under control.

Beside creating awareness on dengue spread in masses, the authority has been taking punitive actions against those involved in Dengue SOPs violations.

Registered cases against the violators reach 1800 through FIRs, whereas Rs. 8.2 million fines have been imposed along with massive spots sealing and chalans.

The report also highlights 2 Congo 646 measles patients reported so far this year in the district. However no death has yet been reported in the district due any of the mentioned deases.

## Dar highlights role of education in shaping country's future

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister

Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday highlighted the significance of education in a prosperous society and stressed upon making of strenuous efforts and investments in this sector for the bright future of coming generations.

Addressing a certificates awarding ceremony of Pakistan Foreign Office Women's Association (PFOWA), the deputy prime minister said that the incumbent government was making substantial efforts in this regard and in the current fiscal budget, it had made significant allocation for the education sector because education would provide future dividends in the country.

He also referred to the emphasis laid down by Islam over the importance of gaining education.

The deputy prime minister and foreign minister further underlined that other organizations and institutions devoted to humanitarian assistance and support should also focus on the financial, health and education issues faced by the people, adding that they were required to follow the precedents set by organizations like PFOWA.

Dar also commended PFOWA's contributions for the public welfare and said that he was pleased to learn that the Association had been serving as platform to support the needy and deserving people.

It had been supporting students to pursue their Masters degrees and PhDs besides, providing them scholarships, he mentioned

and said that it was not only a kind gesture but also a real service to humanity with immense rewards in the world hereafter.

Expressing his satisfaction, he said that it pleased him immensely that such a thinking existed in the ministry which was like a family. PFOWA had provided children with stationary and school bags, besides a number of scholarships and other financial support to the widows and minorities. It had also made contributions for the natural calamities hit areas.

The deputy prime minister informed that during 2020, he had founded two organizations for the support of orphans where about 100 children were getting education while the other entity was providing assistance in education and health sectors.

## BISP, JazzCash team up for digital empowerment

ISLAMABAD (APP): Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) will collaborate with JazzCash for digital empowerment of its beneficiaries.

A meeting to discuss modalities of this joint venture was held between the Chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid and a delegation from JazzCash, led by Ibrar Khan, Vice President Corporate Affairs, and Ali Naseer, Chief Strategic Officer.

The meeting focused on

enhancing the financial and digital inclusion of BISP's women beneficiaries by providing them with smartphones.

Senator Rubina Khalid emphasized the directive from both the President and Prime Minister of Pakistan to ensure that BISP beneficiaries receive their payments with complete transparency and respect.

She highlighted that digital empowerment through smartphones is vital in bridging the communication gap between BISP and its beneficiaries, enabling

them to be fully aware of their rights and reducing the risk of fraud.

The chairperson also stressed BISP's commitment to improving the lives of its beneficiaries by offering market-driven skill training that aligns with employment opportunities.

During the meeting, the JazzCash team presented potential initiatives for collaboration. Senator Rubina Khalid urged the team to develop a detailed implementation plan for the digital empowerment of BISP beneficiaries.

## ANF recovers 456 kg drugs in eight operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting eight operations across the country managed to recover 456 kg drugs worth Rs 120 million and arrested nine accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here on Monday.

He informed that in two operations conducted near a university in Peshawar, 1.6 kg hashish was recovered from two suspects. 500 grams opium was recovered from an accused

rounded up near a university in Islamabad.

The spokesman said that ANF was conducting operations near educational institutions to protect students from becoming victims of drug traffickers.

In other raids, ANF recovered 175 kg hashish from Qilla Abdullah, and 40 kg opium and 164 kg hashish were recovered from three suspects netted near Green Town, Kangni Sialkot Road. 52 kg heroin was recovered from Chaman and 17 kg ice

was recovered from a vehicle intercepted near North Bypass Peshawar while two suspects were arrested during the operation.

6 kg hashish was recovered from an accused nabbed near Canal Road Lahore Cantt. ANF is committed to ensuring a drug-free environment for youth and promoting a safe and healthy society. An investigation has been started to register cases under the Anti-Narcotics Act against the arrested accused.

## NADRA, NTL, PKCERT unite for cybersecurity

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), NADRA Technologies Limited (NTL) and the National Cyber Emergency Response Team of Pakistan (PKCERT) have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) to exchange cyber security threat intelligence and relevant data to enhance their security posture.

The MoUs were signed here today at NADRA Headquarters, Islamabad in the presence of Chairman NADRA. The areas of collaboration include the exchange of cybersecurity

threat intelligence and relevant data, timely and secure sharing of information on vulnerabilities, threats, and incidents, and coordinated responses to cybersecurity incidents affecting national infrastructure upon request, says the press release issued on Monday.

As part of the partnership, NADRA, NTL and PKCERT will conduct joint investigations and analyses of cybersecurity incidents.

They will share best practices and methodologies for effective cybersecurity management and collaborate on research and development projects aimed at improving cyber-

security technologies and strategies. Additionally, the organizations will conduct joint training sessions on various domains of cybersecurity and collaborate on educational initiatives to enhance citizens' understanding of cybersecurity.

The MoUs were signed by Chief Information Security Officer (CISO) NADRA, Dr. Monis Akhlaq, Chief Executive Officer NTL, Dr. Javed Ashraf and Director General PKCERT, Dr. Haider Abbas. The partnership between the two organizations will strengthen efforts towards creating a safer and more secure digital environment in Pakistan.



ISLAMABAD: A CDA (Capital Development Authority) worker is busy installing umbrellas on a tree at the Kashmir Chowk for beautification of Federal Capital.

## Rising stray dog menace alarms capital's residents

ISLAMABAD (APP): Stray dogs are increasingly becoming a serious threat to the residents of the federal capital, especially to the residents of sectors G/8, G/9, and Chatha Bakhtawar.

Despite existing spaying and neutering programs, the stray dog population continues to rise, leading to frequent attacks and increased safety concerns.

Reports indicate around 3 million stray dogs in Pakistan, with more than one million dog bite cases reported each year.

Additionally, while there are laws regarding stray animals, a high number of unclaimed dogs are

ethanised, due to the low rate of adoptions.

Capital Development Authority (CDA) faces significant challenges in managing stray animals, including a high incidence of dog bites and low adoption rates, said Afia Khan, an expert on animal behavior.

Speaking to APP on Sunday, she noted that stray dogs, frequently exhibiting aggressive behavior, have become a major concern for residents, particularly affecting children, women, and the elderly.

Multiple reports of attacks by these dogs have heightened concerns about

community safety.

She mentioned that there are sterilization programs available, but some people ignore them. However, those who care for strays often step in to assist.

Pakistan does not euthanize as many dogs as we do and adopts a 'live and let live' approach, although the level of care provided to the dogs is less thorough.

She said stray animals present several challenges, including public health risks and concerns for animal welfare. Implementing effective management strategies is essential to tackle these issues.



Ministry initiates review

KABUL (BNA): Ministry of Higher Education has launched the first session for the comprehensive review and development of the national curriculum for mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology across the country's educational institutions. During the meeting, Dr. Lutfullah Khaikhwa, Deputy Minister for Academic Affairs, emphasized that education is the foundation of learning and brings the philosophy of teaching to life.

150 foreigners held in prisons

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Prison Administration Authority of Taliban state that country currently holds over 23,000 inmates, including 1,000 women and 150 foreigners. Foreign detainees are incarcerated for various criminal offense. Efforts are underway to reopen Bagram prison, with some inmates already transferred there. Over the past year, 3,243 prisoners were released, and 3,016 were moved between Kabul, provincial prisons, and among provinces.

Muttaqi meets with diplomats in Turkey



KABUL (Ariana News): Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs says that the Islamic Emirate has made great achievements in the field of diplomacy recently, and more progress is expected in the coming days. Speaking to a group of diplomats at the Afghan Consulate in Istanbul, Turkey, Amir Khan Muttaqi said that Afghan citizens are forced to leave the country due to poverty and unemployment, and they should be treated well and their problems addressed properly. Muttaqi said at the meet-

ing that countries such as the United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan have accepted an Afghan ambassador. "The United Arab Emirates accepted our ambassador. The neighboring country of Uzbekistan accepted our ambassador. Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan accepted our charge d'affaires and there are other countries where we will see a good development in the coming days," said Muttaqi. Regarding the invalidation of documents from several Afghan embassies in Europe, Muttaqi said the

embassies were given three years to interact with the foreign ministry and provide services to the people, but some of these embassies refused to do so. Therefore, we declared the documents of some of these diplomatic institutions invalid, he said. "Istanbul is the gateway to Europe. We gave former diplomats three years to interact with the center (Kabul) and serve the people, but unfortunately some of them did not show up. Finally, we had to declare the documents of some embassies and consulates invalid," Muttaqi added. He also stated that the work of big projects has started, there are no challenges with the countries of the region, and that the value of the Afghan currency has been preserved. This comes after he recently visited Cameroon to participate in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation meeting.

Farmers struggle to make a living

HELMAND (Ariana News): Marjah district of Helmand province was once known as a major poppy growing area in the country but today, no poppies are in sight and instead, farmers say they are struggling to make a living. These farmers have appealed to the Islamic Emirate to work with them to find alternate crops to plant. One of the affected farmers is Mohammad Esa, who has switched from poppies to cotton and basil but he says he is not happy with the results. Esa is not alone in this, as many farmers in the district say crops they have switched to are not bringing in enough money to cover living costs. However, local officials say they have provided assistance to these farmers but that they hope to provide additional help in the near future. Farmers in the district have tried to switch to wheat, corn, basil and cotton. Helmand province has extremely fertile soil and farmers believe that with the right help from government, and with the provision of water, conditions would be perfect for wheat farming. In April 2022, the Islamic Emirate's supreme leader Hibatullah Akhundzada imposed a comprehensive ban on opium cultivation, production, processing and trade. The IEA has since said that poppy farming has been entirely eradicated in the country.

Meeting with tribal elders: Kabir highlights importance of session



KABUL (BNA): Mawlawi Abdul Kabir, the Deputy Prime Minister for Political Affairs of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, emphasized the value of consultations and reform suggestions in a meeting with former government officials, tribal elders, scholars, and youth from various provinces. ARG reported that during this meeting, some former officials expressed their support for the Islamic

system, describing it as the long-held aspiration of Afghans, and voiced their readiness to cooperate for its stability and strengthening. They further noted that while the global community may resist the Islamic system in Afghanistan, Afghans would not allow any attempt to weaken or oppose it. These former officials and influential figures also mentioned that while the public welcomes the laws

enacted by the Islamic Emirate, some individuals influenced by Western ideologies oppose Islamic law. They affirmed that the decrees of the Islamic Emirate's leadership are integral to the Islamic system, and supporting it is a religious duty for all Muslims. For his part, Mawlawi Abdul Kabir expressed gratitude for their shared suggestions and affirmed that the Islamic Emirate has

fulfilled the aspirations of the past two periods of jihad, establishing an independent state where Afghans live in peace. He emphasized that the Islamic Emirate values reform suggestions and welcomes direct input from all Afghans, assuring that the doors of government institutions remain open to the people. He further assured that the government would consider their suggestions and proposals.

Electronic ID card: Applicants criticize delays in distribution

KABUL (TOLOnews): Several electronic ID card applicants in the capital are complaining about the slow distribution process of these ID cards. Rozuddin, who has come to one of the distribution centers, said that for the past five days, he has been trying to obtain an ID card for one of his relatives, but has not yet succeeded. This man urged the officials to facilitate the distribution process of ID cards for the people. Rozuddin told TOLOnews: "It's been five days since we've come to get an ID card, and during these days we've faced many problems. No matter what we do, our work does not progress; we spent three days just in the biometric section."

Mohammadi, another applicant, said: "A poor person earns 200 afghanis a day by working, and then he has to spend 15 to 20 thousand from his pocket to come to Kabul to get his work done. His money runs out, but his work doesn't." Some of these applicants are calling for the establishment of new electronic ID card distribution centers in the capital and speeding up the distribution process. Mahboob, another applicant, said: "There is a need for new branches because people come here from all over Afghanistan." Sayed Mohammad Qasim, another applicant, said: "I am very happy with the behavior of the statistics office staff, but regarding the site, whether it is sufficient or not, it is not because you yourself can see the crowd."

The National Statistics and Information Authority has mentioned efforts to solve these challenges. Mohammad Halim Rafi, National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) said: "The National Statistics and Information Authority has brought many facilities for citizens of the country regarding electronic ID cards, and we always strive to provide the best services to the people. Therefore, we have started this process at the district level." Officials from the National Statistics and Information Authority also report that since the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, eight million electronic ID cards have been distributed in Kabul and other provinces of the country.

Grape yield strong

SAR-E-PUL (TOLOnews): The Directorate of Agriculture and Livestock of Sar-e-Pul reported a major increase in grape production in the province. Officials from this directorate said that last year, 70,000 tons of grapes were harvested from the vineyards in this province; however, this year, more than 120,000 tons of grapes will be harvested. Sharifullah Mosadiq, head of agricultural affairs at the Directorate of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock of Sar-e-Pul, said: "Last year, 70,000 metric tons of grapes were produced in Sar-e-Pul. In the current year, 1403, we are expecting 123,018 metric tons, which shows a 56% increase in grape yield compared to last year." However, orchard owners expressed concerns about natural pests, lack of markets for selling grapes, and the absence of standard cold storage facilities. They urged authorities to address these challenges. M. Haleem, a farmer from Sar-e-Pul, said: "There are five or six types; this year's yield is a blessing, but they have also been affected by some disease. In the end, we have no other work; I am working on one or one and a half jeribs, and we make our living from it." Farmers said that currently, 7 kg of grapes is sold in the markets of this province for 160 to 200 Afghani due to the lack of a proper market and standard cold storage, causing them significant losses.

Rising malnutrition rates among children in Bamyan province

BAMYAN (TOLOnews): Doctors at the Bamyan Provincial Hospital report that the number of children suffering from malnutrition in this province is on the rise. According to statistics, more than 160 children suffering from malnutrition have been treated at this hospital in the last three months. Poor economic conditions of families, premature birth of children, lack

of proper nutrition for mothers during pregnancy, and non-adherence to hygiene practices are cited as the main causes of the increase in malnutrition among children. Doctor Zalmay Gulzad said: "31 patients were treated in June, 61 in July, and 69 in August of this year from Bamyan Province at Bamyan Provincial Hospital, and among them, three children have died."

Another doctor, Obaidullah Siddiqi, said: "Children weighing less than 2,500 grams are suffering from this disease, and maternal malnutrition after pregnancy, along with fluctuations in weather conditions, are the main causes of malnutrition among children." Some families say they cannot afford to provide proper food for their children due to poor economic conditions.

Khadija, a patient, said: "We do not have a good financial situation, but we are forced to buy milk from the market for our child; if we do not buy milk, the child's condition will not improve." Earlier, doctors at Bamyan Provincial Hospital had also reported an increase in infectious diseases among children, particularly vomiting accompanied by diarrhea.

Afghan Ministry of Agriculture delegation visits China

KABUL (TOLOnews): The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock has sent an eight-member delegation of its experts to China to participate in the trilateral "China-Afghanistan-Pakistan Agriculture" meeting. Musbahuddin Mustaeen, spokesperson of the ministry, told TOLOnews that the meeting will be held for ten days and will discuss China's agricultural programs, the factors behind the transformation and progress of its agriculture, and other related topics. The spokesperson of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock said: "This meeting will be held for 10 days in China, and all of China's agricultural programs, its 10-year agricultural plan, and the transformation and progress of the country's agriculture will be discussed." The Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock considers China to have the most modern agricultural machinery in the world and stated that China can play a prominent role in mechanizing Afghanistan's agriculture. Wasim Safi, CEO of the Chamber of Agriculture and Livestock, said:



"In such trilateral meetings between Afghanistan, China, and Pakistan, the Ministry of Agriculture has represented Afghanistan. This will be a very effective and productive step towards the mechanization of agriculture in Afghanistan." Several agricultural experts also said that using China's experience for the advancement and mechanization of agriculture in Afghanistan is impactful. "China, as an industrial and technological country in today's world,

has a significant advantage. If it gets involved in Afghanistan's private sector, it can play a very important role in the mechanization of Afghanistan," said Qutbuddin Yaqubi, an economic analyst. The Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock reports that 85% of the Afghan population is engaged in agriculture and its products, and the ministry continues its efforts towards the mechanization of agriculture to achieve self-sufficiency.

Khost initiates major road and drainage projects



KHOST (BNA): Officials from the Khost Municipality have announced the initiation of two projects, with a total investment of 18.3 million Afghani. Qari Bismillah Bilal, the Khost mayor, informed Bakhtar News Agency that the projects include road construction and drainage systems. Specifically, 12.5

million Afghanis will be allocated for roads and drainage systems extending 660 meters north and south of the Sargardan Square. Additionally, 5.8 million Afghani will fund the construction of a 265-meter road and a 530-meter drainage system in the second district. The municipal authorities officially launched

these projects on Monday. Mayor Bilal also noted that this year, the municipality plans to implement 32 projects in the province, with a total budget of 390 million Afghani. Worth to mention that, under the IE's administration, reconstruction and development activities are progressing rapidly across the country.

China's greed for Minerals looks set to turn Afghanistan into hell

KABUL (Khaama Press): This year, in February, China became the first country in the world to give diplomatic recognition to the Taliban that seized power in Afghanistan in August 2021. Even as the international community was taking note of it, Beijing's motive behind deepening its engagement with the Taliban started unravelling like sloughing off skin by a snake in the summer. China has been eyeing Afghanistan's mineral deposits for years. Therefore, soon after Beijing gave diplomatic recognition to the Taliban, the first thing that the East Asian country did was to execute its projects related to mines and minerals in Afghanistan. In July, China's state-backed Metallurgical Group Corp (MCC) laid the foundation of a copper

mine plant in Logar province of Afghanistan. The Metallurgical Group Corp was awarded the contract in 2007 but the Chinese company made no progress since then. Hence, when the Chinese company decided to set up the copper mine plant, residents of Kabul and Logar province saw it as a recipe for disaster instead of welcoming the upcoming copper mine plant. They feared that development without proper management would prove to be calamitous for the poverty-ridden country. While mining would cause severe pollution, the large amount of water that will be required to run the project is expected to cause a huge problem for the inhabitants as the region is arid with water being scarce there, Nikkei Asia, quoting experts, said.

The Metallurgical Group Corp (MCC) is executing the project in MesAynak area of Logar province which lies 30 km away from Kabul. MesAynak is considered Afghanistan's 'El Dorado,' containing the country's largest untapped copper deposits, with an estimated 4.4 billion tons of copper ore. It is estimated that the MesAynak site would yield 2.5 million tons of copper per year and as such, can help Kabul in earning a revenue of \$300 million to \$400 million. But all this at the huge cost-in terms of environmental degradation and unmitigated loss of scarce water. If experts are to be believed processing just one ton of copper leads to generating 200 tons of waste. It means the copper mining plant can severely pollute earth, water, and air-

affecting the life of millions of people living in Kabul and Logar province. As per media reports, people in this area of Afghanistan rely on groundwater and if this waste is not properly handled, it can eventually contaminate the Logar River, impacting the health of people of the country. China's bad reputation for waste management and environmental abuses adds grist to people's fear in Afghanistan. Chinese companies involved in the mining sector in Africa and other parts of the world have poor records of maintaining quality environmental safeguards. In 2020, four Chinese companies engaged in gold mining in the Central African Republic (CAR) were forced to leave the African country after they were found to be involved

in polluting the Ouham River, a source of food and water for the local community. The river water was found to have high-level presence of mercury. In June 2022, civil society groups in Cameroon raised an alarm over the pollution of the Djiengou River by two Chinese gold mining companies: Meng Cheng Mining and Zinquo Mining. These Chinese companies were accused of contaminating the Djiengou River, which was found to have dangerously high levels of mercury and cyanide. Mongabay, a US-based news portal that reports on environmental-related issues, said. Even in Indonesia, China's neighbour in Southeast Asia, companies from the East Asian nation have been accused of causing huge environmental damage. A report from the

US Geological Survey said that Indonesia is known for proven reserves of 21 million metric tons of nickel, a key component for lithium-ion batteries. As per the London-based Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (BHRRC), Chinese companies involved in nickel production in Indonesia have caused air pollution, water pollution, soil contamination, flood, deforestation, and biodiversity loss, as well as loss of livelihood in the Southeast Asian country. Given such a pathetic display of disregard by China-owned mining companies for the environment and lack of technical expertise by the Taliban government, worries among ordinary people of Afghanistan over the looming impact of the copper mining by the Chinese company on public health

and environment have intensified. More so in the background of the fact that the Chinese mining company has, as per Nikkei Asia, reneged on several elements of the contractual agreement with Afghanistan. For instance, the Chinese company has refused to lay a railway line from Bamiyan in Afghanistan to Khyber Pass in Pakistan despite it being the specific issue of the contractual agreement. In fact, for the Taliban government, nothing is as important as business and investment. Analysts say it will not pressure the Chinese company to go by rules and contractual agreements as long as it brings money and investment to Afghanistan. But then, it is not just the environment that is going to be threatened, the Chinese company's

MesAynak project is about to severely impact a Buddhist complex which comprises over 20 ruins, including temples and more than 1,000 statues. Beneath the copper deposits, signs of ancient Bronze Age settlements have been found in MesAynak, South China Morning Post quoting Afghanistan's Mines and Petroleum Ministry said. Experts maintain that any mishandling of the mining project by the Chinese company has the potential to bring inevitable disaster to the region. Despite this, ordinary Afghans cannot lodge complaints against China or prevent their country from facing negative consequences because all that the Taliban government wants at present is revenue and the flow of foreign direct investment in the country.





ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister Balochistan, Sarfraz Bugti called on Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

## Israelis go on strike for Gaza deal after hostage deaths

TEL AVIV (AFP): Strike action brought parts of Israel to a halt on Monday in a bid to raise pressure on the government to secure the release of the remaining hostages in Gaza, after the military recovered the bodies of six captives that the health ministry said had been "murdered" by Hamas.

Relatives and demonstrators have accused Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government of not doing enough to bring the hostages back alive, and during mass rallies on Sunday called for a truce deal to help free dozens who remain captive. The military said on Sunday the bodies of six hostages, who were all captured alive during Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel that triggered the war, had been recovered from a tunnel in the southern Gaza Strip, prompting outpourings of grief and fury.

The Israeli health ministry said post-mortem examinations showed the six had been "murdered... with several close-range gunshots" shortly before they were found by troops. The Histadrut trade union called a nationwide strike beginning at 6:00 am (0300 GMT) "for the return" of the remaining 97 hostages, including 33 the military says are dead.

Several major cities across Israel joined the strike, closing schools and municipal services for several hours. Ben Gurion international airport near Tel Aviv was operating "as usual," a spokeswoman told AFP, but takeoffs were halted for two hours. In

Jerusalem and some other cities, life appeared to go on as usual. Some private companies, like public transportation providers, have partially suspended operations in support of the strike.

The strike followed a day of mass protests on Sunday that saw tens of thousands on the streets of Tel Aviv and elsewhere, part of a series of anti-government rallies during the war. On Monday, protesters again blocked roads in Tel Aviv. Histadrut chief Arnon Bar-David said he wanted to "stop the abandonment of the hostages," adding that "only our intervention can shake those who need to be shaken," an apparent reference to top Israeli decision-makers who have opposed a truce or stalled in months of negotiations.

Out of 251 hostages seized during the October 7 attack, only eight have been rescued alive by Israeli forces but scores were released during a one-week truce in November — the only one so far. Mediation efforts led by the United States, Qatar and Egypt since then have repeatedly stalled.

US President Joe Biden is due to convene a meeting with his negotiating team later on Monday to "discuss efforts to drive toward a deal that secures the release of the remaining hostages" following "the murder" in captivity of the six including US-Israeli Hersch Goldberg-Polin, the White House said. Israel named the five others as Carmel Gat, Eden Yerushalmi, Almog Sarusi, Ori Danino and Russian-Israeli

Alexander Lobanov.

On Sunday, Biden said he was "still optimistic" a deal could be reached. Yair Keshet, uncle of hostage Yarden Bibas, said during Sunday's protest in Tel Aviv that the government needed to "stop everything and to make a deal," which campaigners say is the best option to ensure the return of the remaining captives.

On the ground in the Hamas-run Gaza Strip, civil defense rescuers said an Israeli strike on Sunday killed 11 people at a school where Israel's military said a Hamas command center was based. The fighting continued on Monday, coinciding with the second day of localized "humanitarian pauses" to facilitate a vaccination drive after the first confirmed polio case in 25 years.

An AFP correspondent reported some air strikes overnight, and the civil defense agency said artillery shelling and gunfire rocked Gaza City, where two people were killed when a missile hit a residential block. Louise Wateridge, spokeswoman for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said 87,000 children received a first dose of the polio vaccine on Sunday in central Gaza. UNRWA chief Philippe Lazzarini called the inoculation campaign a "race against time to reach just over 600,000 children" in the war-torn territory of 2.4 million people. "For this to work, parties to the conflict must respect the temporary area pauses," he said.

## Biden says Netanyahu not doing enough to secure Gaza ceasefire deal

WASHINGTON: In what is still a rare public criticism of Benjamin Netanyahu, United States President Joe Biden has said that the Israeli prime minister is not doing enough to finalise a Gaza ceasefire deal. Biden told reporters outside the White House on Monday that the US is "very close" to presenting a final proposal that would lead to the release of Israeli captives in Gaza.

Asked why he thinks this push would succeed when other attempts to bring about a ceasefire in Gaza have failed, Biden said: "Hope springs eternal." The US president then answered with a simple "no" when a reporter asked him whether Netanyahu is doing enough to secure a ceasefire agreement with Hamas.

Despite the Biden administration attempting to put some distance between itself and Netanyahu over the past few months, amid the unpopularity of Israel's war on Gaza among Democrat supporters in particular, the criticism is one of the most overt made by the US president — even if it

was brief and apparently off the cuff. Biden met with the US team negotiating the captive release deal after he made his comments on Monday, and received an update on the status of the discussions, the White House said.

The renewed US effort to reach a ceasefire comes two days after six Israeli captives — including one American citizen — were found dead in Gaza. The discovery has fuelled mass protests and strikes across Israel demanding a deal to free the nearly 100 Israelis who remain held by Palestinian groups in Gaza.

Meanwhile, Israel has continued its brutal blockade and relentless bombardment of Gaza, which has killed more than 40,700 Palestinians. The US is Israel's main weapons supplier and diplomatic ally. Since the start of the war in October, Washington has vetoed three United Nations Security Council proposals that would have called for a ceasefire in Gaza. It abstained on another vote in March demanding an immediate ceasefire.

Biden's assertion about Netanyahu on Monday appears to contradict statements by his aides, who have blamed Hamas solely for the failure to reach a deal. Last month, the US said it put forward a "bridging proposal" to finalise the agreement based on a proposal that Biden had presented in May. The initial US-backed plan would see a multiphased effort to end the war, starting with a six-week pause in fighting that would enable the release of some Israeli captives held in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails.

In the second phase, there would be a permanent end to the fighting and the release of all remaining Israeli captives. The final part of the agreement would include the reconstruction of the Gaza Strip, which has been devastated by the Israeli war. On August 19, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that Netanyahu had "accepted" the US bridging proposal and Hamas must do the same — an assertion echoed by other US officials. — Aljazeera

### Three killed as boulder hits bus

F.P. Report

KOHISTAN: At least three people onboard a bus were killed when a boulder hit the vehicle during a landslide in Kohistan area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Police informed on Monday.

President Northern Areas Transport Company (NATCO), Fazal Elahi also confirming the incident, told media persons that three passengers were killed on the scene while several others were injured when a boulder hit the bus of NATCO.

He said the bus was enroute to Hunza from Rawalpindi when it met with the tragic incident in Kohistan. Soon after the incident the relief and rescue operation was started. He said the dead and injured were shifted to a local hospital in Kohistan.

### Sindh Police find 5 missing persons

F.P. Report

KARACHI: The Sindh Police have submitted a report of the recovery to the Sindh High Court (SHC) which claimed that they have traced and recovered five missing individuals from Karachi.

Justice Naimatullah Phulpoto of the SHC heard petitions related to the missing persons. The government lawyers and police officials were present in the court for the proceedings.

The police presented a report detailing the recovery of five missing individuals, including a girl, from various areas of Karachi. The report revealed that the girl, Tanya, had voluntarily married, while the missing individuals Khadim, Hamad, Umair Aziz, and Moiz had returned home. Following the police report, the Sindh High Court dismissed the petitions regarding the recovery of the five missing individuals.

The court instructed to expedite efforts to recover the missing child Farwa and others, emphasising that authorities should address the conditions of the families of missing children, and ensure their recovery. During the proceedings, the government lawyer noted that some families of the missing individuals were not in contact with the police and did not attend JIT meetings. The court directed that efforts be made to locate individuals even if their families were not actively pursuing their cases. The court also instructed police and government officials to use modern devices in the search for the missing citizen Matuillah and others.

### Jail brawl injures inmate

RAWALPINDI: A brawl erupted between inmates at Adiala Jail, leaving at least one inmate being injured. As per details, the Adiala jail administration said the injured inmate was attacked with a sharp cutter.

Assistant Superintendent Imran Shehzad has registered a case against the accused inmate identified as Imran Atish and the incident has been reported at the Sadar Baironi Police Station. According to the FIR, the brawl occurred three days ago, whereas the injured inmate is currently under medical treatment.

## Blockade of Pak-Afghan highway Rs25m loss daily inflicts to national exchequer

F.P. Report

LANDI KOTAL: The ongoing shutdown of Pak-Afghan highway has imposed a daily loss of Rs.25 million to the national exchequer in addition with export and import has completely halted via Torkham border, a custom official informed.

It is to be mentioned here that the Koki Khel tribe has blockaded the Pak-Afghan road for cargo carrying vehicles for the last thirteen days demanding safe repatriation of Internal Displaced Persons (IDPs) of Rajgal, Tirah Valley.

A high-up in Custom House, Peshawar said that 30 million rupees were the daily collection in form of various duties and taxes from Torkham crossing; however following the protest sit-in on Pak-Afghan road in Jamrud suspended the trading activities and presently only five million rupees collected per day were made.

He maintained, Rs.25 millions daily loss injects to national exchequer due to

road blockade and so far Rs. 325 million loss had been made to the national exchequer.

Mujeeb Shinwari, an exporter and a clearing agent in Torkham said that a total volume of trade with Afghanistan was \$2.5 per day with Afghanistan but ironically trade came to almost halt since the road blockade.

In the same way he maintained that import from Afghanistan was 540 million rupees daily that was completely suspended at Torkham crossing for the last thirteen days. He went on that Pak-Afghan trade was already on decline because of Pak-Afghan governments anti-trading policies and if barriers in bilateral business were not removed than in near it would be completely closed down.

According to traders Pakistan exports cement, heavy machinery, home appliances, rice, maize, banana, orange vegetables, chicken and fish etc to Afghanistan and similarly imports coal, soapstone, seasonal vegetables and fruits etc. from across the

border.

An official in the National Logistic Cell in Torkham informed that previously eight to one thousand export and import carrying vehicles were facilitated each day in the terminal that dipped to sixty to eighty trucks daily due to road suspension. Long queues of stranded vehicles, loaded with export and import could be seen at both sides of the Pak-Afghan road in Khyber.

Safirullah, an Afghani driver said that they were fed up with routine events of road blockade in Khyber that not only multiplied their problems but also imposed a negative impact on Pak-Afghan bilateral trade. Perishable items (fruits and vegetables) worth million rupees had decayed on the road that caused financial loss to the traders. He asked for concrete steps to ensure smooth flow of export and import at Torkham border. As per available information Pakistan has exported different trading commodities worth \$969.04 million to Afghanistan in 2023.

## UK announces suspension of arms exports to Israel

LONDON (AFP): Britain said Monday it would suspend some arms exports to Israel, citing a "clear risk" that they could be used in a serious breach of international humanitarian law. The announcement follows a review by the foreign ministry into the arms sales given concerns about Israel's conduct of its war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip.

Foreign Secretary David Lammy told parliament that the UK would suspend 30 out of 350 arms exports licenses to Israel. He said the partial ban covered items "which could be used in the current conflict in Gaza," including fighter aircraft, helicopters and drones. The ban does not include parts for the F-35 fighter jets, Lammy added.

The foreign minister announced a review looking at the arms sales shortly after Labour swept to power in a landslide gener-

al election victory over the Conservatives in July. "It is with regret that I inform the House (of Commons) today the assessment I have received leaves me unable to conclude anything other than that for certain UK arms exports to Israel, there does exist a clear risk that they might be used to commit or facilitate a serious violation of international humanitarian law," Lammy told lawmakers.

He stressed that the suspension was "not a determination of innocence or guilt" and that the situation would be kept under review. "We have not and could not arbitrate on whether or not Israel has breached international humanitarian law," Lammy said, adding that Britain is "not an international court." Lammy reiterated Britain's support for Israel to defend itself and stressed the suspension would not have a "material impact on Israel's security."

Britain's center-left Labour government has repeatedly called for a ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war, and for the speeding up of aid deliveries into Gaza, since taking power on July 5. It has followed the same approach to the conflict as the previous Conservative government, with Lammy and other ministers at pains to demand Hamas release the hostages seized in its October 7 attacks as part of any ceasefire.

Some commentators have suggested however that Labour led by Keir Starmer — a former human rights lawyer — may take a tougher long-term stance toward Israel and how it conducts its military operations. Last week, the UK foreign ministry said it was "deeply" concerned by an Israeli military operation in the occupied West Bank, urging it to "exercise restraint" and adhere to international law.

## PDMA issues flood alert for upper parts of Punjab

F.P. Report

LAHORE: The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) on Monday issued flood alert for September 3 and 4 due to torrential rains in upper parts of Punjab. The PDMA has warned of high water level in Jhelum while a flood alert has also been issued for Sindh river.

According to the alert, the urban flooding is also being feared for the streams and canals of river Ravi and Chenab on Sept 3. The PDMA issued alert to the commissioners of Gujranwala, Sargodha, DG Khan, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi, Gujrat and

Multan.

Meanwhile, the flood alert was also issued to the deputy commissioners of Bhakkar, Khushab, Mianwali, Rajanpur, Jhelum, Gujrat, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, Khanewal, Toba Tek Singh and other districts. The PDMA Director General Irfan Kathiya has directed the concerned administration to remain on their toes to deal with the situation.

"The people should contact the helpline 1129 in case of any emergency," said the PDMA DG. He said that the basic facilities should be ensured in flood relief camps established in the vulnerable areas.

Meanwhile, the PMD on

Monday recorded the minimum temperature in Karachi at 25°C while the maximum temperature in the city is likely to fluctuate between 31°C to 33°C. With 92% humidity and westward winds blowing at a light speed, the PMD forecast shows a cloudy skies over the port city with a possibility of light rain or drizzle at night.

According to the Met Office, the new system may also bring rain to some parts of Sindh, including Hyderabad, Thatta, Tharpakar, Mithi, and Badin, by tomorrow (Tuesday) while Karachi is likely to get light and heavy rain on September 4.

## US researchers find probable launch site of Russia's new nuclear-powered missile

WASHINGTON (Reuters): Two US researchers say they have identified the probable deployment site in Russia of the 9M370 Burevestnik, a new nuclear-powered, nuclear-armed cruise missile touted by President Vladimir Putin as "invincible."

Putin has said the weapon - dubbed the SSC-X-9 Skyfall by NATO - has an almost unlimited range and can evade US missile defenses. But some Western experts dispute his claims and the Burevestnik's strategic value, saying it will not add capabilities that Moscow does not already have and risks a radiation-spewing mishap.

Using images taken on July 26 by Planet Labs, a commercial satellite firm, the two researchers identified a construction project abutting a nuclear warhead storage facility known by two names - Vologda-20 and Chebsara - as the new missile's potential deployment site. The facility is 295 miles (475 km) north of Moscow. Reuters is the first to report this development.

Decker Eveleth, an analyst with the CNA research and analysis organization, found the satellite imagery and identified what he assessed are nine horizontal launch pads under construction. They are located in three groups inside high berms to shield them from attack or to prevent an accidental blast in one from deto-

nating missiles in the others, he said. The berms are linked by roads to what Eveleth concluded are likely buildings where the missiles and their components would be serviced, and to the existing complex of five nuclear warhead storage bunkers.

The site is "for a large, fixed missile system and the only large, fixed missile system that they're (Russia) currently developing is the Skyfall," said Eveleth. Russia's defense ministry and Washington embassy did not respond to a request to comment on his assessment. Burevestnik's strategic value, its test record and the risks it poses. A Kremlin spokesman said these were questions for the defence ministry and declined further comment.

The US State Department, the CIA, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence and the US Air Force National Air and Space Intelligence Center declined to comment. The identification of the missile's probable launch site suggests that Russia is proceeding with its deployment after a series of tests in recent years marred by problems, said Eveleth and the second researcher, Jeffery Lewis, of the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

Lewis agreed with Eveleth's assessment after reviewing the

imagery at his request. The imagery "suggests something very unique, very different. And obviously, we know that Russia is developing this nuclear-powered missile," he said. Hans Kristensen of the Federation of American Scientists, who also studied the Vologda imagery at Eveleth's request, said that it appears to show launch pads and other features "possibly" related to Burevestnik. But he said he could not make a definitive assessment because Moscow does not typically place missile launchers next to nuclear warhead storage.

Eveleth, Lewis, Kristensen and three other experts said Moscow's normal practice has been stockpiling nuclear payloads for land-based missiles far from launch sites - except for those on its deployed Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) force. But deploying the Burevestnik at Vologda would allow the Russian military to stockpile the nuclear-armed missiles in its bunkers, making them available to launch quickly, said Lewis and Eveleth.

Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said Russia will make changes to its guidelines on the use of nuclear weapons in response to what it regards as Western escalation in the war in Ukraine, state news agency TASS reported. A 2020 report by the United States Air Force's National Air

and Space Intelligence Center said that if Russia successfully brought the Burevestnik into service, it would give Moscow a "unique weapon with intercontinental-range capability".

But the weapon's checkered past and design limitations raised doubts among eight experts interviewed by Reuters about whether its deployment would change the nuclear stakes for the West and other Russian foes. The Burevestnik has a poor test record of at least 13 known tests, with only two partial successes, since 2016, according to the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), an advocacy group focused on reducing nuclear, biological and emergent technology risks.

The setbacks include a 2019 blast during the botched recovery of an unshielded nuclear reactor allowed to "smolder" on the White Sea floor for a year following a prototype crash, according to State Department reports, opens new tab. Russia's state nuclear agency Rosatom said five staff members died during the testing of a rocket on Aug. 8. Putin presented their widows with top state awards, saying the weapon they were developing was without equal in the world, without naming the Burevestnik.

Pavel Podvig, a Geneva-based expert on Russia's nuclear forces, Lewis, Eveleth, and other experts said it will not add capabilities that

Moscow's nuclear forces already do not have, including the ability to overwhelm US missile defenses. Moreover, its nuclear-powered engine threatens to disgorge radiation along its flight path and its deployment risks an accident that could contaminate the surrounding region, said Cheryl Rofer, a former US nuclear weapons scientist and other experts.

"The Skyfall is a uniquely stupid weapon system, a flying Chernobyl that poses more threat to Russia than it does to other countries," agreed Thomas Countryman, a former top State Department official with the Arms Control Association, referring to the 1986 nuclear plant disaster. NATO did not respond to questions about how the alliance would respond to the weapon's deployment.

Little publicly is known about the Burevestnik's technical details. Experts assess that it would be sent aloft by a small solid-fuel rocket to drive air into an engine containing a miniature nuclear reactor. Superheated and possibly radioactive air would be blasted out, providing forward thrust.

Putin unveiled it in March 2018, saying the missile would be "low flying," with nearly unlimited range, an unpredictable flight path and "invincible" to current and future defenses. Many experts are skeptical of Putin's

claims. The Burevestnik, they say, could have a range of some 15,000 miles (23,000 km) - compared to more than 11,000 miles (17,700 km) for the Sarmat, Russia's newest ICBM - while its subsonic speed would make it detectable. "It's going to be as vulnerable as any cruise missile," said Kristensen. "The longer it flies, the more vulnerable it becomes because there is more time to track it. I don't understand Putin's motive here."

The Burevestnik's deployment is not banned by New START, the last US-Russian accord limiting strategic nuclear weapon deployments, which expires in February 2026. A provision allows Washington to request negotiations with Moscow on bringing the Burevestnik under the caps but a State Department spokesperson said no such talks had been sought.

Citing the war in Ukraine, Russia has spurned US calls for unconditional talks on replacing New START, stoking fears of an all-out nuclear arms race when it expires. Podvig said Moscow might use the missile as a bargaining chip if talks ever resume. He called the Burevestnik a "political weapon" that Putin used to bolster his strongman image before his 2018 re-election and to telegraph to Washington that it cannot dismiss his concerns over US missile defenses and other issues.